

Front Cover: A sun-drenched, leaf covered Rock Creek Road presents a nostalgic view on a sunny autumn morning in 1989.



About The Author

Curtis Coulter is a seventh generation native of Sale Creek, Tennessee. He attended Sale Creek High School, graduating in 1967. He later attended Bryan College in Dayton, Tennessee where he received his bachelor's degree in 1970. In 1984 he earned the Master of Arts degree in educational administration and supervision from Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville.

He has taught at Sale Creek since 1970 both in the elementary and secondary divisions. Currently, he teaches mathematics, computer and adult vocational courses at the school.

Curtis's obvious pride in his heritage and his educational credentials have inspired a keen interest in preserving local history, particularly in the Sale Creek and Coulterville areas. Through a personal dedication of his own, he has spent countless hours and money gathering information on prior generations of local citizens and long-forgotten structures and acquiring photographs hidden away for decades. He has now compiled information on the various subjects and combined these into his second book.

In a commendable effort to bring back parts of our heritage, he has been able to preserve a part of that heritage that would be completely unavailable in the near future.

Rexford C. Alexander

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Dedicated to Alice, Ben, Andy, and Allison.

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Introduction

I do not know why so many people are interested in things of the past, old pictures and the like. It has always fascinated me to hear old people tell about their experiences when they were young. The peach business, the Welsh people, the coal mines, the depression - all of these topics have interested me, but the thing that most interested me was how the people lived. I wanted to know what their thoughts were, what they did for entertainment, how did they feel about their jobs, what was their family lives like, what did their houses look like. These are the things that have brought about my interest in writing about the people of Sale Creek and the town itself. It is my feeling that there are many wonderful things to be told about Sale Creek, things which everyone should know. Many of the stories in this book are comical. Some of them are serious and maybe a few even sad. However, they are all true, as far as I know, with the possible exceptions of the Pitty Pat Hollow tales.

Many people might ask, "Why do people have to dwell on the past? Things are so much better today." It is true that we have more material wealth today, medical care is much better, food is better, transportation is better, there is more leisure time, and our homes are more comfortable. These are all very good, and I would not trade these for anything that went on one hundred years ago. However, the things that have not improved over the last fifty years and the very things that should have are the moral and social values that people used to have.

My grandparents and parents have told me of how they gathered as a group and went places at night, walking mind you, in the total darkness. The companionship of others was very important and was a normal part of life then. People did not lock their doors. They did not have to lock them. There was much more respect for private property. Sure, there were thieves then just as there are today, but society took a much harder attitude toward them and punishment was more severe for offenders.

The good of the group was still important to those people. Words like "we" and "you" were used more than "I". "Me first" was not known. How many times have I heard about how women in the community left their own families for several days at a time to go to the home of a sick neighbor and minister to their physical needs. And they did it without any thought of payment. They did it because they were concerned about their fellow man. Every person was a part of the whole group, and when one part was hurting, the whole was hurting. This attitude does not prevail today.

So when I am asked why I enjoy studying about the past and writing about it, I would have to answer that I am writing about a way of life that I wish still existed today. Since it cannot, then I would like to pass on to others some stories about what life was like when it did exist.

Chapter 1: How Sale Creek Got Its Name

During the Revolutionary War in 1777 and 1778, the British governor of the Northwest Territory with headquarters at Detroit initiated Indian warfare against the American backwoodsmen. Governor Henry Hamilton even offered rewards to the Indians for American scalps. This practice made him hated by the Americans and earned him the distinction of "the hair buyer."

The British army at the time was planning an offensive on Georgia and the Carolinas in the spring of 1779 under the direction of Lord Cornwallis. Hamilton was instructed to distract American attention to the backwoods by inciting an Indian uprising.

For this campaign Hamilton used a chief of the Chickamauga Indians, Dragging Canoe, to spearhead the attack. By the end of 1778 Dragging Canoe commanded a force of warriors that numbered over 1000.

The Indian agent at Chickamauga, John Stuart, was told to assemble supplies at Chickamauga, Georgia for the spring campaign of 1779. A train of 300 pack horses left Pensacola, Florida with goods worth an estimated 20,000 pounds sterling. When these goods arrived in Chickamauga, they were stored at the house of John McDonald, Stuart's deputy.

During the winter that year Hamilton was captured and sent to prison in Virginia, thus ending the planned uprising.

In December of 1778 British forces captured Savannah and advanced as far as Augusta. About this time an American agent, James Robertson, obtained detailed plans of the planned Indian offensive. He quickly communicated these plans to Joseph Martin who was acting as the Indian agent for Virginia. Martin set out immediately for that state to warn Governor Henry.

A joint campaign of Virginians and North Carolinians was arranged for the spring of 1779. Col. Evan Shelby of Virginia was given command of this expedition. There was no money available, so Shelby's father, Isaac Shelby, raised the necessary funds on his personal name.

The troops assembled at the mouth of Big Creek on the Clinch River and built boats for the trip down the river. His army numbered about nine hundred. They left Big Creek on April 10, 1779. The river current was high and fast because of spring rains; therefore, their advance was rapid down the river.

Shelby's men surprised the Chickamauga's towns and defeated Dragging Canoe and Big Fool in a brief but furious battle. Two more weeks were spent in destroying the Chickamauga's villages and collecting the booty for the trip up river. After completing his task, Shelby crossed the river, burned his boats, and began his trip up river on horseback.

Coming to a swollen creek approximately 30 miles above present day Chattanooga and being unable to get his laden pack animals across with the plunders of war, he conducted an auction at the mouth of that creek. Since that time the name of the creek has been known as the Sale Creek, and the nearby town that grew up was known by the same name.¹

