

**To My Sister  
Tales Our Mother Told.  
Written by one of my cousins about our grandparents.**

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*Mary Overman Denison Fuller*

These should really begin with Grandma and Grandpa Overman, for their lives had far more of romance and pioneering than the heroines and heroes of today's fiction.

Grandma's father was a North Carolina plantation owner, John Lindsay Wilson. Grandma, Eliza, being the only daughter, and having three brothers, was especially beloved by her father, and as she grew in to a very beautiful and high spirited young woman, he was inclined to indulge her every whim.

Their home was a large two-storied house, under spreading oak trees, set somewhat back from the wide dusty highway that separated the house from the Commissary her father ran, one corner of which he used as an office.

There were many cousins in the family, and as Grandma exchanged visits with these she became known in many counties for her beauty of character as well as charm of manner.

On one of these visits she met a young naval officer, and the glamour of an Annapolis graduate, along with the brass buttons, attracted Eliza greatly, so that the following year, after a visit to her home, they became engaged to be married.

Then the quiet of the plantation was changed to bustle and preparation. Outside, extra turkeys and chickens, duck and geese, had to be fattened, the smoke house was fired to cure extra hams and bacon, while within, preserves and pickles and special fruit cakes were made ready, for in those times wedding guests often stayed several days, while close relatives came a week or ten days ahead.

Eliza, herself, was excitedly busy with the family dressmaker who came to remain until the last stitch was in, while the more important part of the trousseau was entrusted to a dressmaker from the nearest town, who also came to oversee the carrying out of her ideas as to what a naval officer's bride should wear.

As the wedding date drew nearer, Eliza became unusually quiet, and then would fall into moods of restlessness quite unlike her usual self, and when asked what troubled her replied she had been having most disquieting dreams.

Almost from childhood she had had vivid dreams which would affect her for days. Unlike her brothers, her father never treated these lightly but always listened sympathetically when she told them at the breakfast table.

Her brothers now laughed at her serious mood which they thought due to the unusual excitement, until one morning when she came to breakfast she made the startling announcement that all preparations must cease, for in a dream the night before she had seen the face of the man she was to marry and it was not that of her fiancé.

The insistence of her brothers that at this late date she would disgrace the family should she persist in carrying through anything so unprecedented as breaking her engagement all because of a silly dream, caused Eliza much unhappiness, and when the same dream occurred the second time, she remained in her room, allowing only her mother and her personal negro slave, Becky, to enter.

When her brothers in their indignation wished to break the lock of her door and "talk her into reason", her father refused to allow it and said it should be as Eliza wished and that expected guests would be notified of the indefinite postponement of her wedding.

So Eliza stayed closely in her room and her meals were brought her in order that she might avoid meeting her brothers who had little sympathy with her "idiotic behavior".

Even after several weeks when their indignation had somewhat cooled, Eliza stayed much alone, when one day, sitting at her window, she saw two horsemen coming down the long dusty road which ran in front of the house. Soon she saw it was a gentleman and his negro servant, and from the appearance of their saddle-bags, they had come from a distance.

As he dismounted in front of her father's Commissary and gave the reins to his servant to fasten to one of the hitching posts that ran the length of the long piazza, she saw his face, and in quick excitement, ran downstairs calling to her mother that she had seen the man she was to marry!

In vain her mother tried to calm her excitement, but when the noonday dinner hour approached and her husband sent word that he was bringing a stranger to dinner, she wondered if Eliza's dreams had a meaning.

The stranger in question was a certain Benjamin Franklin Overman, who lived in quite another part of the State, and who, upon entering the Commissary, asked for Mr. Wilson, to whom he gave letters and most excellent references and told of being left an orphan at an early age in Scotland. He had come to America and made his home with an uncle in Pennsylvania, who had become one of the Quaker Colony founded by William Penn.

Benjamin, however, was not a welcome addition to the Quaker settlement. He had a flute he liked to play and a fast horse he liked to ride, both of which seemed instruments of the devil to the Quakers in authority. So when he became of age, his uncle very gladly turned his inheritance over to him and he left the settlement to make his own way in the world.

Thus he had come into North Carolina and built a carriage factory, and because his carriages were well designed and well built his business prospered. Later, he manufactured stage coaches that swung on leather straps for hinges and were used on the post roads.

