

## Renice Lorene Curtis

Renice Lorene Layne was born September 18<sup>th</sup>, 1935, to Edd and Beulah Layne in Floyd County, Kentucky. She was the second of seven children and the eldest girl in the family. Thus, she learned the chores of babysitting, cooking and cleaning at an early age, and was a tremendous help to her mother when the set of twins were born.

Renice was a very bright school student and wanted very much to attend high school. Her father would not allow her to go unless her older brother also attended. He wasn't interested in attending high school, so Renice was denied this opportunity.

Renice married Daniel Houston Curtis and this union produced four children; Michael Houston Curtis, Rebecca Elaine Curtis, Patrick Dee Curtis, and Brent Edward Curtis, six grandchildren and one great-grandchild. She was a devoted mother and spent the remainder of her life caring for her family. Dan and Renice divorced in the 1970's.

During her lifetime she also participated in many civic endeavors, with her favorite being the Grundy County Historical Society, which she helped found. Renice is credited with the idea that spawned the local historical group. She published a number of obituary books, the first of which was titled *Deaths and Funerals of Grundy County*. She also conducted the audio tape interviews with Tracy City citizens, which were the basis of the book *Reminiscence*, published by the Grundy County Historical Society. Renice was a charter member of the Society, and served as the second president of the group from 1989 until her untimely death in August of 1994. She enthusiastically

promoted the "Root Cellar", a tiny room in the Tracy City Library which houses the Historical Library and work space for officers of the Society.

The Society began organizing old court records stored in the attic of the Grundy County Courthouse and finished only a small part of the project before the courthouse burned in 1990. The group removed the loose files from the attic, cleaned them and put them into folders. Though very ill at this time, Renice took the files, placed them in proper order and sent them to Nashville in preparation for microfilming by the State of Tennessee Library and Archives. All of this work was accomplished during the last year of her life. Charles A. Sherrill, Director, Public Services for the State of Tennessee, commended Renice for her work on the records in a letter, dated August 15, 1994, just a few days before her death. "I have been through your inventory with a fine-toothed comb and find it to be an excellent finding aid for the collection. I am certain that once this collection has been microfilmed, many people with Grundy County ancestors will find long-lost connections as a result of your work."

On a personal level, not connected to the Historical Society, Renice assisted many people across the United States with genealogical research. These were primarily associated with the Dykes, Caldwell and Curtis branches of her family.

~~(500 words)~~ Submitted by Becky Payne, Rt 1 Box 152, Tracy City, TN 37387

Photo caption: Renice Curtis

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