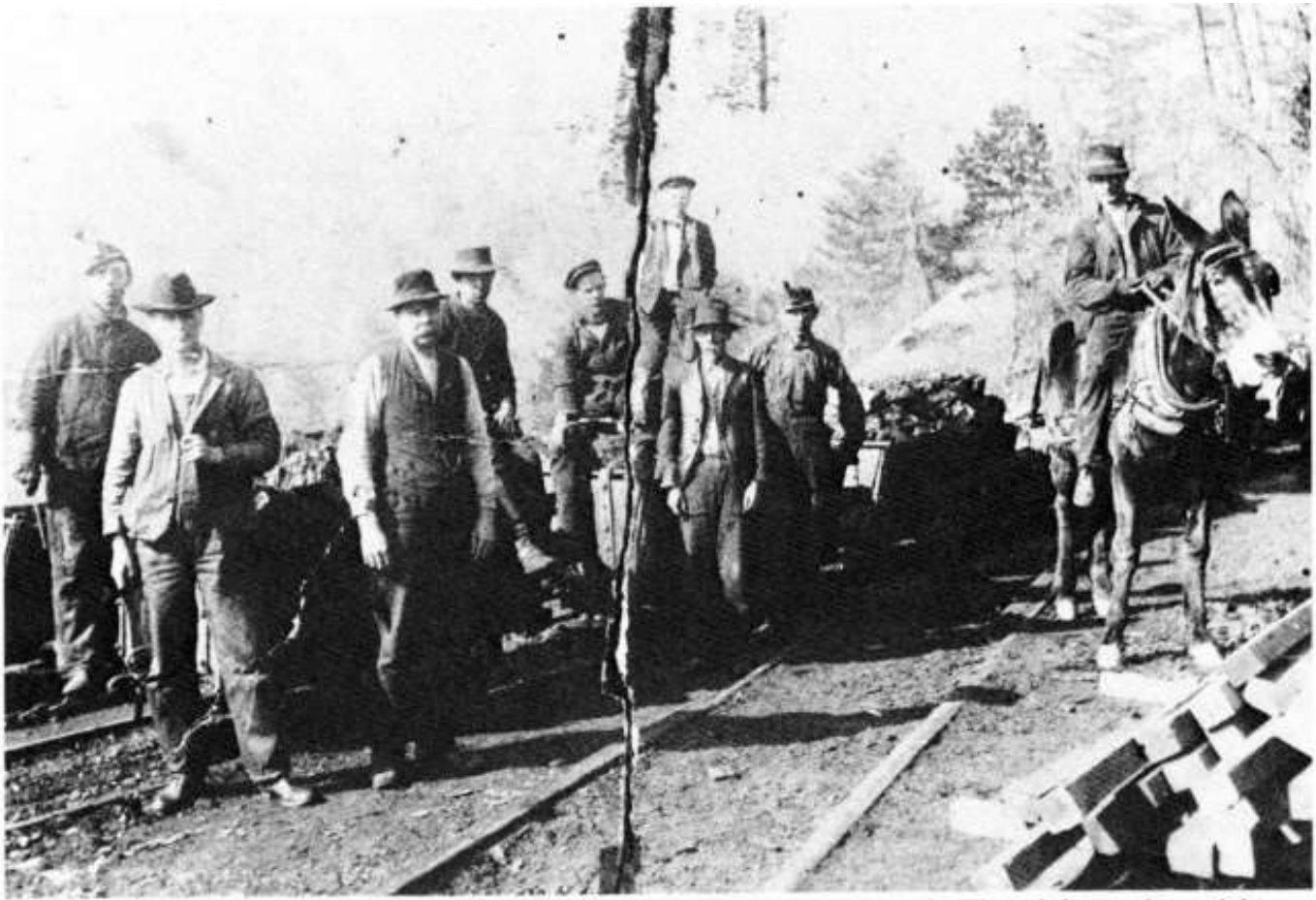
White men were present in the area around 1800. Some of the very earliest were the Pattersons and Gambles. Their first known activity, according to the late David Gray, was in 1806. The Hodge family was one of the next families to arrive around 1810. Alexander and Thomas Coulter came in 1819. Thomas settled here but his father, Alexander, moved across the mountain to Bledsoe County where he died and was buried. The McDonalds settled here around 1820, and their descendants still own a large farm on the north end of Hamilton County adjoining Rhea County. All of these families have been a part of Sale Creek for over 170 years.

At one time all of the area that is now Sale Creek and Coulterville was known as Sale Creek. The little church at Coulterville was known by the name Sale Creek Cumberland Presbyterian Church. With the coming of the railroad in the 1870's, a change of name came about for the northern part of the town. It was the practice in those years for the railroad to name a station along the tracks for the family that sold the property for the railroad to build its depot. This explains why there were so many "-villes" along the railroad, Graysville, Evansville. In my earlier book I wrote that John J. Coulter gave the land for the Coulterville station. This was incorrect as I later discovered that the donor of the property for the station was actually General Thomas Jefferson Coulter. He entered into an agreement in which he promised to sell or otherwise cede property to the railroad in return for the railroad naming the depot Coulterville. This was done, and Coulterville has been the community's name ever since.

Note

1. *Origin of Sale Creek*; author unknown.

Chapter 2: The Welsh Mining Adventure



A group of Sale Creek miners stands beside several cars loaded with coal. The mining mule at right was used to pull the loaded cars out of the narrow hallways of the mines. The wooden rails in the foreground are part of the original oak tram which was built by the Welshmen in the late 1860's. The only miner identified in the picture is John Shipley (center).

The first mining activity took place in Sale Creek in 1843. According to the late David Gray, Robert Patterson sold the land for the first mines during that year. Small amounts of coal were mined mainly for blacksmithing and heating until 1866 when two former Army officers from Knoxville began a large scale operation.¹

Major Thomas A. Brown and Colonel John Baxter began an extensive mining operation that year for the purpose of shipping coal to distant markets.

In 1868 a group of Welshmen arrived in Sale Creek from Ohio and formed the Walden's Ridge Coal Company which was registered with the state on March 11, 1868. This group leased the land for the mines and built a tram from the foot of Sale Creek Mountain to the Tennessee River. The most remarkable feature about this tram was that the

rails were made entirely of oak.

The founders of this company were John W. Jones, James Williams, Philip Jones, David J. Miller, Dave R. Griffiths, Rees Rees, Thomas Joseph, William Richards, D.E. Jones, D.J. Morgan, Thomas E. Parry, David J. Rees, John Jones, Thomas W. Price, John Winters, Enoch Harrell, Dan J. Thomas, and Thomas J. Jones. Many of the descendants of these men still live in Sale Creek, Soddy, and Chattanooga today.

The Welshmen shipped coal by hauling it over the tram in mule drawn carts to the river where the coal was loaded onto barges and then pulled down the river by boat. In 1882 the Cincinnati Southern Railroad built a branch line to the foot of the mountain and the use of the tram was discontinued.



The coal tippie of the Sale Creek Coal and Coke Company, shown here in a photograph taken in 1900, was located at the foot of Sale Creek Mountain approximately one-quarter mile below the hair pin curve at the foot of the mountain. It was capable of loading 400 tons of coal daily. The smoke stack is most likely part of the steam generating system that operated the conveyors on the chute.

In March of 1892 the Sale Creek Coal and Coke Company came into being. This company took over the operation from Walden's Ridge. The company's holdings at that time consisted of five square miles of coal land, four veins of coal (three of which were being mined), sixty-five coke ovens with a capacity of 120 tons a day, a coal masher, 30 houses (company housing for the miners), a complete mining outfit, and the branch line of the Cincinnati Southern Railroad that extended from the main line in Sale Creek to the mines at the foot of the mountain.

The coke ovens were arranged in bee-hive pattern along the side of the mountain. Soft coal was placed in these airtight ovens and roasted after it had been pulverized in the coal masher. As the coal was heated, the coal tar and oven gases evaporated out of the coal and formed pores in the coke.

The coke was then shipped to foundries for smelting purposes. Because there were very few impurities in the coke, 87 to 89 percent carbon, it produced intense and

smokeless heat which was perfect for smelting.

The coal veins were known as the Goodson or No. 3 Veins. Coal in the upper veins was hard and was good for producing steam and for heating purposes. The coal in the lower veins was soft and better for coking. In 1890 over 59,564 tons of coal were produced from these mines. The coal tippie had a loading capacity of 400 tons a day.