He had built a comfortable house but found it needed a wife to make it a home, and this need grew as he prospered. So, having heard of the beauty and charm of Miss Eliza Wilson, he had come to ask her father's permission to meet her.

So it was that Eliza and Benjamin came to meet and fall in love at sight, for it did seem as if they were made for each other. After a few days he returned to his home which he made ready for his bride, and the following year they were married and began together a life which lasted beyond the three score years and then, in which there were many joyous years as well as those of sadness. There was pioneering and adventure, as well as times of danger, all of which they gladly shared together. But that, I think, must make another tale.

## Tales Our Mother Told - Number Two

Eliza felt keenly having to go so far away from her family but she knew that life without Benjamin was unthinkable. She kept near her mother during the engagement in order to learn as much as possible of the detail of housekeeping, and the realization of some of the responsibilities she would have to assume in her own home added a quiet dignity to her usual love of gayety that to Benjamin seemed to make her all the more desirable.

When they were married and left for their new home, she took her own negro, Becky and two of her mother's slaves, to help her begin housekeeping in the way she had been taught.

She developed a decided liking for domestic duties and her preserves, jams, pickles, etc. brought her fame among her neighbors, and so the routine of the home was well established when the babies came along and they were a joyous addition to a full and happy life.

Her first child, a son, was named Benjamin Franklin, for his father. The next two were girls, Susan, born in 1831, and Sarah, in 1834. These sisters were especially devoted to each other and all through their lives this strong bond of affection never wavered. When they reached the age of playing "lady" it was their greatest joy to be allowed to go down to their father's factory and play in the ever fascinating stage coaches.

About this time several of Benjamin's friends had been or were going to Florida on prospective trips and wanted him to go along, but his factory had become one of importance by then and he turned an indifferent ear to their arguments. However, when they all, without exception returned with intriguing stories of the seemingly unlimited forests of virgin yellow pine, and the numerous water courses making it admirable for the milling industry, he too became interested, indeed he loaned a considerable sum of money to one enthusiastic friend who went to purchase timber land.

At first Eliza felt a bit dismayed as she saw Benjamin's growing interest in the stories his friends brought back from Florida, for her life had been very happy, their home was well established in North Carolina, she had many friends, and there had been nothing to mar their happiness. Yet, when news came that the friend in Florida was showing a recklessness foreign to Benjamin's thrift in spending his borrowed capital, and he wanted to go down to look the situation over, she gave her consent and saw that his going was made as easy as possible.

The trip had to be made on horseback, in many places the roads were hazardous, and often the accommodations were very crude. But it was one he thoroughly enjoyed and upon his return his heart was set upon going back and building a lumber mill. That meant selling his carriage factory and starting over again in a new State, and while Eliza could not share his enthusiasm she soon came to see that his heart was in this new venture.

To one raised in the environments that had always surrounded her it seemed a hazardous thing to take her family of young children into an unknown country where there were few and scattered white settlers, and the Indians were known to be unfriendly to these. She would be leaving her many friends, and all her life friends had meant much to her, the trip would be slow and tiring,

perhaps at times even dangerous, most of her treasured household furnishings would have to be left and sent when she was settled enough to have them.

These and doubtless many other matters were discussed long and earnestly and while Benjamin made no effort to persuade her to make what he knew would be a tremendous sacrifice, his descriptions of the country and the possibilities it offered to those who were willing to go as pioneers, finally fired Eliza's spirit of adventure and she not only gave her consent but entered enthusiastically into plans for going.

Benjamin had little difficulty in disposing of his factory and it was arranged that he should go on ahead with a picked group of factory hands and build a house for the family who would follow. And so again Eliza was plunged into excited preparations and plans for a new life.

It was also arranged that a cousin, Charles, should take the family down to Florida as soon as the house was ready, so they began at once to plan the trip. Charles was to drive Eliza's own span of matched horses to the carriage which was for her own and the children's use, while for night covered wagons arranged with mattresses were part of the caravan in case accommodations were inadequate, for servants had to be taken and camping at night was planned for.

The older children were not too young to sense the excitement and to them it seemed a glorious picnic. When, at last, all was in readiness it was an eager as well as anxious group that started their long trek to their new home.

Benjamin had decided the ideal spot for his mill was a point in the Gulf of Mexico where there was a small land-locked bay known as St. Joseph's Bay.

A stream flowed into this which was sufficient to bring logs from the interior when these might be needed, also there was a slight elevation to the land and it was on this rise that he built his house.

