

Bertha Anna Adams

Rentis's mother, Bertha Anna Adams was born October 31, 1885 in Knox County. She was the daughter of Walter Andrew Adams and Margaret Jane Myers. Bertha had two sisters, Sallie and Ruth and five brothers James, John, Earnest, Ira and Yula. The Adams frequently visited the Paces at their farm outside Petersburg. Ruth Adams eventually married Perry Pace, Tom's half brother.

Tom had little ambitions, being happy to work on the farm. This frustrated Bertha, especially seeing her brothers doing quite



At the Brick House, Petersburg. L to R: Walter Adams, Margaret Adams, Bertha, Ollie, Thomas. Front: Ruby, Rentis

well. Ira Adams went on to be a college professor at Texas A&M and often offered to educate Bertha's children.



Tom, Ollie, Ruby and Bertha-Indiana, 1912

The family was a quiet, reserved family and Bertha seldom ever smiled. Tom was so controlling that Bertha had to ask for any and all money even to buy groceries and her own clothes. In later years to help Bertha, Julia would send her clothes since Tom would seldom let her buy any. They were always hard at work or struggling to make ends meet. The family went to the Methodist church in Petersburg.



The Brick House farm outside Petersburg, Indiana (1534 West State Road 56)

The immediate neighbors to the brick house from the 1920 census were Lannie Siple, George Bell and William Jones in one direction and Andrew Avery and Alfred Fair in the other.

Mr. and Mrs. Lannie Siple and son Robert and Miss Ruth King and Miss Bertha Grigsby were in Washington, Sunday.

HOMEMAKERS CLASS EN TERTAINED

The Homemakers Class of the M. Church was pleasantly entertainod at the home of Mrs. Ferd P Veeck on West Main Street, Monevening by Mesdames May day Davis, Lydis Siple, Willis, Walter Lula Goodman and Pauline eeck. Devotions were in charge of Mrs. Eva Jackson. reading The Birthday of St. Patrick" Mrs. by May Logan was enjoyed. Thirty three members were present. At the social hour refreshments were served.

First United Methodist

The first United Methodist church in Petersburg was started in 1835 and the third building was built in 1891 and stayed the same till the 1990 tornado destroyed it. It was located at 202 E. Walnut about a mile from the Brick House.

Golden A. Smith was the pastor in the 1920's and had a congregation of 777 members.

Petersburg Press 3/18/1927



James Oliver at the brick house. Ruby and Bertha cut off.

James Oliver Pace

Ollie, as he liked to be called, was born May 14, 1907 in Knox County, Indiana. Ollie went to school in Petersburg but never went on to high school. He worked on the farm with his father. Ollie loved to tease but he also had a cruel streak. As children, Ollie would try to get Ruby to jump out of the hay loft into a pile of hay, but he knew there was boards with nails in them so she would get hurt.

He played a guitar and sang and liked to play in a local band . "I have seen the picture of him by the Big Drum. The bus company down there was called 'Blue Bird' and Raymond Mosby drove for them awhile. I don't know if Ollie drove for them or not", recalls JoAnn.



James Oliver at the Brick House





Ollie out hunting.



Ollie and Doris

"Ollie met Doris Keith, a good friend of Ruby's at church and they were married in 1927. Doris wanted to go God's Bible School over in Cincinnati, but Ma Toler wouldn't help her to go. Later Ma was sorry she hadn't when Doris married Ollie. Mother told me that he threatened to kill himself if she didn't marry him. She realized later that he wouldn't, he was too selfish."

"Tom and Bertha begged Doris not the merry Ollie. They said that he would ruin her life and he

did. Doris went ahead and married Ollie, but it turned out to be the biggest mistake in her life."²¹



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PACE-KIETH

Oliver Pace, son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Pace and Miss Doris Kieth, daughter of Mr. Jerry Kieth, all of this city, were married by Rev. J. F. Jenner. The groom is engaged in farming and they will reside on a farm near town.

Ruby Agnes Pace

Ruby Agnes went to school in Petersburg but never went on to high school. In 1927 Ruby, at the age of 17 married Raymond Mosby, a local bus driver. They were married in Petersburg.

"I always liked to live in the brick house (outside of Petersburg). I used to slide down that banister. Momma used to get after me and say, "Ruby", she'd say," you up there slidin down that banister. " And she'd get after me, you know. I'd just love to get up there and slide down that banister. And the one downstairs was too small. Didn't have far to go on it."