Mine wages in 1892 were \$0.45 to \$0.60 a ton for miners depending on the thickness of the seam on which they were working, \$1.00 to \$1.75 per day for drivers, trappers who were boys 12 years old and up \$0.50 per day, blacksmiths \$2.00 per day, and carpenters \$2.00 per day.

Representative prices which were paid by miners in the company store the same year included picks \$1.00, shovels \$1.40, shoes \$1.50.²

George Gothard remembered some of the activity that went on around the coal mines and the tippie. The railroad had a spur that connected with the mines. A small switch engine traveled up and down the line hauling loaded cars

as well as empty ones back and forth from the main railroad to the mines and coke ovens. George said that he could remember seeing the loaded cars being switched at the area below the tippie.

The switch engine did not stay at the mines, so there was no engine to move the full cars away from the tippie to another part of the yard when loading was completed. A brakeman released the brakes on the car and the gentle slope of the ground caused the car to roll gently down the tracks past the switch. Then an empty car was moved into position to begin loading. George said that the miners had a very large mule that was used to pull the empty cars into position. That was all that this animal did. He had been trained for this job and was good at it.

One day as George and his father, George W. Gothard, were passing the yard, they noticed one of the miners hitching the mule to an empty car. His father said, "Now, I want you to watch that mule. He knows what he's up agin' and he knows how to go about it."

The old mule positioned himself between the rails with no need of coaxing from his driver. Then he placed his hooves very carefully against the cross ties for leverage. Next, George said that the mule "kind of hunkered down low and pushed against its harness real hard." The rail car slowly began moving, and the big mule pulled it right up to the tippie. Once the coal car started moving, the mule was able to build up enough speed with it to roll it right into the loading position. This old animal had done it so many times that he never tried to pull at it in a run. "He was too smart for that," George chuckled.

The mines usually kept fifteen or more mules around the stable at all times. The one that pulled the train cars was a very large one; however, the mules that were used in the mines to pull the small coal cars out of the mines were much smaller because of the tight places into which they had to get.

"I remember that just like it was a few days back," George recalled.

George said that the mule barn was located on the right side of present day Leggett Road at the top of the hill just past the last house at the foot of the mountain. This barn stabled all of the mules. In addition there was a blacksmith's shop on the back side of the large barn. Usually the mines employed more than one blacksmith.

There was one fatality around the barn. Dan Thomas, one of the original founders of the mining company, was killed when one of the mules kicked him in the head while he was working with it.

When George was growing up and the mines were still working, there was a black man named Jim Howard who ran the blacksmith shop and took care of the stables. Free Coulter and another man named Mills, both of whom lived in Coulterville, were two other black men who helped work the mines.

George spoke about mine safety for awhile. He said that in the old mining days, the company men went into the mines every day, or at least they were supposed to, and checked for bad air, cave-ins, or other dangerous situations. Even at that the mining business was dangerous.

On May 16, 1891, Jacob Troutman was injured by falling slate in one of the mines. On June 15 of the same year, James Sing was killed by slate because he disregarded a warning about going into a dangerous area in the mine.

On January 2, 1892, Daniel Smith was killed when over

a ton of slate fell on him. The Commission of Labor Report for 1892 stated that one and one half tons of slate fell on Smith and one other miner, John Palmer. Smith was killed almost instantly, but Palmer was only injured. The January 3, 1892 *Times*, however, reported that Smith was killed instantly and Palmer was severely injured, dying a few hours later.

An inquiry was conducted by state mining officials with Peter Bolton, a justice of the peace for Hamilton County, presiding. William Williams came before the justice as a witness and stated: "I was some distance from Daniel L. Smith when the slate fell on him at Sale Creek Coal Mines. I got to him only in time to hear him speak one word. He said: 'Lift, boys, for your dear lives.' There was about one and one-half tons of slate, known as horseback slate fell on him, causing instant death."

G.F. Burdet also swore to the same thing. Also called as witnesses were Robert Todhunter, William Williams, Samuel Fleming, Benjamin Hawkins, and E. H. Thompson. Acting as jurors in the inquiry were James Burdet, Thomas Thomas, C.A. Coker, Burd Thomas, Callaway Gann, and J.C. Potter.³

George related that he remembered two mining accidents himself. One of them involved his brother, Ed Gothard, who broke his back when a mule spooked in a mine and rolled him between the wall of the mine and a loaded coal car. Ed was crippled for life and drove a hand operated school bus for many years after that. The other accident that he recalled was the death of Will Gann in the coal mines.

According to George, there was a line of coke ovens that extended up the foot of the mountain. He said that some of the remains could still be hidden under ground up there. "A backhoe could probably unearth them without any trouble," he said.

On a recent trip to the site of the mines and coke ovens, I was able to find some of the foundations of the coke ovens as well as many of the bricks that were used in them. Some of the large concrete foundations for the coal tippie were also visible from the road.

Portions of the railroad right-of-way are also still visible. Pieces of coal and coke can be found at several locations close to Leggett Road where the old coal cars dropped small chunks along their way back to the main tracks.

George said that he went in one of the abandoned mines one day. He and Hershel Alexander were mining down in Burton Hollow at one time when they stumbled into one of the old mine shafts. They had opened up a small mine on the south end of the hollow and were doing some blasting one day.

"We kept a drivin' that thing back there until we drove right into one of their old mines one day there. We took some shots and shot right into the old mines. The Welshmen had worked in it. The Welsh people, now they knew minin'. The way they worked their mines, they made it high enough that you didn't have to crawl around in them like they have been making them the last few years. Mining now, you know, is done with machinery and they don't take much top."

When asked what he meant by "top", George said that "top" in mining terms means the roof of the mine.

"The Welsh people back then, now, say their coal was four feet high, they might take a foot of top and over the

roadway, well, they'd arch that top. They said that made the mine stouter."

"Me and Hershel, we went wild there one day, both of us. I told him after it was over, I said, 'Hershel, that was silly.' We cut into that old mine one day and the next day we were out there working when we decided to go back in there a piece. The tops of that mine were arched like that and some of them were still standing."

"Of course, they had big falls (cave-ins) in there, here and yonder. That's when I told him that there was something wrong with us. There was one fall in there that was as long as from here to that house over yonder," he said, pointing to a house about one hundred feet away. "And you had to crawl to get over it. After we got over it, why, it opened back up again and was all right. I told him after we got out, I said, 'We couldn't have done any crazier trick than that.' We had two carbide lamps and if we'd a got back in there and run into bad air as they called it, why those lamps would have gone out. There was no way we could have gotten out of there if that had happened. I told him, 'Boy, we ought to go to a psychiatrist or something for that! And he said, 'Yeah, I guess you're right.'"

"We just wanted to see what it would look like back in there. You could actually see, and he would tell you so if he was alive, you could actually see where the mules had pulled coal through those hallways and where their feet had gone in the mud. It gets muddy in the mines pretty bad and you could see where their feet had gone in and turned the mud over when they pulled their feet out. You could actually see that. And, Lord, how many years it had been, there ain't no telling."