It was a comfortable house built of logs. Through the centre ran a wide hall, open at each end, with rooms on each side. Both in the front and back ran a broad veranda, and from the front one looked down to the nearby shores of the bay where the mill building was under way when Eliza and the family arrived. Part of the foundation of the mill was over the water, being laid on heavy piles. This was Eliza's second home.

Their nearest neighbors were seven miles away, a young couple with two small children, by the name of Jones. They were struggling to make a farm. The nearest town was Pensacola, some one hundred and fifty miles or more to the west.

A teacher had been brought for the older children and with Eliza's executive ability a certain routine was soon established. Cousin Charles returned to North Carolina, taking the horses and carriage and most of the equipment used on the trip out.

The slaves that Benjamin had brought with him were able mill hands, so very soon the mill was in operation, the lumber was towed to Pensacola and loaded in sailing vessels for exporting.

Benjamin was very fond of hunting and there was plenty of game, so he kept the larder well supplied. It was during these years that he found he was gradually growing deaf. This grew with age so that when he was an old man he was extremely hard of hearing and on this account he took one of his men, Wake, with him wherever he went as a sort of bodyguard.

One day when they were hunting a bear attacked them and Wake shot it. Soon they found two tiny baby cubs and each took off one suspender, tied their paws, carrying them under their coats. They were carefully nursed and soon grew into very playful and mischievous playmates which the children adored.

When they were a bit older, Benjamin made a habit of always taking one with him on his hunting trips, keeping the other chained at the house, for should an emergency arise Eliza had only to loose his chain and he found his brother like a shot.

When and how this emergency did arise perhaps had better await another telling.

## Tales Our Mother Told - Number Three

These were busy days both within and without at the new home and the business that was being established. One of Eliza 's earliest tasks had been to lay out a garden and have it planted, and now she was seeing that all surplus vegetables and melons, as well as wild grapes and berries were canned and stored away. Even much of the wild game was cured and smoked against possible lean years, while Benjamin found there was a ready market for all the lumber he could manufacture.

So it was that as Benjamin was hunting one Sunday morning, Becky, coming across the yard from the smokehouse, saw two strange men beach a small skiff and start toward the house, each with a gun on his arm. She frightened the children as she ran screaming with alarm to Eliza, who came out on the veranda with the frightened, crying children clinging to her skirts, but as soon as the strangers were near enough, they called to her not to be frightened for they were friends who had come with tragic news of her neighbors, the Jones'.

Mrs. Jones had been sitting in the doorway of the cabin nursing her baby, when an arrow came out of the woods, piercing the infant's head and entering the mother's heart. Falling to the hard beaten path at the doorstep where the older child was playing, she dragged herself and the babies far back in the cornfield which grew close to the cabin door, and there this wounded mother, with one of her babies dead, watched a party of drunken Indians rush into the cabin, which after ransacking, they set afire, bringing out the feather mattress which they slit, and jerking, each at a corner, found great amusement in seeing the feathers fly upward, caught in the draught of the burning cabin, seemingly forgetting the woman and child. Failing to find liquor in the out houses, they finally left, shouting and calling in drunken carousing.

Mr. Jones was away from home, and upon seeing smoke hurried back. Soon hearing the shouts of the Indians, he became frantic with fear, and knowing he would meet them at the primitive bridge which crossed the stream between them, he ran to the leafy water's edge and sank below the surface, watching them as they passed over, then making his way to what had been his house. There he found his family hiding in the cornfield, the baby dead and his wife living only a few minutes after he arrived. Another neighbor seeing smoke had come to help and found a tragedy and now all in the scattered homesteads were being warned to go down to the block-house.

The block-house was a rough sort of emergency fort made of heavy timber with slits for firearms. This was down the shore fourteen miles from the Overman mill. The friendly strangers had not finished telling their news before Eliza had unchained the young bear and almost at once Benjamin came running home.

Eliza had rag carpets on her floors and these were ripped up and what she needed to take was put in them and carried down to the flat boats used at the mill. Soon they, too, were all on their way down to the block-house.

There were seven children in the family now, for besides the three older ones there were Mary, Charles, Emma, and a young baby, William. The block-house was made as comfortable as possible for the several women and the children, and the men were never out of sight when they left the fort for game and fish. It was understood that all would have to stay till all danger from the Indians was over.

