

1930 Colored- The Depression Years
1940 Colored World War Two
1950 Negro Brown vs Board of
Education
1960 Negro I have a
Dream
1970 Black I am Black and I
Am Proud
1980 Black CHANGE????

From Colored To Negro to Black

Changing Tide in the United States for Two Women

A story of two Women who experienced life between 1930 and 1983

Emma and Angela were born in Riverside Mississippi around 1912. Circumstances caused both to live far different lives even though they both were affected by the same historical events. This book provides an insight into the historical events that shaped their lives

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Introduction

History can be very exciting and an excellent learning tool for many. However history cannot be fully understood unless examined through the eyes of those who were most affected by the series of events being studied. This book attempts to look at the history of the United States from approximately 1920s through the early 80s. It does not try to identify and quantify each historical happening but instead only uses major historical events to show how they affected the lives of two Black Women who lived during the 20th century. While the characters are completely fictional, they do represent a cross section of Black Women who survived a time of change for the United States.

This book gives an insight into events that changed the lives of many. It does not attempt to promote any one idea or philosophy but instead again is written as a cross section of experiences. It is hoped that the book will provide an opportunity for the reader to re-think their thoughts of those years. If one is old enough, maybe the reader can remember where they were at the time of some of these historical events. If the reader is younger, maybe the reader will be able to better understand the decisions that were made by many.

History is important but we must learn from it. History is not just events but it is real people who succeed regardless of the circumstances presented.

Chapter One Waiting for the Next Taylor

The room was full as all those present were waiting with cautious excitement. They all were gathered together for another memorable family event when another Taylor would enter the world. In one corner of the room was Grandmother Taylor who was now looking toward her 70th birthday and had already seen her son Little Tom and daughter Frances be added to the Taylor clan. She had also seen her Tom have two daughters who had the rich complexion of milk chocolate. Tom also had a son who was dark but handsome and was the apple of his grandmother's eye. Pearl set next to her grandmother as she gently combed her long white hair. That hair, that had been so Black and straight when Grandmother Taylor was a young girl and danced across the ballroom floor as the envy of every girl in town.

It was some 53 years earlier in the late spring of 1930 that Angela Mims entered the hall with Thomas Taylor to the tune of Moon River as they were crowned Mr. and Ms. Booker T Washington High. It was the same Thomas Taylor who had escorted her to the Cotillion. It was the same Thomas Taylor who had escorted her to the homecoming game and the same Thomas Taylor that she had dreamed of marrying. He with his kind and gentle smile while being driven to be the next great Colored attorney in Riverside. In fact there had been only one other Colored Attorney in Riverside and that was his father. It was as if they were destined to be together as her father, the Rev Moses Mims has always understood the importance of having his daughter only date the most eligible bachelor in the town. From the time that Thomas's father made Moses Mims pastor of the First Baptist Church, Moses Mims knew that he wanted the best for his daughter. He made sure that Angela set in the same row with young Thomas at Church and made sure that they set at the same head table for dinner after the Sunday revival. This was easy as Thomas was the head deacon and had been head deacon for more than 20 years. During this time the family had become as one, controlling the church and the town of Riverside or at least the Colored section of the southern town.

As the sun slowly went down along the hillside, Grandmother Taylor set quietly waiting on the next Taylor. She had already decided that this child would be another clog in the wheel of the Taylor clan and was predestined for great things. While she may not be there, she had already put in motion all of the resources needed for the yet to be born Taylor.

It was in the year 1930 that Thomas Taylor JR. graduated from Booker T Washington High and was to follow in his father's footsteps to go to Howard University in Washington DC. It was at this school that his father Thomas Sr. had come some 30 years earlier to become the first to graduate from high school and college in his family. A family that had its roots on the old Mississippi plantation of The Taylor family not far from the town of Riverside. He remembered his father telling him stories of his grandparents and their days on the plantation as slaves. He remembered stories of how his grandparents became sharecroppers and stayed on the land even though they could leave after the war between the States.