George said that a lot of the tunnels from the original mines were probably still open. Nearly all of the entrances have caved in, but a person can tell where these openings were by the large slag heaps that are mounded in front of the mines.

One Sale Creek man, Jody McDonald, managed to crawl into one of the mines one time. Using a flashlight, he was able to explore a small section of the mine. Just before he went into the small opening, he told his companion that he would give anything to find an old miner's pick or anything else in that mine. His wish came true because as he turned a corner in the dark tunnel, there, lying against the wall of the mine, was a miner's pick.

This pick had leaned against the wall for over seventy years. The gentle pressure against the handle along with the wet conditions in the mine had caused the handle to become slightly bowed. Jody showed me the pick and said that people would not believe him unless they saw the pick. I saw it and I believe it.

George Gothard related how brick were produced at brick kilns located close by at one time. These were the old type bricks that crumbled apart after years of age. This recalled a story to his mind about an old fellow that lived in Sale Creek many years ago. This man's name was Chauncey Reavley.

Chauncey had been a brick layer all of his life and had laid many a brick out of the kilns from Sale Creek. He finally quit work later in life and began riding the rails as a hobo. He took a fellow whose last name was James along with him. They sometimes stayed gone for two weeks or

longer. Then, all of a sudden, they would show up again in Sale Creek.

Before they left on their trips, these two men always gathered up a little money to buy food or clothing that they might need on the trip. Usually this held them over until they could get back to Sale Creek. If it did not, then they just started begging.

One of their trips took them into one of the northern states, and as bad luck would have it, their money started running low. The two resourceful hobos took a few pennies and went into one of the little stores along the way and bought several of the smallest paper bags that they could find.

Being familiar with old bricks produced around kilns and coke ovens from his days around the mines in Sale Creek and having seen some deserted coke ovens at the edge of town, Chauncey went down to the ovens and found several crumbling bricks. He and James rubbed them together and made a real fine powder with them. They continued grinding up the bricks until they had enough to fill several bags with the dust.

Later that evening they went into the little town close by and told the local residents that the powder would kill bed bugs, a common household pest in those days. Everywhere that they went they sold several bags of the powder. George said that Chauncey and James sold enough of that counterfeit stuff to enable them to eat in high style all the way back to Sale Creek.

Chauncey had a real close friend, Bill Cunningham, with whom he used to run around when he got up in years. If someone saw Chauncey, they usually saw Bill and vice versa. They were such good friends that Chauncey once told some men around Dolph Lane's store that when he died, he wanted to be buried right beside Bill so that he could reach over and "goose him every now and then."

The Sale Creek coal mines continued in operation until 1913. When they closed that year, a chapter of Sale Creek's history was ended. For seventy years the mines had provided livelihoods for many men and their families in Sale Creek.

There were several reasons for the mines closing. One descendant of Dave Griffiths told me that methane gas got to be a problem in the mines and that the inability of the company to combat this buildup brought about the closure. It was also stated that the coal veins were "worked out" of coal and that profitable mining operations could not be continued. George Gothard stated that water in the mines got to be such a problem that the pumps were unable to keep them dry enough to work. Some of the shafts had eventually passed under Rock Creek, and this seepage, coupled with the other problems that the company faced, proved to be too much of an obstacle to be overcome.

Whether these circumstances brought about the demise of the mines or whether it was something else, the closing of the mines brought an end to a way of life for many mining families in Sale Creek. All that is left as evidence of the mines' presence are some partially open shafts, a few concrete pilings, a handful of elderly people who have vague memories of the mines, and pieces of coal and coke scattered around where the mines used to be.

Notes

1. Conversation with David Gray, October, 1986.
2. Commission of Labor Report for Tennessee, 1892, pp. 87-88.
3. Commission of Labor Report for Tennessee, 1892, pp. 89-90.

Chapter 3: Sale Creek's Small Businesses

Through the years there has been just about every kind of business imaginable in Sale Creek - general stores, farm stores, shoe stores, blacksmith shops, beer joints, cafes, farms, mines, grist mills, tanneries, sawmills, peach and strawberry packing houses, barber shops, doctor's offices, canneries, moon shine stills, movie theaters, bus lines, sorghum mills, gas stations, garages, boarding houses, ferry boats, and trading boats.

Probably one of the earliest small businesses in the area was the Patterson Mill, later to be known as the McDonald Mill. This mill was built by Abel Pearson in 1820 for Robert Patterson. Patterson is recognized as the first citizen of Hamilton County. Pearson was a millwright and the first preacher in Hamilton County.

Since the mill and dam were built fifteen years before the removal of the Cherokee Indians from the area, it is altogether possible that the first few loads of meal or flour that were ground were turned for the Indians that inhabited the creek banks at that time.

Robert Patterson gave or sold the mill to Ben and James McDonald around 1850. These two McDonald men married two of Patterson's daughters.

Robert Patterson's son, Lewis, operated a tannery on the Sale Creek in the middle part of the 1800's. With so many leather products needed in those times, a tannery was almost an essential.

The earliest record of a post office in Sale Creek was on October 26, 1841 when Thomas J. Coulter became postmaster. John Hickman followed on April 16, 1855 and served until February 18, 1856. He was followed again by Thomas J. Coulter. On March 18, 1856 Abel Pearson became postmaster. Pearson had also built the Patterson mill dam. He served for 10 years, through the Civil War years, and until January 9, 1866.

Gideon T. Morgan took over the next day and served two months until John R. Hickman took over again, serving for five years.

Peter Bolton, a well known name around Sale Creek in the latter part of the nineteenth century and a justice of the peace during the 1890's, held the office from January 11, 1871 until December 28, 1882. The postmastership stayed in the Bolton family after his tenure in office as William B. Bolton held the office from December 29, 1882 until April 1, 1886.

Jacob Alfred Newton Patterson, (J.A.N. to many and January to others) served from April 2, 1886 until June 30, 1889. Alfred was also an educator in Sale Creek for many years. His post office was located on the corner of present day Highway 27 and Leggett Road.

Ellen Jenkins followed Mr. Patterson and served from July 1, 1889 until September 14, 1901. She held office longer than any of her predecessors except Thomas J. Coulter. She served for over twelve years.

Peter Bolton returned to the post office in 1901 and continued in that capacity until February 4, 1905.

William M. (Bill) Beene took over the office on February 5, 1905 and continued until June 30, 1914 at which time he turned it over to Perry A. Wall. Mr. Wall, for whom



Grover C. Jones stands in front of the post office that was located on Leggett Road beside the railroad tracks.

Wall Street in Sale Creek was named, served until April 28, 1925. His little post office was located alongside the railroad tracks and Leggett Road on the west side of the tracks. Joe Rogers was the rural carrier at that time and did most of his delivery in a horse drawn buggy.

Ed Downey constructed two buildings in Sale Creek in 1925. The first structure was known as the first Tobe's Restaurant along the west side of the highway. The second building was a combination post office and office for the Ell-Dee Orchard Company. This building still stands on the west side of the railroad on Leggett Road. The front of the new post office building was used for postal business while the rear room was used as the office for the Ell-Dee.

