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# **Highlights of the History of Triana**

by  
Charles Dillard Lyle

## ***With an Introduction by his Son***

by Charles Polk Lyle, Sr.

My daddy, Charles Dillard Lyle, was born in Triana in 1883 and lived there with his mother and father, three brothers and one sister until he was a young man in his late teens. He envisioned, as everyone there at the time, that Triana had a great future and there was not doubt in anyone's mind that it would indeed outgrow Huntsville as it had deep water to make a fine river port city. Of course, it lost out because the train took the place of the river barges for hauling grain and cotton up the river. Some of the prominent families that lived there I remember him saying (late 1800s) were the Dillards, Toneys, Halseys, etc. His mother was Laura Halsey.

Maybe Triana's losing out in its proposed future caused my dad to take a clerk's job with the railroad in Memphis. He later went out west to Lawton, Oklahoma, with the railroad. At the time this was Indian Territory; rough and tough with saloons and the whole bit. A friend of his talked him into a business proposition in which the two of them would go to Mexico and set up a business making shoes using cheaper labor. They went to Mexico City and started working on the deal. One night they were riding around in a sort of topless cab. His friend had had too much to drink and started shooting his gun in the air and laughing. The police stopped them and took them to jail. My dad was not drunk, but he couldn't speak Spanish like his friend so they locked them both up. They got out the next day, unlike a black man from the South, who had been imprisoned for a very long time because he had no money, but fortunately was released with them. In a few weeks my dad became ill with typhoid

fever and fought it for several months and came close to dying in a Mexican hospital. After this, he worked his way back home.

He entered business with his brother Roy, to replace his brother Harry who had died of a heart attack. The business known as Lyle Feed and Seed Company had become a thriving business with a branch store in Decatur. At that time the family was recognized as quite financially well off and owned the first Lincoln in town. But prosperity ended with the Depression—the business went bankrupt. My dad never really completely recovered financially from this misfortune. He became a silent partner with Solon Tidwell as a food broker. The company's name was S. W. Tidwell & Company. I will always remember him as a gentle, kind, and generous man. He always spoke well of his fellow man, hardly ever criticizing a single person.

Late in life he had a keen interest in history and wrote several articles and a brief history of his home town, Triana. He died in the Spring of 1958, just nine months after my mother, Madeliene. He was seventy-four.



*About 1943 on Newman Avenue  
L to R: Dad, Me, Grandmother & Jimmie.*



*Charles D. Lyle, about 1939.*