

## Excerpt from Journal by CHARLES LESTER TINGLE

Born Sept. 21, 1885

Died 1970

Age 84

(Journal started in November, 1922)

(Edited by his granddaughter, B. L. Bailey Taylor. Mr. Tingle's exact words have not always been recorded as written. The changes were necessary for clarification. Prior to the beginning of this journal a religious rebellion had taken place on Chincoteague Island, VA, and the people of the Sanctified Holy Church had left to settle elsewhere. That was why, Mr. Tingle, his family and a number of others were living on boats just off the North Carolina coast .)

Old Trap, North Carolina, was one place I remember quite well. A bridge had been built, far out from land into the water, where steam boats and smaller craft loaded and unloaded their cargoes. This bridge, or wharf, had a track on which a car was pulled back and forth with an ox hitched to it. The bridge was so old and rotten, it would sometimes break through, so I thought the name of the place was pretty good, for that wharf was surely an "old trap." Yet, this was the only way people had of disposing of their farm products--- by boat. The nearest railroad was in Elizabeth City, NC, about fifteen miles away. So, Old Trap did not mean as much to me, as a small boy, as it did in later years. It was here that dear Uncle Ananias Tingle, my father's brother, lived, and it was the place where God gave Uncle Ananias his wife, Lydia. And, it was here that his companion died. They owned a farm at Old Trap.

We spent some time here, with souls heeding and accepting the Gospel, and we again set sail. We had to have some repairs done to our boat which was pulled out on the railway at Little Washington, but we did not stay long . Our next stop was Beaufort, NC, on the Atlantic Coast, where there were plenty of oysters, clams and other fish. Here, at this nice place, several of our company moved on to land and rented houses. This included C. H. Bishop and W. J. Whealton, and their families, and most of the rest, but W. J. Collins and my parents (Samuel and Vesta Tingle) and I (Charles Lester Tingle) remained on the boat. Things went well here, and we stayed some little time. We were of "roving minds," so you will not be surprised when I tell you that we sailed right back to "Old Trap" again.

We unloaded and went no farther on that boat. As Mother and Father had gotten homesick, and as they had spent most of their savings, they decided to go back to Virginia.

We had only arrived that morning, and while waiting for the 5:00 p.m. steamer, we took a stroll around. By noon we were really hungry. The little store carried nothing we cared

for, but Daddy bought a chicken from an old lady. He hired her to cook it and bake us some bread. As it was warm weather, we ate it out in the shade, sitting on an old dead tree. And did we ever relish it? Indeed, we did! After paying her, we bade her goodbye and went to the wharf to wait for the steam boat. It soon arrived, and we started for home, sailing all night. We were in Norfolk by 9:00 a.m. where we changed to another steamer which took us across the Chesapeake Bay to Cape Charles, Virginia. By train, we reached Exmore, and from there, we walked more than a mile to Willis Wharf. Here our boat took us straight back to Accomack County, and Upshur's Neck.

This place had nothing to boast of when compared to Old Trap, if you wished to compare them, for we had to go by boat to the town where we traded, but I liked it because I had once lived there. We had plenty to eat, even if not much of a house to live in. The house was only an old shack of rough boards--no ceiling, lath or plaster. The rising sun could be seen though the roof and side walls. For furniture, dry goods boxes made a table and also answered for chairs. When fall days came we found a better home. Those were happy, care-free days for me. Not one thing to worry about. I helped Daddy on the water in agreement and contentment. Mother bought a few old hens and started raising chickens. As they increased, and we became a bit more straightened out in the better house, we bought a cow. Now, we had plenty of milk and butter, and before long, Daddy was able to buy and plant a clam bed.

There was one thing I wanted and, as I now worked, I felt I ought to be earning something. I wanted a bicycle. So Daddy took me to Exmore to buy one. It was too high for me, so he sold it and bought one that was just right. How I enjoyed riding that wheel. The day that Daddy and I went to Exmore, Virginia, to get me the bicycle, I wished the reader could have been along to see us try to ride it on our way home. After buying the bicycle, we had to go through a woods, so we pushed it along. Then we both tried to ride it. Daddy would say, "Get away and let me try it," but he would do as badly as I did. Before I got home, though, I had learned how to ride, and I sure enjoyed it. As I look back on those days, before I knew any cares and worries, they were the happiest days of my life. It was a pretty sight to see my mother out among her 300 laying hens and her large flock of turkeys and ducks. We lived at that place for five years. But, I must tell you how we got our cow. Mother and I bought her. Some boys and I were going through the woods, and we found the cow, which belonged to a neighbor, in a ditch. The poor animal was too poor and weak to get out. We boys worked hard and pulled her out. I went home and told Mother about it. So she and I told the neighbor we wanted to buy a cow, and he sold that one to us for \$15.00. In a few months, you would have been surprised to see how well she looked on ground feed. We sold a calf or two, and when we left Upshur's Neck, we sold the cow for \$35.00! That was the way God blessed us in most everything we tried to do, and He helped us to prosper in our work. As we lived near the schoolhouse, I went to school during the five years we were at Upshur's Neck. I would work some days and go to school some days. I did not get to study much as I helped my father work. I will tell you one thing I liked to do, and that was to catch fish with a hand line. I remember one day I was catching fish about as fast as I could put my line in the water. Mother came down to the shore and called me to come home because she was afraid I might fall over-board and drown. I obeyed her, but