The small, one-room post office that Mr. Wall supervised was moved halfway down Wall Street and added onto the house where William Fleming lived for many years. It still stands in that location.

Fred M. Burton entered the office as postmaster on April 29, 1925 and served in that capacity until November 28, 1925. At that time he continued in the employment of the Post Office Department as the rural route carrier until December 30, 1965 when he retired. He used T-Model Fords, horses, and even boats to deliver his mail in those early days of being the rural carrier.

Hettie Killian, whose father was Joe Rogers, the rural carrier while Fred was postmaster, filled the post from December 1, 1928 until November 4, 1929. Joe retired one day before Hettie began her tenure in office.

After Hettie left the post office, John L. (Luther) Coppinger filled the post until October 8, 1934.

Luther G. Coulter served from October 9, 1934 until August 15, 1943 at which time he entered the U.S. Army and served the remainder of the war in the Army postal service. Grover C. Jones served as postmaster during the next two and a half years until February 5, 1946.

At that time Luther Coulter returned from service and continued in the post office until June 30, 1974. Delsie Francisco filled a temporary position as postmaster from July 1, 1974 until November 9, 1974. Alvin Harris took over at that time and still serves as Sale Creek's postmaster.

Minerva Jane Martin was the first postmistress at Coulterville during the 1800's. Not as much is known about the post office in Coulterville; however, in its last years it was housed in the small country store which sat in the corner of the intersection of Coulterville Road and Swafford Road. W.I. Williams was postmaster there and served four different tenures intermittently from October 13, 1909 until October 8, 1911 and from June 21, 1916 until May 1, 1918. James F. Capps served from October 9, 1911 until June 20, 1916.

One of the most interesting facts about post offices in the Sale Creek area concerned a small office located close to the Tennessee River and not far from the Daughtery Ferry. This office was known as Pyatt, Tennessee. Grover C. Jones frequently spoke of it when he worked in the office at Sale Creek, and Luther Coulter finally found the signature of the postmaster of Pyatt on an old cash book that was about to be burned. The postmaster at that office from May 18, 1900 until December 14, 1905 was Phillip Fox.¹

At approximately the same time that Pyatt was in existence, the Coppinger family operated the Coppinger Ferry as well as a trading boat that went up and down the river peddling vegetables and other wares. A.D. Coppinger owned the ferry which was large enough to carry cars, horses, and wagons across the river to Birchwood. It was located at the end of Daughtery Ferry Road. The ferry was originally known as Doughty's Ferry after the name of one of the families residing on the Birchwood side of the river. Doughty's Ferry began around 1830 and continued under various owners until around 1930.

In the early years of the twentieth century river travel was one of the most important means of transportation for people living along the river. Automobiles had not been produced in sizeable numbers at that time; therefore, boats, and especially ferry boats, were vitally important. Several store boats were operated along the Tennessee River at that time.²

Each Sunday morning a riverboat towed the store boats up river to the last stop. At that point the storemen began their trip back down the river. These boats stopped at each landing and spent a day trading with the residents there.³

The Coppinger Ferry was a two part operation. A.D.

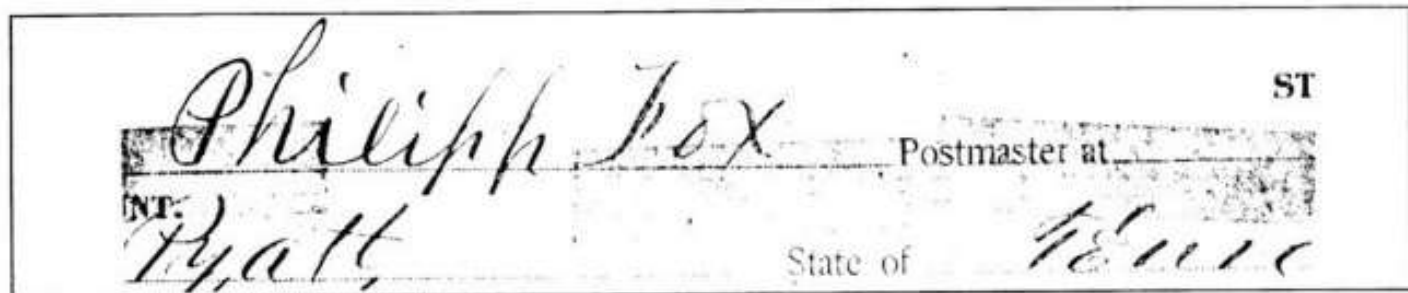


Bill Iles rides on the bow of the Coppinger Ferry that operated until about 1930. This picture was taken around 1922.

Coppinger, known to many as Andy and to most as just A.D., paid Roscoe Hoskins to operate the ferry for him while he operated the trading boat.

Margaret and Marilee Coppinger, granddaughters of Andy, remembered the little boat that plied the waves between Sale Creek and Birchwood. They recalled that the river was narrow enough at that point that people from the Birchwood side could yell across to the Coppinger home when they needed Roscoe to bring the boat over for a haul. Roscoe might pick up cattle, horses, trucks, buggies, wagons, loads of corn or wheat or just people on foot. Roscoe was a big husky man. His size was to his advantage as he used the large oars on the ferry to propel the boat across the river.

Meanwhile, Andy Coppinger would be off on his



trading boat. He was in the habit of trading goods with the local people who lived along the river banks. He often traded eggs and milk for wheat. When he got a good amount of wheat, he took it to Dayton and had it ground into flour. Then he stacked it in his kitchen for his own use or for possible trade to his customers.

In addition to regular money and barter, Andy Coppinger used script in his peddling operations. These small octagonally shaped coins were inscribed "A.D. Copinger - Sale Creek, Tenn." (This was not a misspelling of the Coppinger name. This family still spelled their name "Copinger." On the reverse side was the inscription "Good for 5 cents in trade." This script was used to give change to the customers. By issuing this script it insured Mr. Coppinger that the people would have to deal with him since no one else accepted the script as valid currency. This type of arrangement had been used a few years earlier by the Sale Creek Coal and Coke Company at their company store on Leggett Road.



A five cent piece of script from Andy Coppinger's trading boat. It was made of aluminum.

About the biggest problem that this family faced in their operation was chicken thieves that tried to steal their poultry when Mr. Coppinger was away on his boat or when he, Luther Coppinger, and Roscoe Hoskins went fox hunting. Mrs. Coppinger got real handy with her old .38 Smith and Wesson revolver and ran several would-be chicken grabbers through briar patches by firing shots over their heads from the back porch.

The ferry and trading boat continued in the Coppinger family until they closed the operations around 1930. It was never re-opened.

Because of the large forested areas around Sale Creek, the timber business has always flourished. Small sawmills dotted the sides of Sale Creek Mountain as loggers used mules and horses to snake logs out of the remote mountain lands. C.W. (Pat) Hoffman established a large lumber mill in Sale Creek and employed a goodly number of men to saw and plane the lumber. He became quite prosperous in his business before moving to La Grande, Oregon where he continued in the timber business there. Many people who got into this business got their start with Pat. Oliver Standifer was one of Pat's early partners in the business, and together they logged and sawmilled on Sale Creek Mountain.