However, Benjamin decided the danger was too great to take his family back to their home and also they felt the older girls should be put in school, so it was agreed that Eliza should return to North Carolina until plans could be worked out. Word was sent to Cousin Charles and he came again, bringing everything necessary to take them back, and once again they started the long trip which would carry them through several States.

The baby William had not been well, so Benjamin went with them for two days, and as the baby seemed better, he left them and went back while the family continued on their way, but the baby's improvement was only temporary and he grew steadily worse, while Eliza grew more anxious.

She held him in her arms day and night but in spite of all they could do he passed away the second day after Benjamin had left them. Eliza's grief was tragic. She would allow no one to take the baby from her arms and insisted they go as quickly as possible, which they did for another day.

Becky grew alarmed at Eliza's grief as they made camp in the dark of the afternoon, and when she heard a dog baying far in the distance, started out to find it and get help for her mistress if possible. After walking some distance she saw a light through the woods and made her way to the modest home of a man with a wife and a young daughter, where she told of Eliza and asked their help.

The woman went back at once with Becky, persuaded Eliza to let her hold the baby, and finally took her to her home where, in the morning, she showed her the grave of her own little one near the doorstep. Eliza consented to leave her baby there too, so the man made a tiny coffin and the grave was made beside that of the stranger's child.

Eliza stayed another day with the kindly people who lived near the side of the road and left money with them to have an iron fence put around the two small graves. Thus she came back to North Carolina and while the welcome of many friends was a heartening experience, yet she carried in her heart a longing to be with Benjamin now that her first great sorrow had come to her.

In the meantime, Benjamin travelled back to the block-house and in a few days back to the mill, still undecided as to his future plans. One thing was certain, however, Eliza must not return until the country was more thickly settled.

It was another quiet Sunday morning not long after his return when with Wake he was sitting on the front porch cleaning their guns, when to his great amazement the mill began to sway from side to side almost like a reed in the wind. The mill hands all rushed from the quarters to the house and with their master watched the mill go almost quietly out of sight, until only the outline of the roof was visible beneath the water.

It was an aweing experience and Benjamin felt that plans were being made for him by some higher power than his own. The venture had been a successful one but it was not ended completely and finally by no effort of his own.

With limited equipment there was little of the machinery he could salvage but he had a crew of able mill hands who were very valuable, especially at that time in Florida's development, but before he could formulate any immediate plans, he was approached by two eager, earnest young men whose names were Simpson and Forsyth.

But again that would seem to be another tale.



## **Tales Our Mother Told - Number Four.**

Ezekiel Ewing Simpson was the son of another pioneer lumberman who had brought his family of two daughters and four sons from South Carolina to establish a mill which he hoped his sons would carry on as a family project.

He built his mill on Escambia Bay and his product was exported through New Orleans. The captain of his tugboat was Captain Forsyth, and on one of his trips his son, Joseph, came with him and decided to remain when he and Zeke Simpson became friends.

Each Sunday they would saddle their horses and ride back into the sparsely settled country. One day they discovered a clear, swift gravel stream which attracted them greatly and after many visits and much serious thought, they decided it would be an ideal site for a bucket factory with much nearby available cypress.

These two started this venture quite alone. They were beautiful three gallon buckets, made of many panels of cypress, bound together with bands of brass. Rails, laid along a road-bed on which a flat car was drawn by mules, carried them three miles down to a landing on a small navigable stream known as Blackwater River, where small sailing sloops came for fire wood which was universally used in Pensacola, the nearest town.

They were thrifty and hard working young men and their business prospered. Before very long small sloops came for buckets alone. As their product sold they built a home on the higher land, Joseph Forsyth married, and later, Ezekiel married a Miss Allen, and they lived together for many years.

Ezekiel put his savings into land. This part of Florida being originally owned by Spain, the land was not expensive, and sold in what is now known as Spanish Grants, consisting of many acres. There were many of these Tarragona, Dela Rue, Gregory, Perdido and Arcadia were some of them, and it was the Arcadia Grant that Simpson bought. They called their home Arcadia.

In time Simpson outgrew the bucket factory. He had accumulated other land and wanted to build a sawmill at the landing on Blackwater River, which by then was known as Bagdad. Forsyth agreed to continue the bucket factory.

Simpson needed more cash, experience, and capable mill hands for such a venture, and so it was that these two came seeking Benjamin Overman, upon hearing of the loss of his mill.

