

Far Away Cabin Home

By: Samuel J. Burris

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My father, Cliff Burris was born in this cabin in Spring Valley, Virginia on September 10, 1910. Like many males living in the mountains of Virginia during the depression of the 1930's, Cliff couldn't find a job or livelihood at that time. Many men, like my father, went west as they had heard stories of fertile land, jobs to be had and a bright future ahead. Some went and stayed, but many more returned to the mountains again. My father found a new life, a wife and a family in Nebraska so he stayed, but it wasn't easy!



Will and Minnie Burris

Along with John Fielder and two other friends from Virginia, my dad had decided to travel west by automobile and find employment. They arrived in Kansas and worked in a rock quarry for a few days. In Colorado they stepped on wooden board walks in Denver, but didn't have much success finding work. After all of these experiences, they ending up at the Will Burris farm north of Pilger, Nebraska.



Cliff and his cousin Gifford Burris in 1930

The four young men were ready to return to Virginia but, Uncle Will said to my father, “No kin of mine need go back. You can stay right here with us!” He did, and after that, Uncle Will’s farm family was like my father’s very own. Those relationships lasted their whole lives.

The other three men bade farewell and all three of them went back to Virginia. In later years, John Fielder, Cliff’s best Virginia friend, did come back to Nebraska and bring his family with him for a visit. It was more than 20 years later.

From early on, Cliff began working out as a hired hand, first for Herman Ritze and later on for Walt Chase. He also worked for his girl friend’s father, John Dohren and others. He and Elsa moved into a house Walt Chase had, working for Walt for several years. Cliff worked for Pete Topp too, finally moving in to the 160 acre farm house with his wife Elsa. That is where Cliff and Elsa’s first son Sam was born.



The W. T. Burris family several years after my father accepted Uncle Will's offer to remain in Nebraska rather than to go back east to Virginia.

Left to right: ft. Darryl and Milan Frerichs , 2nd row: Gyda Burris Greve, Marian Nettie Doty Burris with infant Tom, Virgie Burris Frerichs holding Joyce, Lillian Burris Jones, and Elsa D. Burris.

Back row: Hans Greve, Gifford Burris, Herb Frerichs, Don Jones and Cliff Burris. The photo was taken at the Will Burris farm place around 1936. The farm is located about five miles north of Pilger, Nebraska.



Elsa and Cliff Burris

Taken in the 1930's in front of the grove of evergreen trees at the entrance to the John and Emma Dohren farm about four miles north of Pilger, Nebraska.

Cliff and Elsa were married almost 60 years to each other and raised three sons, Sam, Ron and Bill Burris.

My father is wearing a "Humbug" baseball uniform. The name comes from the Humbug Creek which flows in the region. In those days, baseball games were played on any piece of land which was flat. Pastures were popular.

The following poem was written by Samuel Clifton (Cliff) Burris while on a fishing trip to Willow Lake, Pierce, Nebraska.



HOME

There is a little green valley
Lying quietly in the hills,
Where the brooks murmur merrily
As the rocks form their rills.

We were born in this pleasant valley,
Many years ago,
To parents, true and loyal,
As anyone may know.

The beautiful mountains tower above it
And protect it from all sides,
From wind and storms and weather,
I'm sure God is its guide.

We were a happy family,
Blessed not with silver or gold,
But with love, understanding parents, friends,
And above all, true love of God.

The finest people ever,
Live in this lovely land,
As the privileged ones who've lived there
I'm sure can understand.

Some of my finest moments
Are those spent in dreams,
Of mom, dad, and loved ones,
And good times in our teens.

And although we have wandered
Miles and miles away from there,
I'm sure God still has all of us
In his protective care.

And as we sit and ponder,
Wherever we may be,
Of home and friends and loved ones,
And those we'll never see.

We thank God for the valley,
The mountains and the streams,
And for so many pleasant years
That seem almost like dreams.



Cliff and Elsa Burris

Photo taken around 1990 in Norfolk, Nebraska

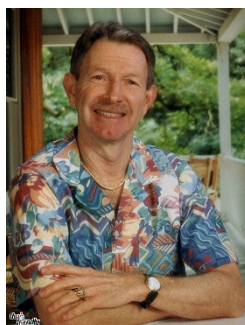
My brother Ron Burris purchased the cabin in the 1990's, renovating it to near original state. The site came back into the family again at that time as a genuine two-room Appalachian dwelling. It presently has electricity, fireplace, wood stove for cooking with hot and cold water. As traditionally, bathing is done in a tub and the water is thrown out after. The outhouse is located in the back!



Dee and Ron Burris in front of the cabin.

Comment by the Author –

From my earliest memory, the stories of my family and how they emerged as well as how I fell into the picture, has dominated my life. It is a pleasure to be able to share all this with others.



Samuel J. Burris