Very few people lived on Sale Creek Mountain in the

late 1800's and the very early years of the 1900's. The road up the mountain was not very good and was steep in places. For this reason, wagons could not be loaded heavily. The steepness of the terrain gave birth to a name for one stretch of that road called "the Punkin Chute." Men travelling the mountain road often had to lighten their load before proceeding up the Punkin Chute. Then they emptied their wagon, went back down the Chute, brought up the second half of the load, reloaded the first half of the load, and then continued on their way. Oliver Standifer had a large log behind two trees along the road. When he started down the Punkin Chute, he tied a rope from the wagon to the log in case the wagon got away from the mules.

Mountain people raised plentiful crops in the rich mountain soil during the spring and summer months. This gave them food and income during the warm months of the year. Roberta Standifer said that her family always put up more than one thousand jars of canned goods for use during the fall and winter. During the winter months many of them resorted to lumbering and sawmilling for their income.

Pat Hoffman's sawmill sat on the west side of the railroad tracks and about 200 yards south of the Leggett Road crossing. It was immediately south of the Ell-Dee Orchard Company's packing house and almost directly across the tracks from Grover Eldridge's packing house. His operation was quite large for a small community at that time. Piles of lumber were scattered along Wall Street in the location of the parking lot of the Baptist Church, as well as out in the large field at the end of Wall Street in the area where the POW camp was located at one time.

Southern Railway built a small side track alongside the Ell-Dee shed and Pat's mill. With the amount of loading that was carried on at that time, it was a necessity that train cars be left at the mill and the packing houses. Box car loadings in a single day between the peach sheds and the mill might easily reach fifty to seventy-five cars during the peak of the peach season.

Farmers brought their crops to the depot and shipped them to markets in Chattanooga, Dayton, and other towns farther away. This was very advantageous to them. Addison Downey was a farmer all of his life and had a large farm along Highway 27 just north of Rock Creek. As a young man he took part of his first wheat crop to the depot in a large mule-drawn wagon. After loading the wheat on the waiting freight train, he received his payment which, according to one of his daughters, was fairly substantial. When he came out of the depot with his money, he was so excited over his prosperous crop that he walked over a mile home before he realized that he had left his team of mules and his wagon tied up at the Sale Creek train station.

Up until the late 1940's the railroad maintained local passenger service to the small communities. The Oakdale Accommodation left Chattanooga early in the morning and picked up passengers along the route north to Oakdale, Tennessee. The Sale Creek and Coulterville depots boarded many travelers who were going as short a distance as Dayton or as far as Chicago. Later in the day, the Accommodation returned south and dropped off freight and passengers on its way back to Chattanooga.

When the first diesel locomotives appeared around 1946, the railroad took the steam powered Accommodation off the rails and replaced it with a diesel engine that was known to Sale Creek residents as the Ol' Joe Wheeler. When the Joe Wheeler made its first stop in Sale Creek



The Standifers posed for a picture at the front of the Standifer Boarding House in 1946. From left: Bill Standifer, First name unknown - Davis, Johnny Standifer, Sherry Standifer (in lap), Riley Goodson (behind Sherry), Sue Cameron, Hilda Grace Cameron, Mildred Standifer Cameron (in back), Joanne Standifer Bowman, Shirley Davis, Juddy Standifer Smith (seated by tree), Phyllis Standifer Killian, and Ethel Standifer Mason. Seated on porch are Florence Standifer Newman, Jerry Standifer, Jimmy Ray Cameron, Barbara Standifer Binns, and Grace Standifer.

This picture was taken in the approximate location of Therle Francisco's Sale Creek Market and is looking south toward Highway 27. The road had not been raised at that time.

early one morning, Mr. Ervin McEwen, well-known mathematics and history teacher at Sale Creek High School for many years, dismissed his classes and took them up to the depot so that the students could see this modern transportation miracle.

The road between Chattanooga and Dayton during the 1800's was a lonely, tree lined stretch of by-way. People travelling on horseback or on foot frequently had to stop and spend the night along the way. Several families along the Valley Road (which is now called Highway 27) were known to travelers to be willing to lodge these wayfarers for a set fee. These homes were not regular boarding houses, they just agreed to take in the occasional customer.

Robert Patterson built a two story house in 1822 at the south end of Sale Creek on what is now known as Ragan Hill. This log home was later covered with regular clapboard siding, renovated several times, and stood for almost 150 years until it burned in the late 1960's. For many years during that time span, it was known to be a haven for the occasional, weary traveler who needed a warm bed, a cozy fire, and a good meal while on his sojourn.

With the amount of peaches, strawberries, and timber products that were being shipped out of Sale Creek and the

hundreds of men, women, and children that were employed here in the forests, fields, and orchards, there were often people coming into Sale Creek on business and needing lodging for a few days. Maggy Standifer, otherwise known as Granny Standifer, ran two boarding houses. The first was located in Slabtown. Maggy operated this establishment for several years while the coal mines were still in operation. Most of her boarders in this early boarding house were coal miners.

Around 1905 Maggy and George, her husband, built a new boarding house along the main road in Sale Creek. It was located in the same vicinity as Therle Francisco's Sale Creek Market today. This house was L-shaped with a two-story section parallel to Highway 27. On the back side of the house was the kitchen and dining room.

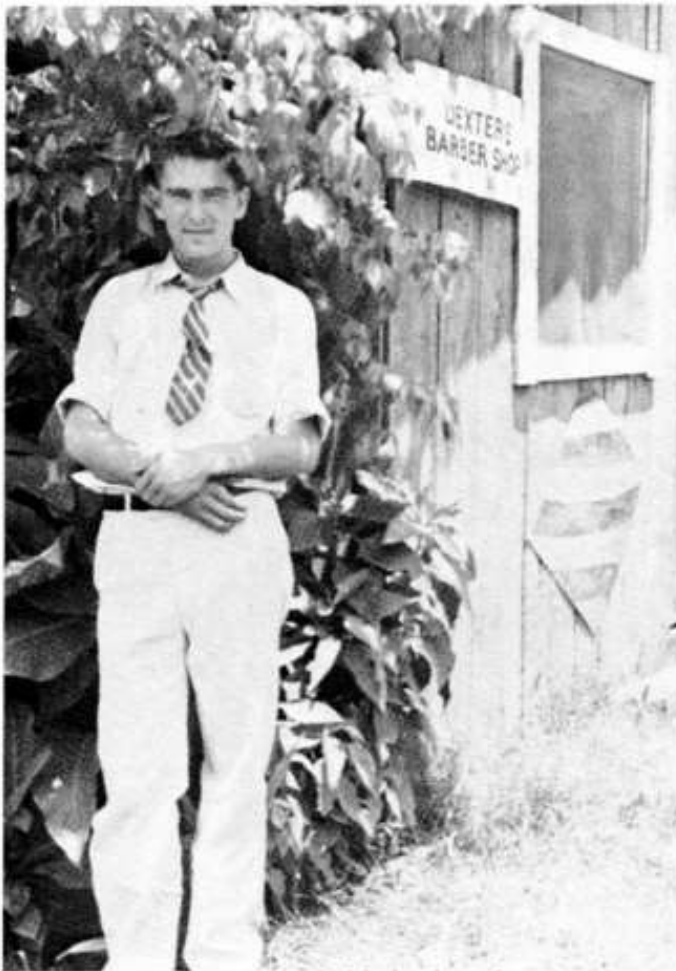
Maggy cooked all the meals for the boarding house until she got too old to take care of it at which time her daughter Florence took it over. After 1934 Florence did all the cooking.