Benjamin though their plan had much merit and decided to return with them and consider their proposition more thoroughly. Upon looking over the proposed mill site, the adjacent extensive yellow pine forest, some of which had already been acquired, the prospects for a profitable investment seemed promising, so he decided to back young Simpson, and so came to Bagdad to start anew. The firm was called "Simpson and Company" and continued to operate under that name for over one hundred and eleven years, their trademark being a recumbent diamond.

After building a home, Simpson brought his wife and family to Bagdad. This included two small children and his wife's mother, who always made her home with them. Benjamin, too, lived with them until the mill was in operation and well established.

Before long, larger and more efficient machinery was needed, much of which was invented by Benjamin, and so it was that his second milling venture prospered also and in time it became advisable to include others in the company, and a Mr. Edward Creary and Mr. Henry Thompson became members of the firm.

By this time, Benjamin was most anxious to have his family with him, they being still in North Carolina. He had continued to be a member of the Simpson household. Zeke's wife and two children had died, leaving one small son, Ewing, but much loved Grandma Allen had taken over the household duties and the entire charge of her young grandson.

Benjamin began building of a home in Bagdad for his family and arranged with Eliza's cousin to bring them once again to Florida. Eliza's years in North Carolina had been busy ones. Her two older girls, Susan and Sarah, she felt needed a broader outlook than they would have under a governess, so she interested herself in organizing and financing a boarding school for girls which became quite well known as Edgewood Seminary.

Her eagerness to join Benjamin, however, counteracted any regret she might feel in again giving up her friends and interest, so it was with a happy heart she looked forward to their second journey to Florida. Benjamin had written that he knew this would be their permanent home, and for her to bring with her the things she prized most, so it was quite a caravan that started on its way one Spring morning.

Again, she had her own carriage and horses, with Becky's son to drive, Cousin Charles and the others following. Susan and Sarah had their saddle horses and took much pleasure in riding ahead, helping to find a suitable camping spot, for even where accommodations were available; some sort of camp was necessary.

Becky still took personal care of Eliza, and often had a pail under one of the wagons, with breakfast rolls rising as they went their way. When they came to the home of the friends along the roadside who

had been so kind and understanding, it gladdened Eliza's heart to see them again and to find the iron fence around the graves of the two babies, and she went on her way quite content to leave her baby with them.

When their journey ended it was with unspeakable joy that Eliza and Benjamin were together again, and with Eliza's pronounced domestic ability, their new house soon became a very real home. Susan and Sarah found it very lonely; the newness of their surroundings they found interesting, but they missed their school friends, and looked forward to returning to school in the fall, which they did. It was only the following summer that they began to take their new home more seriously.

Susan had never been too robust and her health had failed noticeably within the last year. When her father saw her frailness, he was touched by her "almost transparent" ears, and began to show especial tenderness to her happiness.

Bagdad was nothing more than a very small milling village. A church had been built when Zeke felt the need of spiritual guidance for the mill hands and their families. A Dr. Sparrow became its much-loved pastor, and his daughter married one of Zeke's brothers, so it was a closely knit little settlement.

Among the few young people in the village was a young clerk in the office. Having asked Susan to marry him more than once, he wanted a definite answer. One afternoon as they approached a fork in the road while returning from a horseback ride, he told her the right hand fork to him would mean her acceptance and Heaven, while the left mean Hell. Susan spurred her horse down the right fork, calling back that he would go to Hell without her, so at least Susan had a sense of humor which doubtless helped in her new environment.

Zeke Simpson had been noticeably attracted to Susan, which was a matter of concern to Benjamin, for he knew from years in the Simpson home that they had not been happily married. Also, he was twenty years older than Susan. It was then that Benjamin decided to take Susan for a year's travel, insisting that it would benefit her health.

Plans were made and the time approached for their leaving, when what Benjamin feared came to pass. Susan, flattered by the attention of an older, prosperous businessman, decided to let Simpson take her on her trip.

Perhaps they didn't travel a year --- who knows ---- but at least they went to Niagara Falls, for many years after the memory of Zeke, holding up one sock after another, completely saturated with her tonic, which had broken in his suitcase while at Niagara Falls, always brought a laugh.

The story of their married life through both peaceful and war years must wait another telling.