I sure hated to leave when fish were biting so good. Mother always worried about me when I went on the water alone, but I was almost like a fish in the water. I could swim, or sail a boat, almost as good as anyone. I liked to praise my daddy and mother as they were so good to me. If there was any "best," I got it, as I was the only child at home. I had only one sister, and she left home when she was young.

Well, as I said, we lived at Upshur's Neck five years. Then Daddy went in the clam business with W. J. Walker at Willis Wharf, Virginia. This was five miles from Upshur's Neck. We wanted to get closer to our work and the railroad station. So in November, we sold our cow, and mother sold the fowl, and we moved to Willis Wharf. We rented some rooms from Mr. Elie Doughty. They owned a large house and had only three in the family. Of course, there were only three of us. We rented four rooms as that was enough for what furniture we had. We were there only a short while when an old lady by the name of Minson wanted someone to stay with her. She lived in a small town called Hadlock which was about five miles from Willis Wharf. So Mother went to live with her. Mother was there about three or four months when the old lady died. Then she came back home. We sure were glad to have her back as we had to do our own cooking, and that did not suit with our work.

We got along good in our work and made some money. We bought and shipped clams six days a week. We also planted clams when we would buy more than we had orders for. I remember one time having over a half million clams planted, besides shipping everyday. We kept an excess for extra orders to enable us to always have clams to fill our orders.

When we started in the clam business with Mr. Walker, we were to furnish half of the money and do all the work, and Mr. Walker was to furnish half the money, the dock, the clam house to work in and a man to do all the hauling. So you see Daddy had his hands full. That is why I had to stay home from school again to help him. When he thought he could get along without me, I would return to school. In the summer season, when work was slack, I would work for someone else and make a little extra money. This way I would make enough to buy what clothes I needed. We made more clear money, those five years we were in business, than at any other time. The reason we did so well is we had a good partner. He was very honest and took an interest in Daddy and me. He wanted us to stay with him, but it seemed five years was as long as Daddy and Mother ever stayed in one place at a time.

Before I go too far with my story, I want to say a few more words about Mr. Walker and his family. He and his wife were nice folks. I would go to their house often as they had a boy about my age named Wade. They had four more children besides Wade, and I have got my first time to hear Mrs. Walker speak cross to any of them. I thought she had the most patience. Wade and I chummed about and he was about as bad as I was for getting into mischief. I liked him a lot, and I believe he thought right much of me. We were together a lot. I will tell you how we got acquainted. I was still living in Upshur's Neck. One day my daddy and I took some oysters over to Willis Wharf to the oyster house to sell. Daddy sent me to the store to get something. On my way, I met this boy, Wade

Walker. He threw oyster shells at me, so, of course, that was my play. I picked up one and threw it at him. It struck him on the shin, and he began to cry. I ran. I got what I was sent for at the store and got back to our boat as soon as I could. The next time we met we got more acquainted and became the best of friends. There were a good many boys in our town, but this one was my pal.

I remember one boy, much larger than Wade or me--his name was Burtrum Mears. He was one of those boys that liked to get a fellow in trouble and then have a great laugh about it. One day I had the laugh on him. I caught him asleep on a bench under a tree. So, I took a piece of chain, and a piece of rope, and made him fast to the bench. Then I left him there as I had to go to another town close by. When I came back, the other boys said he did some turning and twisting, and also some little cursing. They said he would thrash me, but he didn't as I was about as good at thrashing as he was. He was a right good boy after all. We all had our bad points. I believe boys enjoyed each others company and had better times in those days, more than they do today. There were no moving picture shows to go to. We had no automobiles to ride in, but we enjoyed riding behind a horse and buggy. That was good enough for us. We did not have much money to spend as the young folks do today. A boy of today thinks he is lost without a car to ride in. I am glad I grew up when I did, for I was satisfied with what I had.