The boarding house could accommodate no more than eight or nine customers at one time. There were no private rooms at all. The men who stayed in the house had to sleep at least two people to the bed. Occasionally, Granny rented

out the parlor if there was a large demand for places to stay.

Maggy Standifer was a very hard working woman. In addition to taking care of anywhere from six to nine boarders, she also raised cows, pigs, and chickens. She maintained a large garden to supply her boarding house with fresh vegetables. Usually she had a surplus that she sold around the community. She sold fresh milk, eggs, and butter in the community, too.

After Maggy died June 30, 1941, Florence continued the operation of the house. At that time her boarders were usually men who worked for Grover Eldridge, the Ell-Dee Orchard Company, or Pat Hoffman's Sawmill. The boarding house burned on March 21, 1949.



Dexter Coates started this barber shop in March, 1931. He is pictured beside it in 1936. Dexter's Barber Shop was located across the highway from Granny Standifer's Boarding House.

One boarder at the boarding house stands out more than any other, Owen (Tex) Kanedy. This man who was known simply as Tex to many of the people around Sale Creek at that time had boarded at Granny Standifer's for some time. He worked around the community doing odd jobs.

Tex was known to drink heavily at times. During the period of time when the depot was in operation, it was a favorite spot for drinkers to congregate, drink, curse, and fight according to some older residents of the community.

On the night of July 9, 1937, Tex Kanedy got intoxicated and wandered up to the depot where he sat down on the platform. The platform was made out of concrete and had only a small amount of clearance between it and passing trains. This small clearance allowed easy loading and unloading of the innumerable items that were shipped into and out of Sale Creek in those bustling times.

As Kanedy sat on the platform that night with his legs dangling over the edge, he fell asleep as a result of the effects of the alcohol.

Late in the night a fast, north bound freight train came through town. Kanedy was in such a drunken, sleepy stupor that he was either unable to hear the shrill steam whistle of the locomotive or was unable to get out of the way after hearing it. The speeding train struck and killed him instantly, decapitating the body.

The next morning after Kanedy was found, several members of the community, including S.E. Gann, helped remove his body. Deputy U.S. Marshal G.S. Gentry set about the task of locating next of kin of the deceased man.

A couple of days after the accident, a woman identifying herself as Kanedy's divorced wife, identified the body as that of Owen Carlisle, 40, of Reeves, Georgia. The ex-wife said that she and Carlisle had one child before they were divorced. She had been corresponding with him by mail using the name of Kanedy in addressing letters to him. She was unable to give any reason to Marshal Gentry about why Tex chose to use the fictitious name.

It would certainly be enlightening if one were able to identify all of the folks who had bootlegged illicit whiskey over the years. Since before the turn of the century, "moonshining" was a way of life for many people. Moonshining was the process of making whiskey, also commonly known as who-shot-John, home brew, corn liquor, rot gut, or white lightning. Many country folk produced this bottled hell for their own consumption. Others produced it for commercial enterprises.

In the early years of the 1900's there were only three families that lived in the area from the large stones at the top of Sale Creek Mountain all the way to the Bledsoe County line. There were many thousands of acres of land where whiskey stills could be hidden, and many were hidden between these two landmarks. One resident said, "On a clear day you could see a little puff of smoke over here and another little puff of smoke over there and another little puff..." from the fires of the stills on the mountain.

To the average citizen it seemed that very little was done by the authorities to put these bootleggers out of business. At least one deputy sheriff operated his own still, and at least three others that patrolled Sale Creek frequented the homes of several bootleggers on a regular basis. Many people have sat and watched these booze merchants peddle their fire water from parked cars both day and night on the side of Highway 27 in full view of anyone passing. To the law abiding citizen, these men were seemingly ignored by the police except for one revenue officer named J.D. Jones. Constable Jones probably had better tabs on the situation around Sale Creek than any other police officer. More than one still was blown to smithereens by him, and stillsmen lived in mortal dread of him flying over

and observing their operation. Therefore, many of them worked their stills at night in the light of the moon to prevent their smoke from giving away their location as well as to hinder the efforts of Constable Jones, hence the name moonshiners.

If the revenuers managed to surprise a still operation, a gun battle often ensued. During one such gun battle in the area, one Sale Creek moonshiner had his ear lobe perforated by a bullet and his partner's back and rear end were well peppered with birdshot from a revenuer's shotgun. The location of the injury gave a good indication of which direction the moonshiner was travelling at the time the gun went off.

Even as recent as the late 1960's, it was not entirely safe to wander around in some hollows of the mountainous regions. One of the best ways to get ventilated with lead was to walk up on moonshiners at work. For this reason people tried to be careful about where they did their hunting and exploring.

One Sale Creek family had a little tiff over one of the boys wanting to contribute some of his bootlegging profits to their church. His two brothers attended church religiously and were very highly thought of in the community for their moral leadership. As a result the two church-going brothers stopped the third brother and said that they would not allow the money to be accepted by the church because it was obtained illegally through the sale of alcohol, a product that was condemned by the church. As a result, no offering was made.

When Jeff Reavley was a young man and courting his future wife, Sally Pickett, he had a run-in with something on the ridge between Stormer Road and the highway. Jeff was known to take a little road that went across that ridge when he came home in the evening.

Tales began circulating about some kind of booger that followed people along the road. It really did not matter if it was day or night, this white spook just seemed to float out

of the woods and silently and slowly follow the traveler on his way.

One night as Jeff was coming home, he felt that something was behind him. Turning around, he saw the white shape of a man in the darkness behind him a little ways. When he speeded up, the haint speeded up, too. Jeff later told Jim, his son, "I didn't exactly run from it, but I walked awful fast getting home."

These sightings continued regularly for several years until the revenuers conducted a large raid in the area and blew up several moon shine stills. After the raid it is said that the white haints were never seen again. Jeff related to Jim that he felt that the spooks were actually revenuers keeping an eye on this road since it was known that bootleggers frequented this area on a regular basis.

There was no lack of market for the home-made fire water produced in the Sale Creek stills. Many men spent the better parts of their lives trying to drink the stills dry, and several of these men are planted in the Welsh-Rogers Cemetery as a result.

With so much whiskey being produced, it is only natural that there would be honky tonks in which to consume it. There have been many honky tonks and road houses that operated in Sale Creek over the years. One of the most notorious (the word famous would not be appropriate) was the Dead Rat. This beer joint stood on the right side of Highway 27 approximately two miles north of Sale Creek Bridge. It looked like an old army barracks style building and had the reputation of attracting a crowd that was as rough looking as its exterior. More than one person has had the living daylight beat out of him in this business establishment. In addition, there was at least one killing that took place on the front steps of the Dead Rat.