"I remember once when Dad was ill and we were there alone and all of a sudden we just heard this noise that sounded like someone was hitting a bunch of switches on the sidewalk. It sounded like it was out in front of the door out in front, out to the main road. And of course we Rentis, Ollie and Ruby, circa 1916 were scared and everything. We went out into the hall-



way and while we were out there well it happened just right out in front of us it sounded like, but we couldn't see anybody or anything."

"The dog was awful and mom was scared to death and even the dog down in the barn heard it: so loud it woke him up. He came to the house a barkin. I never did figure it out and we had the awfullest time and grandpa was gone somewhere I don't know. He (Dad) wasn't there and that's what made it so bad. Just mom and us and Ollie was afraid."

"The noise never happened when Dad was there. It got quieter and then went away. I never heard anything like it in my life. The moon was shinning, you could look all outside but we didn't see anything. If there's anything like ghosts then that was one. The noise was so loud it was like it was right at your feet. But there wasn't anything there at all because you could see. Some people thought that there was someone tried to scare us so bad that we would move from the house but if there's any truth in that, I don't know."

"We had everything we wanted there (at the brick house). What we didn't, we raised it you know. All kinds of fruit. Butter. I remember we churned milk and butter and I remember that churn we used to have to turn, Oh, I hated to do that. My mom did all the cooking, I didn't help her very much because I was always outside playing. When I got older at threshing time I helped her cook for all those men."



Ruby Agnes Pace, Petersburg 1915

"We just fixed everything, chickens. And it took a lot of food for a big bunch of men like that. And of course mom had her own milk and butter from the cow we had there. Her and I would have a big table stretched clear across the dining room there and into the kitchen full of food. I was just a kid when I was helping her. A lot of cooking for a bunch of hungry men. Mom fixed biscuits a lot. To make ice cream we'd have to go in there (Petersburg) and get a cake of ice. Dad killed the chickens. Mom never would kill a chicken at all, she just cooked em. Of course I didn't, I was just a kid, ya know."

"Time soon passes away. When Jackie was born she had a head full of hair, it was just black. a whole lot of hair on her head. Most babies you know are bald headed. She always did have her own black hair. Old Dr. Logan "he was the one brought you into this world", (to Jackie). I know I had a play house up at the brick house all my dolls and things on the top floor." "I used to plow corn down there. Ol Ginger was the one that done the buckin, you know. Used to get up on him and he'd buck em on down on the ground. Ginger was the horse. We only had one horse the rest of them were mules. Ol Queen, she was grey. I done hooked the team and go down there, any of them, it didn't make no difference to me. It took two of them, at times the horse would be hooked up with the mule on a plow when it took two of them. When I used to get up on that you had to guide it with your legs, you know. I'd plow a whole field of corn down there with the team I'd get on that mule and ride back. But that's all in the past."

"Our first car was a 1923 Chevy. I remember we'd all get in there and start travelin somewhere and us kids would stick our heads out, you know, and dad would say " get your heads in there", he said "you look like a bunch of gypsies". I'll never will forget that."

"You remember Ollie, he'd always wait for that man, I forgot his name, that went to work there in the morning and he had a car, you know, and Ollie, he didn't want to go ahead and so he'd get to ride because (he said) "I couldn't catch no ride with you and Eldred stringing along." So he'd come along and pick him up you know. The man would. And when they'd go by he'd wave at us and he'd go ahead and leave us to walk. Ol Ollie was somethin' else."

"Mr. Lease, he was a cripple. He was a superintendent at school. Everybody was afraid of him. They said he used a kind of machine, a paddle machine he used on you to give you a whippin', you know. He'd whip kids who'd go down in the basement to play, that wasn't supposed to. He'd hit such that they'd let out a big yell. Boy, kids would just scatter, would just get outta there. We just had to stand around on the corner we couldn't go to school unless the bell rang. I was little and I'd stand around, it was cold, my hand were cold, my feet, well the bell rung and we could go on the grounds. I always did like that old school."

"I was living at the brick house when I met Raymond (Mosby) we went and got married and we come home. I said: " Mom we went and got married." She couldn't believe it. He was coming over here (Bicknell) working all the time, and I had to stay down there (Petersburg) so we just took a notion to get married and he came over here and he was a coal miner and all."

MOSBY-PACE Raymond Mosby, son of Wellman

Raymond Mosby, son of Wellman Mosby was united in marriage to Miss Ruby Pace, daughter of Thos. Pace of this city, December 28th. They will make their home in Petersburg.

