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## Family Tree

The beginning of my family tree starts with my mom's side of the family. My great, great, great grandmother Ickelburger was a Cherokee Indian. She was a pure blood Indian from a reservation in Oklahoma. Her husband, Grandfather Ickelburger, was a white German immigrant who lived in Oklahoma. Together they had one daughter.

Helen was the name of the only daughter from the Ickelburger family. She met a former slave from Texas and soon married him. Together, Helen and William Johnson became my great, great grandparents. They had seven children, six girls and one boy. They were born and raised in Enid, Oklahoma.

The fourth oldest daughter of Helen and William was Thelma. Thelma met and married a man named Paris M. Jones from Austin, Texas. Great Grandfather Paris Jones taught instrumental music in the public school system of Kansas City, Missouri until 1982. Great Grandmother Jones was a homemaker. Thelma and Paris had one child, a daughter, named Erva.

Grandmother Erva Jones met and married a man named James Cubit. His family was from Tupelo, Mississippi. Together Erva and James had seven children, six girls and one boy. All of Erva and James kids, except for one, had two or more kids of their own. My mother, Marilyn D. Cubit, was the third oldest child. She was born and raised in Kansas City, Missouri. Later in life, she met and married a man named Prentiss H. Bennett, Jr. He was born and raised in Greensboro, North Carolina. They had two children, a boy name Prentiss H. Bennett, III and a girl named Stephanie Bennett. Soon after I was born my parents were divorced and my brother and I stayed with my mom in Indiana. My dad moved and started another family in Arizona.

As the years go by, family customs and traditions soon begin to fade. Every year in the first week of August, my family has its annual family reunion. We try and spread it out and have it in different states every year. So far, my family reunions have been in California, Texas, Missouri, Maryland, Illinois, and Georgia.

Everyone in my family believes in God. We are all Baptist and attend some type of Baptist church. As we are babies, our parents take us to church. They say you're never too young to go to church.

In my family, if you look at how kids are raised now and how they were raised thirty or forty years ago there's a big change. Family discipline and structure was stricter. Now a days, kids are still disciplined but not as bad. We also get away with a lot more these days. Once in my life, I did receive a spanking like my mother once did when she was a little girl. I had to go outside and pick my own branch and I got hit with it a few times. After that, I hardly ever got in trouble. I really wasn't a bad child growing up; it was just this one incident my brother and I got into. I am very respectful when it comes to family.

Respect is very important in our family when it comes to upbringing. Talking back to or disrespecting your elders or those older than you was a definite no. We all stay in touch and depend on each other because family is really all you have. God is also a very important center piece in our lives as we grow. Without God, nothing is possible.

I feel that my family is very strong. We are diverse and yet we all gone through some type of struggle in our lives. Those struggles are segregation, discrimination, and/or racism. I am very proud of that. I haven't found anything to not be proud of when it comes to our heritage. I am very proud and blessed for my family.

I have learned a lot from researching my family roots. It's neat from as far back as my family can remember, they started out biracial. It's amazing that a Cherokee Indian and white European raised a family together. As years went by my great, great grandmother finally got with an African American. After that, my family just stuck with their own race. If you look at my family in all, we are diverse. I have Cherokee Indian in me, European blood, and I'm proud to be an African American.