## Tales my Mother Told

### Number Five

Upon their return, Zeke built a very pretentious home for so small a village; decorators came from New Orleans and did the interior painting and furnishing. He was an indulgent husband, though they did have a large family, six daughters and six sons, Susan often said she had to be careful in expressing a wish for it was sure to be granted. She was fond of linen and silver and he gave her some handsome pieces.

She had little to do with the every day detail of housekeeping, for a housekeeper was always one of the household. Nor did she have the entire responsibility of the babies when they came along, for Maria, one of the trusted slaves, was in charge of the nursery with the older children, and Aunt Mudder, after the Civil War, cared for the younger ones.

Between the birth of the babies, Susan invariably went for a trip, frequently to visit Sarah in Connecticut. For after Susan married, Sarah was very lonely. At one time, she became engaged to her music teacher, a man far older than she; but this did not last when young Richard Bushnell came south to take a position in the office, later becoming a stockholder in Simpson & Co. When the Civil war came, young Bushnell returned to Connecticut, but the sisters continued their intimate interest in each other's lives.

The Civil War brought anxious days to Susan, for Zeke, being over the age for enlistment, equipped a cavalry company know as the Simpson Rangers, which did guerrilla fighting that so annoyed the Federal troops that they offered a reward of several thousand dollars for his head, dead or alive.

Through the ranger scouts he was in close touch with the movement of the Federal troops when they were in the vicinity, and often had to leave at a moments notice, so that his horse and that of his Negro slave, Wade, who always accompanied him, were kept saddled, day and night, and it was often weeks before Susan could hear from him.

One morning while at breakfast, word came that the Federal troops were near, and as Zeke left, Susan had one of the servants make sandwiches and put them in the pocket of each child, not knowing what the day might bring.

Shortly after a company of Federal troops came galloping up, stopping abruptly at the white picket fence which surrounded the home. The children were hanging on the fence, fascinated by the nearness of the horses and the gold braid of the captain in charge, who, dismounting, inquired of the nurse where they could find food. Annie quickly pulled out her sandwich for him, and he ate greedily as he made further inquiry before leaving to see to the billeting of his men.

Later, the office returned, asking for his little sweetheart, and Annie sat as close as possible on the front steps, while he peeled and cut sugarcane and piled in her lap, showing an indignant spirit when the other children moved in, declaring he was her very one Yankee and for them to keep away.

In the meantime, some of the troop had come into the back of the house demanding food and discovering a closet of wine had become irresponsibly drunk, damaging furniture and taking great delight in breaking the prism on the chandelier with their bayonets.

Susan, being quite unable to stop the carousing and seeing the officer with the children, appealed for protection. Instantly on his feet, he roughly handled his men as he cleared the house, leaving a guard to protect the home during their stay in that vicinity.

It was then that Susan decided should Zeke have to go again, she and the children would go with him no matter how inconvenient. The next time was not long in coming and against all arguments, she hurriedly prepared to go, whether by land or water, so Zeke ordered the tug boat to get up steam and they started down the river to Pensacola, leaving the silver and any valuables which he could protect to the servant, Harmon Gaskin, husband of Caroline, long after to be known and loved as Aunt Mudder.

Soon after the boat with the family was under way, the Captain reported seeing a small launch coming up the river. Whether friend or foe they had no way of knowing, so he suggested they run up into one of the near bayous, feeling their watch had been more vigilant.

As they did this, Zeke had one of the crew make a canvas bag, which, with a strap over her shoulder, Susan carried on her hip and filled this with as much money as she could carry, and with the Paisley shawl she wore to cover it, she at least have funds to carry out the advice of Pensacola friends should Zeke be taken captive.

Fortunately, the oncoming boat passed without seeing them, for they were the enemies. Finding their quarry had escaped them, they burned his mill, and, in preparing to burn his home, decided the furnishings too handsome to destroy, so moved them to the large surrounding grounds before burning the house. Next day, returning with a flat boat, all household goods were taken down to Fort Pickens at Pensacola.

Benjamin always resented losing his span of prized horses at this time, for driving down to see Eliza's household goods loaded on the boat, the officer in charge, seeing them, decided to take them also. Benjamin realized too late that had he only loosed them from the buckboard and spoken to them, no stranger on earth could have caught them.

Susan and Zeke reached Pensacola safely, went to a small town in Alabama where one of the children was born, remained there until the war was drawing to a close, and instead of returning to Bagdad, Zeke built a home for the family in Pensacola. The Bagdad mill was rebuilt, later a second one known as the Island mill was also built. Eliza and Benjamin still lived there, as did other members of the firm.