His grandfather had said that he did not know nothing about any place else and felt just right staying at the only place he had ever called home. He remembered stories of how his grandfather worked the cotton and soy bean fields day and night to take care

of his family of 3 boys and 3 girls. How his grandfather made sure that his youngest son learned how to read and write and go to school so he would not have to work the fields. How his grandfather purchased 40 acres and it grew into 200 acres of land. How his grandfather worked so much that he was able to open a store in the colored section of town. Yes this grandson of a slave and whose father was able to go to Howard University in that far away city of Washington DC and come back to run the family store and become the only Colored attorney in middle Mississippi.

Chapter 2 The Beginning of the End

“Where am I” cried Emma Johnson as she woke not knowing where she was. She again had slipped in and out of her own world. As she laid there struggling to pull her mind back inside to the place where she remembered, her granddaughter Missy could only whimper as she felt like she was losing the only person in the world who meant something to her. Missy softly said “it’s ok Granny. I am here and you are with me”. Emma then said “Who are you”? Missy between sobs could only say this is Missy- your granddaughter. Emma with a soft smile and gentle eyes then said “how long have I been here” and before Missy could answer, Emma slumped again into a deep sleep. Missy squeezed her hand knowing that she had lost her again.

Emma Johnson had lived a hard life by any standards but though it all she had endured. She endured pain, suffering and physical and mental hurt, but through it all she had never given up. How ironic that at such a late stage in her life she was now fighting an enemy that she could not see. An enemy that was threatening her one constant throughout her life- her strong will and fighting spirit. Missy set holding the hand of the only grandmother, mother, and friend that she ever had in life. The one person in her life that protected her from the entire world.

As she set there holding the limp and small hand that seemed to have too many calluses and too many wrinkles, she began to think of her grandmother in better times or at least earlier times but not so good. Funny, the more she remembers, she can only think of the good times as the bad times seem to be a far distant memory and happened to someone else- not her. Emma Jean Johnson was 71 years old and had not been sick a day in her life- being pregnant is not sick. She was only a shell of her old feisty self. She was dark with minimum frame. Some would say that she was plain looking. No distinguishing features. Just a plain Black woman, who had seen and endured too much during her life time.

Emma Johnson was born in September 1912 or so she thinks for there was no formal birth certificate with her name and birth date. She was born to Lucy and William Johnson and the fourth of nine children who lived. Lucy Taylor had lost 2 children while giving birth. Emma Johnson was born in a two room shack where she lived until she was 16 when she left home. She was forced to leave as she had become pregnant and her parents did not want anyone in the small town of Riverside to know. It was that time when unwed mothers were a disgrace to the family. Her father Deacon Johnson at the First Baptist Church could not have a daughter pregnant in the congregation. Emma was put on a bus with only a small suitcase and chicken and biscuits in a brown paper bag and shipped to Washington DC to stay with her aunt and uncle. When asked William and Lucy told everyone that Emma had gone north to take care of her sick aunt.

Missy began to think of the many stories that her grandmother shared with her. How terrified she was on the bus to Washington DC. How she had to sit in the back of the bus and hid her face because she was so afraid. Her grandmother told her how she had to go across the street from the bus station to use the bathroom since the only bathroom at the bus stations were for Whites only and the sign said “No Coloreds allowed”. She had to drink from the water faucet in the rear of the bathroom because the water faucet with the sign “Colored” did not work.

Missy remembered her Granny telling her how she almost got left in some town in Tennessee. She had gotten off the bus to use the bathroom and she could not find the “Colored” bathroom. She then needing to go badly went to the store across the street and was told to go to the outhouse behind the store. The outhouse was a little ways in the woods. Not finding any toilet paper, she had to sneak out and find some newspaper lying on the ground. Afterward she saw the bus closing the door and she had to run to catch the bus to get the rest of her chicken and biscuits. When she got on the bus she found that many more people had gotten on the bus. As she went to the back of the bus she noticed that there were no empty seats at all. As she got closer to her seat, she saw a White man sitting in her seat. She stopped frozen in her tracks thinking of her fried chicken until she reached the next bus stop where he got off. Luckily he had not eaten her chicken, She did not care about the seat just chicken and biscuits in that greasy brown bag.

Missy began to smile between the sobs and then suddenly Emma squeezed her hand and said “Hello Missy- I am glad that you are here” How long have I been sleep? Lean over closer so that I can talk to you and tell you some things that I have meant to tell you for many years.” Missy could only wipe her eyes and say “ Yes Maam” and pulled her chair closer to the one she loved.