I remember when I was a boy, at the age of fifteen, I was taken on a trip from Willis Wharf, Virginia, to New York City on a schooner. The name of the boat was the Annie E. Edwards, and the Captain's name was E. D. Breasure from Chincoteague Island, Virginia. He came to Willis Wharf after a load of wood. So the Captain asked me if I would like to take a trip with him. I was anxious to go. We started out on Thursday, August 4, 1900. We had not gone far from home before we got stuck. The boat needed to stay in the center of the creek where it was deeper. So, as I said, the boat got stuck on the center board, and we had to put a block and fall to it, to hoist it up. While doing this, the rope broke and the block came down and struck a deck hand, Gene Beachum, and hurt him bad. I was sorry to see him hurt, but we had a full crew of six men, plus the Captain's two daughters, who were also with us, so you see we had plenty of help. Well, when the accident happened the tide was down, and we had to wait until that afternoon for the tide to come before we could start again. This time we got as far as Hog Island before we got stuck again on a sand bar. This time, the station crew came out to us and pulled us off. By then it was getting late, so we did not set sail again that day. Early the next morning we started again. This time we went out into the Atlantic Ocean where there was plenty of water. We had a light breeze to the south that made it fair for us, but we did not go so very fast. We sailed all that day and night and the next day, and just before dark, we arrived at Long Island, New York. The next morning was Sunday so we did not do any thing but walk around on the island. That was a strange place to me and I wanted to see the sights. It did not seem like Sunday very much, as I was not accustomed to seeing people going out fishing on a Sunday. They came down on the wharf to fish, and went out on boats. I heard that was the day they took for sport as they worked all the week. But, it did not look right to me for I did not do it myself. Monday we unloaded our cargo of wood, and Tuesday we went from there up the Hudson River to harvest straw to use when we loaded again with brick. It took us all day. While

we were loading, a brick fell on the cook's finger and mashed it. Then, of course, some of the other fellows had to do the cooking. Poor man. He was always getting hurt. I caught him in his bunk one day, and the Captain said to get a shell and put it in the gun and shoot it. So I did it. You would have laughed to see the cook come out of there. We were always playing jokes on him, for he was comical. Once, the other fellows cut all of his hair off on one side of his head. He was some fright to look at. He got the barber to finish it.

Well, we finished loading the schooner that day, but we remained there that night and did not leave until Wednesday morning. Someone said that that was a bad place to be at night, that the robbers would come on your boat and take any thing they could find. I remember one of our fellows took a large knife to bed with him, but no robbers came. The next morning we started again. This time we got as far as Coney Island Bay. The wind was not blowing fair so we anchored and took in sail. We were there for a week. We sure had some sport. We would go to Coney Island Beach, and to Rockaway Beach, and the Captain and I took a trip over into New York City. We went across the Brooklyn Bridge. You can just imagine how I was, my eyes and mouth hanging open, for I had never been to a large city like that before. Everything I saw, I had to ask the Captain something about it. I thought going over the Brooklyn Bridge was something wonderful. When I rode on the elevated cars, I thought I was riding in the air. I had ridden on trolley cars on the ground before, but I had never before ridden on them up in the air. Also, I was not acquainted with so many people on the streets. I could hardly keep up with the Captain when we got off the cars and started to walk. But I managed to get back home safe, and I was not anxious to go back there again for I was afraid of being run over. That was in 1900. What would I have done today, for the traffic has trebled. Well, after seeing about all the sites--for we looked at most everything, as far as we went--, we made another start for home. The cook and I found a small boat adrift on the water, and was going to take it home with us, but some man, the owner, I guess, came and took it. So we had no boat. We arrived at Long Island on the 6th of August, a Saturday, and once more started for home on Saturday, the 19th. We sailed all that day and until about three o'clock the next day, which was Sunday. It began to get rough at sea so the Captain thought we had better look for a harbor. We sailed for Little Egg Harbor. Just as we were going in over the bar, a sea broke over the stern of the schooner and would have given us all a good wetting, but we were waiting for it. We jumped up on the (wheel) house so no one was hurt or wet, and we came into the harbor. We were there the rest of that day and all the next day and night. The following morning we started out again. This time we did not stop any more before we reached home. I went as far as Chincoteague Island with the Captain, as that was his home, and then I got on another schooner with Captain Alfred Lewis, of Chincoteague Island, and we went on to Willis Wharf, Virginia. I arrived home on Tuesday the 22nd, safe and sound.

I had some tales to tell my father and mother when I got back home. They were some glad to see me and to know that I had enjoyed my trip. I did enjoy my trip all but one thing. I was seasick both going and coming. I got sick just as soon as I got on the ocean. It was strange because I lived on the water almost all the time.