

## Grandpa Blakeslee's Thoughts on Religion

- Grandpa Blakeslee attends Baptist church services when Mattie Lou (Grandma Blakeslee) is alive.
  - Baptist preachers in Cold Sassy do not take well to Mary Willis (Grandpa's daughter) marrying a Presbyterian, calling it a “mess of matrimonial pottage” (ch. 3, pg. 11). Grandpa, however, feels that Mary Willis' husband (Will's father, Hoyt/Papa) is a good enough person on his own merit, and that his religious affiliation does not matter.
- Grandpa has much to say about religion after Will's near-death experience with the train (ch. 16):
  - Will: “... but he didn't act like I'd been snatched from hell or go on about a maggotty horse hoof on the railroad tracks or how I had to pray God to use the life He had so mercifully spared” (pg. 97).
  - “You can believe [that God gave you the idea to lay between the train tracks to save yourself], son, if'n you think it was God's idea for you to be up on that there trestle in the first place. What God gave you was a brain. Hit's His will for you to use it – p'tickler when a train's comin'” (pg. 97).
  - On Bluford's death: “The Lord don't make firecrackers, son. Hit's jest too bad pore Blu didn't be more careful when he was shootin'm off” (pg. 97).
  - “Life bullies us, son, but God don't ... When it comes to prayin', we got it all over the other animals, but we ain't no different when it comes to livin' and dyin'. If'n you give God the credit when somebody don't die, you go'n blame Him when they do die? Call it His will? Ever noticed we git well all the time and don't die but once't? That has to mean God always wants us to live if'n we can. Hit ain't never his *will* for us to die – cept in the big sense” (pg. 97-98).
  - “I can forgive a fool, but I ain't inner-rested in coddlin' hypocrites. Well anyhow, folks who think God's will jest has to do with sufferin' and dyin', they done missed the whole point” (pg. 99).
- Reflection: How does Grandpa's thoughts on religion compare and contrast to those of other residents of Cold Sassy? Do you agree with any/all of Grandpa's thoughts about God? Why or why not?