The silver left with Harmon was not discovered, fortunately, for he had taken it to the smokehouse, raked away the smoldering fire and ashes, buried it underneath, then carefully covered it over with the ashes and fire.

Much of this silver came into possession of Susan's youngest and only unmarried daughter, who, upon breaking up her home in California, wanted the other remaining member of the family to have it, a sister living in Massachusetts, for who these tales were started, but she feeling she had as much silver of her own as she could take care of, it was sent to a niece who was partly named for Susan.

A post card from her mother was the only acknowledgement ever made of its being received. It was always a matter of deep regret to the two sisters that it had been sent to one with so little appreciation. The old Paisley shawl too came into possession of this youngest daughter. It is still in daily use for afternoon naps. In spite of careful darning with matching thread it is very fragile, and the expectation and hope is that the lovely old shawl and the last of the large family will soon disintegrate together.

In one of the earlier years, while Zeke and Susan lived in Pensacola, the town music teacher was asked to come down to Fort Pickens to instruct the commanding officer's children. Upon seeing their piano, she remarked that she had given many a lesson on that piano in the Simpson house in Bagdad; whereupon the officer had her go through the house and pick out the pieces that had come from that home. He, then, wrote Zeke saying he would be glad to see that everything was returned, but Zeke would have none of it.

When the youngest child was a year old, Zeke died, leaving Susan financially comfortable. Unfortunately, she was a poor businesswoman and none of her sons inherited their father's business ability, so that the estate her husband left was sadly depleted.

In spite of her large family, Susan had never been especially domestic, and now her time and interest turned to the newly built Presbyterian Church, and its development in which she had always been keenly interested. For many years she had and continued to teach a large Sunday School class of young men, many of Lutheran faith, who became members of the Presbyterian Church and her life-long friends.

Eliza and Benjamin had moved to Pensacola many years before and were a tower of strength to Susan, for throughout her life Eliza had almost prophetic dreams, which had a profound influence upon her family, especially Susan, who was perhaps closer to her than the other children were. Indeed, more than once, she acted upon what seemed a message sent in these dreams. After a full and useful life, Eliza and then Benjamin passed away, far beyond their three score years and ten.

When her active years were over, in which Susan had many disappointments, as perhaps was natural with so large a family, she began to long for a quiet place to get away, and remembered the old house at Arcadia which had been abandoned and forgotten many years ago when the bucket factory had been spitefully burned by a belligerent slave girl, whose jealousy of Maria's authority in the nursery made her dangerous. And it became necessary to send her up to the factory, which she resented.

After some effort, the old house, though open to wind and weather many years, was found to be in excellent condition and about to be taken over by very real and active ghost! In spite of its reputation, Susan and Aunt Mudder would go up for a week's visit which soon grew all too short for them.

Improvements began to be made, a small orchard was set out, scuppernong grapes were planted, and when she found that even the small town of Pensacola left her restless for the quiet of Arcadia, Susan had additions and improvements made in the old original house, and soon with only the one unmarried daughter left at home, the Pensacola house was closed, leased a couple of years and finally sold, and Arcadia became a permanent home. The children and grandchildren liked to come and for many years it was a happy, comfortable, elastic sort of country place.

After Sarah's husband passed away in Connecticut, she, too, came to Arcadia with her two unmarried children and made it her home. The two sisters became interested in and much beloved by the few simple families in the vicinity, for many years, they went each Sunday and taught Sunday School.

Sarah finally passed away at her Arcadia home, which was one of the great losses in Susan's life. She spent more and more time out of doors, and when well along in years her mind rather than her health failed noticeably, until, when in her eighty-ninth year, she, too, the last of Eliza and Benjamin's children passed away.

And now, with the old Arcadia home long since burned, these tales are ended with the hope that some of Susan's grand children ---- whom it was always such a pleasure to have at Arcadia ---- might find them of interest.

## **Postscript**

Emma Overman grew up with her family in Pensacola Florida during the Civil War time. Her sister Sally came north and married Richard Bushnell. After the war, Emma came north to visit sister Sally and married George Denison of Saybrook. She died in 1902 leaving son William and daughters Margaret, Mary, Cora, and Louise. Katherine had died 2 years before.