Chapter 3 The Early Years

Emma Johnson began to talk in a slow soft voice barely speaking above the other sounds in the room. Missy leaned forward barely able to hear the words of her Granny but holding on to each word and not letting it go for fear that it would be the last time that she would be able to talk with her grandmother. The last time that she would be able to feel and share the love of her grandmother.

Emma began by saying “ Missy I love you and I just want you to know how proud I am of you” She then said “ I need to tell you about some things in my life that you do not know so that you will know the whole truth before I am dead and gone. You need to really know about your family and what caused us to be where we are today. Missy listened carefully as her grandmother continued to talk in short halting words.

Emma went on to say.. “Let me tell you about your grandfather”. I know that you did not know him and I barely knew him; but, he is your grandfather and he lives right here in Riverside even to this day. He was such a good looking boy with good hair and we were only 12 when we started looking at each other in Church. He sat in the pew behind me and we would sneak looks at each other every Sunday. When I did go to school, he would smile at me and I would just blush for there was not another single soul that looked at me or even cared if I existed. But he did.

Soon later I would let him walk me part of the way home until I got where my mother and father could see us and then he would run back down the road. One day Pa was out in the fields plowing with the mule and saw us but I told him that we were just talking about Church. Well one thing led to another and I then got pregnant with your mother and things were never the same with me and my pa. I remember the day when Ma asked me if I was pregnant and I said I don’t know but she knew. Folks always know even before the one who is pregnant knows. Pa asked me who was the boy and I would not tell him even though he threatened to kill me. Pa then told me I was going to leave town that week and before I knew it, I was on the bus to Washington DC. What Pa did not know was that the boy was the son of Reverend Mims. His oldest son and the one that they all said was going to be a preacher like his dad. To this day he does not know anything about it. I know that he suspects but he never know. At least while I am living and not while your mother was living. Even to this day when I see him in the pulpit just a preaching and spitting out God’s word, I wonder what he would say if he knew that you were his granddaughter. I wonder what his wife would say if she knew... Although she did look funny at your mother when I first came back to Riverside to my Pa’s funeral. However I did not let her get too close so that she could see.

Missy began to try and picture Rev Mims and see if he could be her grandfather. There may be some faint resemblance but he was old and wrinkled and she could not be sure. She wondered if her Grandmother was just delirious or was telling her something that she should know. And if so what was she to do with it.

Missy began to think of the many times that she had set in the Church listening to the sermons of Rev Mims. She remembered how her grandmother had always had good things to say about Rev Mims. She always wondered about her grandfather but was afraid to ask. Now that she may know, she is even more afraid.

The nurse entered the room to take the temperature of Emma and she laid back slowly with the thermometer in her mouth and eyes half shut. As the nurse took the thermometer out of her mouth, Emma again cried out “ Where am I – Who are you- What am I doing here? Missy quickly realized that Emma had gone back into herself.

Chapter 4 Fond Memories of the Past

Angela Mims Taylor set looking out the window as Pearl combed her hair. Her hair was still rich although now it was pure white. Each strand of hair was somehow telling the story of her life. She set thinking of how this Taylor would be the one to carry on the family name and its proud tradition. She had already decided that this boy would also be named Thomas for the husband that she so loved from an early age. She had decided that this Taylor would become a strong Black man that would walk the street with head held high and fearing no one. She had seen what the cruel world had done to her Thomas and she vowed that no one or no thing would ever do that again to a member of her clan.

Thomas Taylor had gone off to Howard University in August of 1930 and left Angela Mims home in Riverside. During the first weeks, she wrote him two letters each day for fear that he would forget her. She remembered the year as it was only yesterday. For it was tied inevitably to the Great Depression. The year before in 1929 she read all about things going bad up North and in the big cities with banks closing and people losing their money and all sorts of things happening. She heard the white folks talking about President Hoover and how he was causing all the problems. She knew that President Hoover did not mean anything to her since she had never seen him nor thought she would ever see him. Those things seemed so far away from her in the little town of Riverside. All she knew was that her father was pastor of the biggest church in the county and that she was in love with the most handsome man in the county.

