

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, April 4, 2005

Life of Eliza Peterson: Eliza Peterson of Hockessin, age 99, died on Friday. Who was Eliza Peterson? She was a black lady who died in her home on Mill Creek Road. She never had much, but she was a *lady*, and her modest house was a *home*. When she was a little girl, she lived with her parents and siblings in a tenant house owned by the Marshall Brothers paper mill on Auburn Mill Road between the mill and the Christofanos. The house is long gone, but the foundation can still be seen. Her father, Dorsey Peterson, drove a two-wheel mill cart (later he graduated and drove the mill truck for many years), and her mother, Martha, worked for my grandmother, Lizzie Marshall, at Auburn Heights. Martha had no one with whom to leave the children, so they would come to work with her when Eliza (the eldest) was about eight years old. My grandmother insisted the children drink their milk, apparently much more than suited their taste. When my dad would come home from the mill for lunch in his Stanley steamer, the kids would wait at the front gate with the hope that he'd pick them up for a ride up the driveway in an automobile! They were seldom disappointed.

Her parents moved to the Mitchell tenant house on Valley Road between Limestone Road and the ice cream parlor, and when Eliza was a teenager, she was "farmed out" to Mrs. Bissett as a house servant. Mr. Bissett was superintendent of the Snuff Mill in Yorklyn. She was nearly 40 when Mr. Bissett died, and she sought other employment. She was a lifelong member of Chippey A.U.M.P. Church in Hockessin and active in the Hockessin Community Center. One of the last to call me "Tommy" has passed away. She deserves all that heaven can offer.