Petersburg Press, 12/30/1927

"There was a bus route from Petersburg to Washington. He rode that bus route and get on the ferry boats to cross the river to go over to Washington. That's where I met him at, then he'd come and take me to Washington with him and men would say "where did you get that pretty girl at", you know, "well I got her and she's mine" he said. I remember that. She (Mom) couldn't say very much about it (my getting married). She was really put out. But it had already happened then. We just took a license and went over and got married. It was really a shock on Mom. That was awful for me to do it that way, but then I was young and wantin' to get married and so I done it, you know. I know Grandpa wouldn't let me. It was too late there wasn't nothin' could be done about it."



Ruby Agnes Pace

"Raymond had to come back over here, he was a coal miner, He had to come back over here and work in the mine and I'd stay home and he'd come home every weekend. Until we was finally able to come over here, (Bicknell). Get us a house. I met him there a drivin' I guess. He went over to Washington in the cab thing you know, then after we got married he had to come back over here, then he had a job over here working in the mines. So I finally come over here and we got us a house."

"We had to haul our wash clear from the river (Pride Creek) down there. There was a pump on the river, you know, we'd have to go down there and haul our water. There was a pump at the house but it never was fixed. There wasn't very much water, then you know."²⁷



Ollie with Ruby in the wagon, 1911

Rentis Eldred Pace

Rentis lead a typical farm boys life, with chores and good times. They raised most of their own food on the farm as well as the cash crops. They had cows and an never ending supply of chickens. He especially loved the abundant watermelon, eating only the seedless sweet core and tossing the rest. With a good friend of his from town, Leon, they would go to Indian Mound and hunt for Indian arrow heads.

Rentis went to school in Petersburg and would often catch a ride with the postman on his way to town. If his father

didn't come to pick him up he would walk back to the farm after school.

Many Watermelons In The County This Year

The watermelon crop in this county, especially in the sands along White river, is large and prolific this year and is right now at its best. The melons coming to this market are unusually large and are selling for about a cent a pound at the stores and for less if you go to the patch after them.



Rentis with the family dog, Shep.



Rentis in Petersburg



Rentis clowning around with his lovely sister Ruby, Petersburg.

Rentis did well in school, and was on the honor roll in both Junior high (91 1/2%) and Senior high school (90 1/4%). By the time Rentis was in senior high, the enrolment was 242 students.

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Vivia	Bilderback
	rd Smith
Eldre	d Pace
Horac	e Norton

Pike County Democrat, April 26, 1929.

Rentis' favorite subjects were history and geography. He also did very well in English grammar. He was interested in what was beyond his small town world and was always anxious to leave home. One summer he went down to Texas to work for Ira Adams at College Station. Ira, who was a professor at Texas A&M, offered to send him to Texas A&M when he completed high school, but Rentis was only interested in joining the



Rentis in school, Petersburg, In. 1927

Army and seeing the world. At the age of seventeen he went into his high school class and told the teacher and his friends that we was quitting school and joining the Army. His friends cried out Nooo, but he was determined. At the age of seventeen, lying about his age, he signed up with the US Army but was 18 when he actually reported. Later he admitted that he was stupid not to have accepted Ira's offer of college, but he

couldn't see it then.

Rentis joined the US Army on June 20th, 1931 at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana (Army Serial Number 6656252). Fort Harrison was about 140 miles north on the east side of Indianapolis.

During the Great Depression the family was forced to leave the farm and moved into Petersburg. George Frank needed to sell the farm because of the depression. When they moved into town, they had very little and Tom ended up on welfare. When living in Petersburg, Tom eventually went to work for the WPA. Rentis would send home some of his Army pay to help.



Rentis school picture

Petersburg Elementary School



Petersburg school, Rentis top row, 4th from right. Sarepta Deen Teacher.



Petersburg school, 2nd Grade. Rentis front row, 5th from right. Georgia Kelp teacher.



Petersburg school, 6th grade, Rentis 2nd row, 5th from right.

The Press-Dispatch Thursday, February 7, 2002 B-11



Petersburg school teachers, 1920-1921

Grade school and high school teachers for Petersburg in 1920-1921 were Sarepta Deen, Josephine Walls, Thirza Deen, Edith Davidson, Merle Gray, Georgia Kelp and Faith Dropsey. In the second row are: Mabel Blagrave, Doris Basinger, Flossie Solmon, Arbutus Miley, Dona Wolven, Grace McBride and Carolyn Surrell. In the third row are: Felix Collins, Wysong Julius, J. B. Leas, W. M. Hopper, Elvis Hadlock, Clay Townsend and General Sanders. The photo was presented by Eunice O'Neill of Petersburg.

Sarepta Deen

Sarepta was the first grade teacher of Rentis in Petersburg, a name he always remembered. Her sister, Thirza Deen was also a teacher in Petersburg in the 1920's. She was raised on a farm in Perry County, Oil Township by her parents Joshua and Helena Deen. In 1880 she was 15 years old and she had two brothers Robert (19) and William H. (13) as well as her only sister Thirza (21). At that time Joshua was 45 and Helena was 43.