She remembered her father preaching on Sunday morning and how the choir sang and had everyone in the church just shouting. The Church did not have a piano or organ but just the stomping of feet on the wooden floor to the beat of the song. She remembered her brother playing the tambourine. My how that it seemed that the only lady on the choir that could sing was Sister Jefferson who was a little old lady but she could really sing. Her daddy could also make a joyful noise to the Lord. She remembered the long days at Church when Church began with Sunday school at 9 and then Church service until 2 followed by dinner in the yard next to the church followed by another church service. Oh the food was so good with the fried chicken, collard greens, potato salad and sweet potato pie. It seemed like they spent all Sunday in Church. She remembered the deacons praying those long prayers and feeling tired from being on her knees so long. She remembered the metered hymns led by Deacon Johnson and Deacon Taylor. Amazing Grace and Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone were her favorites. They don't do that any more except on the first Sunday when they also have testimony time and communion. It seems that the young deacons just do not know how to do that metered hymn. She remembered praying each Sunday for her Thomas. She also smiled as she remembered the sinner's bench—they don't do that anymore either. She was trying to remember if she ever set on the sinner's bench.

Grandmother Taylor continued to think back to the beginning, to the days that started the Taylor clan. She thought about how lonely she felt that first year that she and Thomas were separated. She had wanted to go to school in Washington with him but her father told her that was no place for a woman. He had barely allowed her to finish high school. That her place was there at home waiting on Thomas so that she could be

his wife. How she cried many nights missing Thomas and wondering if he was ever coming back to Riverside.

She thought fondly of her father the right Rev. Mims standing in the pulpit on Sundays bellowing out the sermon. She smiled to herself as she thought of the Deacons sitting up front and one Deacon saying “well” and another Deacon saying “yea” in between her grandfathers’ cries to the Lord. Rev. Mims wife was the preacher’s wife who set on the second pew and shouted amen at everything that the Reverend said even when she did not understand it. She was the perfect wife with five boys and two girls. She had raised her children in the church and had never worked outside of the home. She made sure that their clothes were always clean and that they had good manners. She especially paid attention to Angela for she knew that her husband wanted her to marry the Attorney and Deacon Thomas Taylor’s son. Grandmother Taylor remembered the hot biscuits cooking on top of the wood stove and how her mother seemed to cook every part of the hog or chicken. She remembered the chicken feet in the gravy and the chicken necks and especially the chitterlings. She smiled to herself that now everyone is liking chitterlings and she hated the smell and the taste of those things however she knew that she had to eat them.

Her thoughts went back fondly to the times when she and Thomas walked home from school together and he carried her books. He was so the gentleman and they were so the couple. She could almost feel his arm around her as they danced. She thought how proud he would be if he was only still here and her heart fluttered a little as she for a moment felt sad. Not that there was ever a day when she did not have a moment of sadness for she had been without Thomas some 40 odd years. It was just like yesterday when she got the awful news.

Her thoughts quickly moved to the newest Taylor. The one for which she had so many plans.

Chapter 5 The Good Times Even During the Depression

Pearl continued to comb her grandmother's hair as they waited for the newest Taylor to enter the world. Pearl could only imagine what was going on in the head of the family matriarch. For as long as Pearl could remember it was obvious that her grandmother was in total control of this family and also controlled many of the other Black families in Riverside. She could never remember any decisions of any importance being made without the consent of her Grandmother. Even the Whites in the town came to see her.

Pearl began to think of the stories her grandmother told her about when she was young and had first married her granddaddy. She told her how her granddaddy Thomas had gone to Howard University and came back to Riverside to run the family business and to become only the second Black attorney in Riverside. Granddaddy Thomas had gone to Washington DC in 1930 to study law and to follow in the footsteps of his father. While at Howard, Granddaddy Thomas met Dr Charles Hamilton Houston and the now Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. This was the same Thurgood Marshall that would argue the right for Donald Gaines Murry to be admitted to the University of Maryland Law School for Thurgood Marshall had been denied entrance to the University of Maryland's Law School in 1930 after graduating from Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. He also was introduced to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). This introduction was to change the life of Thomas Taylor. Up until this time, Thomas Taylor had been satisfied in being just the soon to be Colored Attorney in Riverside and the soon to be manager of the family supply store. His only desire was to come back to Riverside, marry his childhood sweetheart and live a comfortable life. However, while in Washington DC, he began to question the way things had always been in Riverside. He began to question, why his family had to pay more for their supplies than the white store owners in town. He began to question why he had to sit in the colored section of the train when coming to Washington DC. He began to question, why he and his father still could not eat lunch in the courthouse lunchroom like all of the attorneys who happen to be White. Yes he was Colored but did that make him less than the Whites?

