
SINNISSIPPI PHANTOMS | SUMMIT AT TROY GROVE

1953

My parents' families met one summer day
on the Troy Grove tenant farm of Ray and Gladys Rod
Unspoken in the photos, it was an audition of sorts
How would they take to each other
and would they take Wally of another father sired?
Grandfathers Joe and Ray in hats and overalls
having a laugh with or at my mother bracing her back



Lee's parents lean in a tentative accepting bow
over grandchildren Kristen and Jolene,
Joe Junior and Jeannette's first two of three daughters
And Char's first born Wally
holding Lee's first born Rickie
Char hoping for reconciliation if not honor



But another photo said the most
Wally on my grandmother's lap
Gladys trying to be a mother to both
my brother and mother
My father tellingly is in none of the photos
And he was never the photographer
His parents accepted Wally, but
My grandparents would never give him back
And my father would not tear him from them.