Georgia Kelp was Rentis's second grade teacher.

ENROLLMENT PETERSBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR 1929

Sarepta Deen, 1A and 1B, 35; Esta Garland, 1B and 2A, 37; Sarah Sullivan, 2A ani 2B, 34; Grace McBride, 2B and 3A, 38; Edna Martin, 3A, 44; Eleanor Fleming, grade 4, 40; Naomi Smith, grade 4 and 5, 37; Regina Miller, grade 5, 41; Orlis Smith, grade 5 and 6, 35; Mary Kinman, grade 6, 40, Summary six year grades; grade one, 60, grade two, 65; grade three, 66; grade four, 65; grade five, 70; grade six, 58.

Six year high school grade seven, 55; grade eight, 56; grade 9, 82; grade ten, 75; grade eleven, 56; grade twolve, 29.

Total elementary, 354; total junior high, 111; total senior high, 242. The above figures were made Sept.

9th Over enrollment of Sept. 10, 1928: loss in elementary, 83; loss in junior

high, 24; gain in senior high, 13.

Total enrollment, 737.

Officials And Faculty Of P. H. S., 1930-1931

Board of School Trustees: Mrs. Amy Fieming, president, Courtney Fowler, secretary, Granville James, transurer. Superintendent: J. B. Lean.

Clerk: Mrs. Gladys Pierson.

Six-year high school faculty: J. B. Leas, superintendent, physics, civics; C. D. Manhart, principal, vocational instructor, mechanical drawing; Flossie Salmon, assistant principal, history (European), junior high English. Belle Bryant, coach girls basketball, latin, algebra; Lorel Coleman, football coach, algebra, plane geometry, general science; Ray. E. Fleeenor, coach basketball and track, history (American), vocational information; Anson L. Kerr, english, vocational information, history (American); Mary E. Holdermann, librarian, english, advanced algebra; H. G. Meyer, physical training (boys), pre-vocatioinal industrial, Jr. High geography, arithmetic; Rachael Randolph, physical training (girls), Jr. High english; Virginia Sowers, supervisor music and art; L. C. Preston, U. S. history, Jr. High arithmetic; Mayra E. Riggs, biology, vocational home economics; Raymond B. Vickrey, biology, vocational agricul-

PCD August 1930 Rentis still being in high school would have had some of these teachers.



Pike County Democrat, May 31, 1929



Rentis at the brick house, Petersburg

The Brick House Neighborhood

WILL GROW WATERMELONS

William Richardson, living one wife north of this tity was here this merring and told a Press reporter that he was going back live the watermellen hashees this spring. Richardson will plant several across is watermellens, and will sell his malons locally. Richardson recent-ity moved back to the old Richard-non farm after spriding several press in the seuthern part of this county. He is an experienced melon preser, having bern in the business before.

Petersburg Press

3/25/1927

The Brick House was in a farming area west of Petersburg. Tom's neighbors raised peaches, grapes, watermelon, corn and wheat.

BLAKE LAMB HAS A BIG SCARE.

BLAKE LAMB HAS A DIG SCARE BLAKE LAMB HAS A DIG SCARE Index morning when he aware Bai-index morning when he aware Every ross of his bersee and mules was dick and it looked for a time an if they might dis. Just what was the matter has not been determined yet. It is not considered probable that they were poleoned as they did not seem to be suffering greatly. Their throats were all welled and they could not smallow. Some of the patients were all welled and they could not smallow they could not greatly in an could they even but after obveving hay they could not gradlew it not could they even that animals seen attached by the di-sease at the area time that all the animals were attached by the di-sease at the area time that all the animals were attached by the di-sease at the area time that all the animals were attached by the di-sease at the area time that all the animals were attached by the di-sease at the area time that all the animals were attached by the di-sease at the area time the all the animals were attached by the di-sease at the area time the all the animals were attached by the di-sease at the area time the all were attached by the di-sease at the area time the area the animals were attacked by the di-sease of the arms time. All of them esem to be improving new and it is thought ghost all will recover which is gradifying to their owner as there were treate head of horses and moles and all are valuable animals, most of them young.

Petersburg Press 3/15/1927



The Democrat extends thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Fred Gompf and to Mr. and Mrs. John Heitenhein who live near the sily for him gropes given to the office force a week ago. 578.0 grapes were of very fine wathly large and must delicious.

PCD September 12, 1930



Pike county, Washington township, Plot map/ownership 1925+.





