

Personal History
Of

Willie Plum (Williams) Sneed
1912 ~ 2003



Born in the very small town of Byars, Oklahoma November 27, 1912, she was given the name Willie Plum (a family name which she did not like) Williams by her parents, Melton David and Jennie Lee (Griffin) Williams. Early in her life she quickly made it known to everyone ~ "My legal name is Willie, but I prefer to be called Billie" ~ and the name "Billie" continued throughout her days.

"Billie" was the third child, the second daughter born to the general store owner and his wife. One son died in infancy. Nell and "Billie" had only a brief time with their mother ~ Mrs. Williams died when "Billie" was just 18 months old. Their father, "Dave", who himself had been orphaned when he was only eight or nine years old, had little knowledge or experience taking care of and raising two daughters. With the help of some neighbor ladies he somehow managed to give them the necessities and always gave them his love. "Billie" told of getting crackers from the big barrel and a slice of cheese from the large cheese "round", making a sandwich for her lunch (with mustard on it!) The two girls had the run of the store ~ whatever they wanted!

During the mid 1920s, about 1924 or 1925, in the depression years leading up to the stock market crash of 1929, Mr. Williams had extended credit to so many people in his mercantile store that he could not make his payment to the bank. The bank foreclosed, and the family was able to take only a few necessities. They had their house nearby, and Mr. Williams would find other work to take care of his girls. Then another tragedy struck ~ their house burned and everything was lost.

Mr. Williams decided to go to Texas where a friend owned a ranch. "Billie" was eventually sent for and it was during this time that her life started shifting around from one place ~ one family ~ to another. She worked for her room and board with each family ~ until they no longer needed her or got tired of her ~ then she would find another family to work for. The pattern continued, but she managed to stay in school and get good grades despite the constant moving around.

During a basketball game she saw a man staring at her. It was the coach's assistant, who later became her husband, William Carl Sneed, Jr., looking at her beautiful hair! They met, dated, and soon married in Howe, Texas. Shortly after their marriage they moved to the Sheridan, Wyoming area to work on a ranch. Their first daughter, Peggy, was born there. Carl worked on the cattle and farming ranch for a time before moving his family back to Checotah, Oklahoma to be near his family. Their second daughter, Dixie, was born in Checotah in 1933.

"Billie" took care of the family and helped in whatever way possible as her husband found work wherever it was available. This included picking cotton, with the girls on old quilt pallets on the ground in the shade of the old car ~ and helping out in the old service station back in Texas ~ and

cooking for the farmers coming in from the fields. When the girls were old enough to be in school she worked part-time in little grocery stores.

She and her husband had managed to buy a piece of property and build a house in Dawson, Oklahoma ~ her first real home. The family became active in church, "Billie", with her beautiful alto voice, sang in the choir ~ music was an important part of her life.

Following her husband's serious accident in 1943 and subsequent recovery, the family moved back to Wyoming where they remained for over 30 years. "Billie" worked at several grocery stores in Worland ~ the last being Jon's Food Basket. She loved to play Bridge, played the piano and organ, loved to travel ~ and enjoyed a bit of gambling now and then!

"Billie" was widowed in 1975 after 44 years of marriage, and soon after moved to Colorado to be close to her daughter ~ eventually moving to Kirkland, Washington where she lived with her daughter and son-in-law until her death in 2003.

"Billie" was one with a loving soul and an independent spirit, who lived 90 years, 8 months, and one day.