Thomas Taylor began sharing his thoughts with Grandma Taylor in the many letters that he wrote. He told of her how he would have discussions with Thurgood Marshall and Charles Huston and he began to mention this organization known as the NAACP. He also talked about the number of individuals who were homeless and had no job. He knew first hand that both Whites and Coloreds were hurting and lined the streets to receive any handouts that they could get. Part of this thinking was due to his reading the writings of Harlem Renaissance writers like Langston Hughes and James Weldon Johnson. It was during this time that Thomas Taylor read God's Trombones and began to sing the words to Lift Every Voice and Sing which was written by James Weldon Johnson and put to music by Johnson's brother J Rosemond Johnson. He began to feel a sense of racial pride that had been bottled up in him every since he was born. What seemed funny to him was that even with all this talk, things were really no different in Washington DC and his home of Riverside. Outside of the school, there were still department store counters where he could not order food. There were still water fountains that said White only or Colored. However there were some changes as the long lines for people looking for food was becoming less and less. This new

President Franklin Roosevelt talked about something called the New Deal in 1933. Roosevelt started something called the Civil Works Administration (CWA) that became the Works Progress Administration in 1935. While this was made out as some big deal in the newspapers, it did little for Coloreds for Thomas heard of many times where Coloreds were fired so that Whites would have a job and the talk made Thomas Taylor question even more the plight of Coloreds in the United States.

By this time, Thomas Taylor and his father were beginning to be at odds as to what the role of the family was to be in Riverside. His father having lived the good life of being respected by all the Coloreds in the town and for the most part had been left alone by the Whites did not see anything wrong with what was going on. In fact he began to think that it was a mistake that he had sent his son to Howard.

During the time that Thomas Taylor was in school, he did come home to Riverside for holidays and summer vacation where he worked in the family supply store. Grandma Taylor had stayed home and was teaching in the Colored school even though she had not gone to college. She was able to do this because she was the daughter of the Rev Mims and was engaged to Thomas Taylor. It was the summer of 1934 when Grandma Taylor became Ms. Thomas Taylor. It was the finest wedding in the county. The First Baptist Church of Riverside was all decked out with white and red flowers everywhere. Grandma Taylor beamed with pride when she spoke of that wedding day. She had said "There were more than 200 Colored people at the wedding and even some Whites came to hear the choir and see us sing and dance. Of course they also wanted some of the fried chicken and catfish stew". There were some Coloreds who also came looking for chitterlings but Rev Mims would have none of that at such a fine occasion. Him with his white double breasted suit that he had ordered especially for the wedding. Grandma Taylor had on a dress that cost \$100 and her hat cost \$20. They also were special ordered. Any of the old people still around are still talking about that wedding. Pearl had tried to picture her grandparents in her mind as Grandma told the story over and over.

Chapter 6 The Move to the Big City

Missy continued to sit closely near the head of the bed of Emma Johnson as Emma slept quietly with soft light breathing. Missy set watching her grandmother sleep as she began to look more closely at the wrinkles in the face and the wrinkles on her hands. Her grandmother had lived a long and hard life. While she knew little of the early life and even less, she knew without a doubt that her grandmother loved her. She had raised her from as long as she could remember for she had known no other mother. Emma Johnson had lived through seven decades. She has seen the rise and fall of dictators, World Wars, Korean War and Vietnam. She had seen the coming and going of almost more presidents than she had fingers on her hands. Through it all she had always been strong and bowed to no one. She had lived through an era where Coloreds were told to stay in their place and through the era of the Civil Rights Movement of the Negro led by Dr Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X to the days of Black Pride as shouted by Jesse Jackson... I am Black and I am Proud. But at this moment none of this mattered because she lay in the hospital bed far weaker than she had even been in her life.

