

TALES FROM THE FARM

Poet and Author, **Vivian Ann (Lovelady) Grant**, born in Crockett, Texas and raised in the Hopewell Community just South of Crockett.

“Tales From the Farm” is a collection of reminiscences of life in rural Houston County, Texas during the 50’s and 60’s. Partly autobiographical in nature, partly pictorial family history, it purports to be like no other book in that it represents such personal tidbits of the author’s life.

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Enjoy one of following stories from the book - “**What’s For Breakfast**”

Morning comes real early in East Texas, especially when it seems like you didn’t get enough sleep the night before. Mama Lovelady had been tossing and turning all night because she had a problem. The economy was bad, the crops had been even worse the year before, and there was no food in the house to feed her children. They had to go to school, and she couldn’t just send them out hungry. They had to eat.

Quietly laying aside her bedclothes, she went into the kitchen, made a fire in the stove and sat down at the table with her Bible. Mama was a good Christian woman, and knew that in times of trouble, God would help her. She had no doubt about His help, but this morning, seems the old adage “He may not come when you want Him” was all she could hear going on in her mind. Nevertheless, she read her scriptures, and prayed fervently for herself and her family.

Iceboxes were wonder inventions. When holiday cakes and pies were baked and needed storing until company came, they went into the icebox. Food brought in from the fields or from the store went into the icebox. Milk, butter, eggs, bacon, whatever there was to keep cool went into the icebox. Mama looked into the icebox this morning, but none of the above looked back at her. The icebox was EMPTY.

“Now, Lord”, Mama breathed. “You know I can’t send these children out hungry. They have to walk a mile to catch the bus, and it will be several hours before they can get a lunch at the school. Please, Lord make a way for us. I have to feed these children.”

Rev. Lovelady had always been a conscientious farmer, building a crib to house his harvested ears of corn; a special bunk to house his sweet potatoes when they were dug, and a first-rate hen house to keep his chickens in. Unfortunately for the family, all those special storage places were empty this morning. Mama Lovelady looked into each one just to be sure there wasn’t something in there to feed her children. When she came away from the hen house empty-handed, she made another stop at the corncrib just to be sure.

Way over in the corner, beneath a pile of old tires, Mama spotted what looked like a corncob. When she checked it out, sure enough, it was a corncob, and nearly full of corn! She grabbed it, breathed a prayer of thanksgiving, and rushed back to the house.

In the boy’s room, groans and yawns could be heard. The children were stirring, as they knew it was time to get up for school. William and Charles were the first to awaken. Charles sat up and sniffed the air. Something was different! He could smell breakfast, but that sure didn’t seem like any eggs and bacon he had ever smelted.

When everyone was finished washing up in the kitchen, the Lovelady children assembled at the table, as was their custom. Rev. Lovelady and Mama believed in saying their blessings before each meal, and today would be no different. On the table in front of them, couched in their best cracked pyrex bowl, was a breakfast of parched corn! The Lovelady children looked at it with baleful eyes. Never had they seen such a breakfast before. But Mama told them, “If you don’t tell anyone what you had for breakfast, they will never know.” And with that, each Lovelady in turn said their blessing and ate breakfast.

Mama was right. Nobody ever knew what they had for breakfast that morning. Until now, that is.