The Keith and Toler Families - 1900s

Adelia Lamb Toler

Adelia was the daughter of H.D. and Margaret Lamb. She had four bothers and sisters: Oliver P., Newton L., Malman , and Thomas H. who were all born in Washington State. Thomas was born in 1877 and married Gertrude B. Adams and they had two children Arvil I. born 1899 and Opal R. born 1903. Malman was born in 1871 and married Ada C. They moved to a dairy farm in Missouri and had four children and each name started with a "G": Garth V. born 1906, Garnett H. born 1907, Gilbert W. born 1909 and Garett H. born 1912. Adelia married Dail Toler and they had six children: Anna Clyde, Adelia, Herbert Dale, Stella N. and Margaret N.



Adelia and Dail Toler



L to R:Gilbert, Garrett, Garnett, Garth Lamb

Anna Clyde Toler

Anna married Jerry Keith and they had two children, Edward and Doris. Anna died in 1910 when Doris was just two years old. Jerry always carried a gun when riding in their buggy in



case they saw some game. The gun went of accidentally and Anna was shot in the chest. She died of what they called "consumption". Back then everything was called consumption if it had to do with the lungs. Anna wanted Doris to be raised by her parents Adelia and Dail Toler. When Doris went to live with the grandparents Adelia

(Lamb) and Dail, they still had three of their own children living at home in Madison Township; Isa then 19, Adelia 19 and Herbert D. age 12.⁷ Anna's son Edward Keith initially went to live with their father Jerry. But by 1920 Edward was also living with the Grandparents Dail and Adelia, then 68 and 53, out on the bluffs in Petersburg, Vincennes Avenue.¹²

Anna Clyde Toler

Doris Dale Keith

JoAnn remembers: the "Toler's lived outside of Petersburg proper up on the 'Bluffs'. They are high ground along White River. I have been there as a kid. Mother had to walk a long distance to go to school in Petersburg. Once in a while someone would give her a ride on a horse when it was really bad weather. Being an orphan was not a pleasant life. Mama was just a little child but Ma Toler had her doing things that were too hard for a little girl. Mama milked the cows and had to



Doris Keith (center) with friends, Petersburg 1927.

clean the separator before she went to school. Her hands would be cracked and bleeding."

"She didn't have any clothes and her Aunts (Anna's sisters) would make her a dress sometimes when they sewed for their children. She used to tell me when I wanted something that she only had two dresses at a time when she was a child and she was lucky if she got an orange and or a stick of candy for Christmas. Now I am sure that Ma Toler loved mama, but she was a very stingy person. The Tolers had money since they had a lot of property, you just wouldn't know it the way Ma Toler was so tight. Mama liked to cook like her Aunts did, but Ma would always admonish her not to use too much of this or that. It has always made me feel bad to think of my mothers life as a child."



Tom Pace and Doris at the Brick House, Petersburg 1928



Doris Keith

Dave Toler Dies Dave Totor, aged about 60 years

passed away at his home on White River bluffs a mile west of the city Saturday morning as a result of paralysis following an illness of three years. He leaves a widow and several children—among them being Mra. Frank Traylor and Mrs. Will Hoggatt of Petersburg, a daughter at Indianspolis and a son. His fuperal took place Toesday

from his tate residence, conducted by Rev. Leroy McDowell. Burial in Walnut Hills cometery.

PCD October 24, 1930 It should have been "Dail" "When Mama was older, Ma bought a car and Mother would drive her around town and could get out to go to church. Mother also became afraid of her own temper. She would get so angry with Ma, she was afraid of what she would do. When she became a Christian, she would go all around down there and sing and play the piano in Revival Services. When she passed away in 1980, a few older people came to the viewing in Petersburg. They remembered Mama."

"When she worked at the Tomato factory peeling tomatoes by hand would have been in December 1929 or 1930 because I was born August 11, 1930 but I should have been born in June. They didn't induce labor then and she was truly miserable with a baby too large for her to carry and a month overdue. They all thought both of us would die when I was born. As it was she was torn severely and in later years had to have surgery. She had made a pretty little silk dress with embroidery on it and a little bonnet to bury me in. I have it among my very cherished keep sakes. Dale Toler, her grandpa, whom she had lived with until she was married, wanted to live long enough to see me born--which he did. He died soon after but I don't know exactly when. Back to the Tomato factory. She was so nauseated that she would vomit in the bucket of tomato peelings. When she found out that the peelings went into Catsup, she couldn't eat catsup for many years. Ha! (Just adding a bit of "trivia" for you.) Mother was a good dress maker and could take a piece of paper and just cut out a pattern from it. She did a lot of piece work"²¹