Missy leaned over to fix the pillar under her grandmother's head when Emma's eyes opened and she smiled at Missy. "Honey did I finish telling you the story? I am just so tired but I must finish the story for it is important that you know the whole story". Emma Johnson then picked up the story just where she had left off with telling Missy about her ride on the bus to Washington DC where she was to begin a new life. Emma arrived in Washington DC during the spring of 1928 pregnant with her daughter Naomi. As she got closer and closer to the bus station she looked with amazement at the number of houses and number of Colored people. She had never seen so many Colored people in her life in one place. In fact she had never seen so many houses so close together. She wondered how they could live so close together and where are the out houses and where did every one keep their pigs and chickens. As she got off of the bus she looked around at all the faces, looking for her aunt and uncle until she finally saw her aunt who was her father's sister who had come up North like many other Coloreds, looking for a better place to live away from sharecropping and washing White people's clothes.

Emma took her small suitcase and followed her aunt out the door. She had no idea of where she was going for she had not seen her aunt in 5 years and had never been outside Riverside. While she had heard people talk about how good it was to live up North, she could only imagine. After sharing hugs with her aunt and uncle, she then went with them to their house. She found that their house looked just like everyone else's house on the block. How was she going to remember the house in which she was to live. It was what they called a row house.

Upon entering the house she saw a small living room and a couch and pictures on the wall. Her aunt then took her to her room which was on the second floor. There were two bedrooms on the second floor with a bathroom between them. She looked at the bathroom in amazement as this was the first time that she had seen an outhouse inside the house. She now knew why she had not seen any outhouses on her way from the bus station. While she was still somewhat unsure of how she was to feel so far away from her home in Mississippi, she said to herself at least she did not have to use a pot in the night but could go anytime she needed to go.

Her uncle and aunt looked at her with smiles as they knew that this was the first time for her away from home. While Emma was pregnant she told herself that this is not so bad. She had a bed that she did not have to share with anyone. She did have to share the room with her cousin but that was not so bad after all she had shared her bed with her sisters all of her life. While they did not have a yard and she did not see any of the red clay she was used to seeing, she felt like she could stay here for a while. For it was her understanding that as soon as she had the baby she would give it to her aunt and she would go back to Riverside where she belonged. No one would know that she had been pregnant and she could pick up her life just where she left it. While she missed her mother and father, she again thought that this is not so bad.

Chapter 7 Early Days in Washington DC

Emma continued talking with Missy as she remembered her early days in Washington DC. She told her of the first time she saw a Colored doctor at the hospital and how she saw Colored nurses. She then went on to talk about her first weeks in DC. She and her cousin would catch the trolley and go to different parts of the city. She was able to see the White House where the president supposedly lived. She was never sure that he really lived there because she never saw him sitting on the porch like she saw others at home in Mississippi. She remembered hearing about that thing called the Depression and seeing people in lines looking for food and jobs. She felt sorry for them and she was glad that she lived with her aunt and uncle in a house and she did not have to worry about what and when she was going to eat. While she knew that she should work, her aunt told her not to worry about working until she had the baby. Until which time, she spent her time just cleaning around the house while her aunt and uncle were at work. She never was sure where her aunt worked but her uncle worked for the railroad on the trains. However this all was soon going to change.

One afternoon, she overheard her uncle and aunt talking in low tones around the kitchen table. Her uncle was holding a pink piece of paper and appeared to be crying. Her aunt was just holding her uncle. She later found out that evening that he had lost his job. Just like that he no longer worked for the railroad. He was a victim of that thing called the Great Depression, Of course at that time the only thing that she knew was that her uncle no longer went to work but stayed home for there were no jobs in Washington or no other place according to the radio. Her uncle had worked for the Pullman Company as a sleeping car porter. He had lost his job because there was a White person who needed a job. She had heard of him talking about someone call A Philip Randolph and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. She later found out that this was one of the first Colored labor unions. However her aunt continued to work so they had food to eat but nothing like they had before.

How quickly things had changed. Her uncle began to drink daily and her aunt could barely make ends meet with her now 2 Days a week job. Emma found herself standing in the same lines as those other people that she had seen just weeks before. Searching for handouts and wondering what was happening to her. As she stood in line, she heard talk about people loosing all their money and jumping out of windows. She did not know why people would do such a thing. She heard talk about President Hoover and how he caused all this trouble and people said he lived right there on Pennsylvania Avenue.

Emma remembered the day that she came home to find out that there was no more home. Her aunt and uncle had not been able to make the rent payments and the owner was unable to make the mortgage payments and thus the bank foreclosed on their house. By this time, she was about 8 months pregnant and they were left to live in the church mission. There were more people living on the streets then in their own houses. Many people built outside makeshift shelters called "Hoovervilles" after President Hoover. Other people used newspapers to cover themselves and these newspapers were call "Hoover blankets".

Her aunt and uncle decided to do like so many others and go to California for they were told that things were better there in California. This was a problem for Emma because she was then 8 months pregnant and could not go on such a long journey. Also an even bigger problem what was she going to do with the new baby. The plan was for her to give the baby to her aunt and return home to Riverside. A decision was made for Emma to enter the mission of St. Marys. This church home accepted girls who were unwed mothers and allowed them to stay there until the baby was born. The baby would then be put up for adoption and the girl could then go on with her life. While Emma was unsure of this arrangement her aunt and uncle told her that it was her only option or to just live on the streets where she did not know anyone. She could not go home to Mississippi and she could not go to California. She understood that there was no other alternative then to go to St Marys.

A little tear came into the corner of the eye of Emma as she told this story to Missy. But while she talked she knew that there was so much more to tell Missy for Missy never knew her mother and further more Emma never wanted her to know of her mother. Emma began again and before she could start talking she laid back on the pillow turned her head from Missy and went fast to sleep.

Chapter 8 Welcome Home a Different Thomas

As Grandma Taylor continued to sit waiting patiently, her thoughts went back to her Thomas and the Summer of 1935. Thomas Taylor had graduated from Howard University with his law degree and had returned home to Riverside to work with his father in their law practice. During the past year two changes had occurred in his life. He was now the proud father of a daughter and he had joined the NAACP.

During his time at Howard Thomas had decided that he no longer was going to accept the status quo. He no longer was going to just accept things as they were. He decided that he was going to fight for things to change. While he knew that there was not going to be Colored children going to school with White children he was going to fight for the Colored children to have better books and a better school building. It was no longer acceptable for the school roof to leak and the children not to have books of their own. For it had been the custom that the Colored school would get the books from the White school after they had used them and had gotten new books.

Many days Thomas and his father argued about the role that he was to play in the town. His father was well liked by both the Coloreds and Whites. The Coloreds liked him because he was the only Colored lawyer and was Chairman of the Deacon Board and the Whites liked him because they always knew that he was willing not to rock the boat and they could count on him and Rev Mims to keep the others in line. Grandma Taylor would remember their heated discussions and how they would argue about how the New Deal created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt did not really help the Coloreds in the South nor in the North for that matter. While there were jobs created by the New Deal Programs, Coloreds were paid less than Whites and Whites got the best jobs. Young Thomas argued that Coloreds should follow the lead of folks like A Phillip Randolph and others. He also argued that the Church should become more active and help people in the community. Young Thomas also knew that the White landowners were getting paid for reducing the amount of cotton that they grew and the Colored sharecroppers were not getting any of this money.

Grandma Taylor became worried the more Young Thomas talked about the lack of civil rights that Coloreds had in Riverside. She knew that the Ku Klux Klan was not going to sit by and let Young Thomas turn the Colored sharecroppers against them. She became even more worried when Young Thomas started talking about some labor union called Southern Tenants Farmers Union to unionize black and white sharecroppers and tenant farmers. She remembered Young Thomas standing up at Church and talking about the Church being more active in what was going on in the community and Rev Mims and Attorney Taylor allowing Young Thomas to speak but telling him how wrong he was to go against the system that had been in place for so many years. They even went as far as to warn him that something bad could happen to him if he did not stop.

She began to sigh and breathe more slowly as she remembered the last time that she saw her husband Thomas Taylor alive. It was shortly after the

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