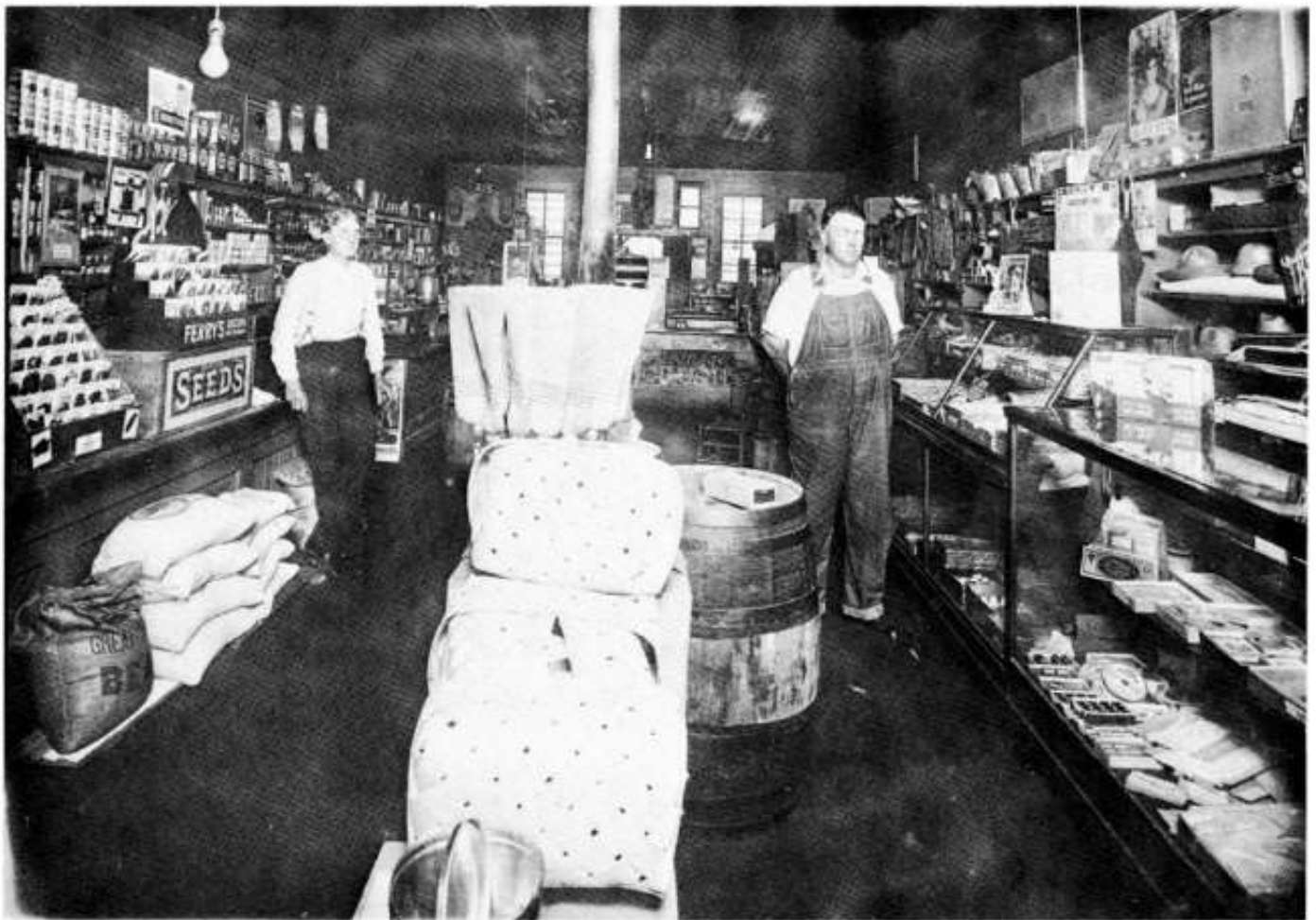
Another night spot in Sale Creek was located on Leggett Road just a few yards south of the old Slabtown Bridge. This beer joint was nothing more than some posts stuck in the ground and rough boards wrapped around four sides. It was painted green and had screen wire for windows and was appropriately called the Green Fly. The proprietor also built a platform beside the establishment so that patrons of the business could dance. A small restaurant was located close by. This further enhanced the desirability of attending this fine entertainment attraction; however, most folk in Sale Creek absolutely forbade their children, whether grown or not, to go to this road house.

No community can be without a good restaurant. Sale Creek's finest was known as the Sale Creek Cafe. Paul (Tobe) Coulter ran the Sale Creek Cafe which was located across the highway from Ott Davis's blacksmith shop. It was a combination diner, pool room, bus station, and gathering spot for young and old alike. Tobe kept the snacks in the front of the store and set up a couple of pool tables in the rear of the store. At night Tobe liked to shoot pool with several of his friends, Neville Troutman, Ervin McEwen, and Arnold Elsea to name a few.

One Halloween night a bunch of boys decided to go up to Addison Downey's pasture and get one of his cows. Then they opened the front door of Tobe's cafe and shooed Old Bossy right through the front of it and into the pool room. Tobe saw the frightened cow coming through the door and managed to jump over the pool table out of its way even though he had the handicap of a wooden leg. All of his other friends ran out the back door followed quickly by the frenzied cow.



Jeff Reavley had a spooky experience with either spooks, revenuers, or bootleggers on the ridge between the highway and Stormer Road. From 1959 until 1971 he operated an Amoco gas station on Ragan Hill on the south end of Sale Creek.



Dolph Lane's store alongside Highway 27 was a typical country store during the 1920's and 1930's. It carried food items as well as hardware, feed, and harness.

On another occasion a young sailor and his wife got off a bus that stopped at Paul's place. One of the Sale Creek bullies decided to pick a fight with this young man after he had insulted the young man's wife. After the customary preliminaries of criticizing one another's ancestry and mother's lineage, a fist fight ensued in which the young sailor whipped the bully and three of his buddies in a wild brawl. The last that was seen of the short sailor and his wife, they were walking out of the north end of town.

Many grocery and general stores have conducted business in Sale Creek, C.A. Lane, Dolph Lane, Ray and Elsea, Will Fuller, Jim Crawley, J. Howard Lee, Milton Crawley, Stanley Fairbanks, Johnson Coulter, the Home Store, J.M. Ledford, Alec Coppinger, Register Coppinger, and the list could be extended by many names if the chronicle could be extended into the last century.

These stores were some of the most important places in the community. They carried everything from canned goods to home products to plows to animal feed to fishing supplies to guns.

The Lane family ran at least three stores in Sale Creek. C.A. Lane ran a store in the building that had previously been the Sale Creek Coal and Coke Company store. Later

his son, Dolph, opened a store alongside Highway 27. Then he moved his business up Leggett Road to the same site where the company store had been. He built a new store there that remained until the late 1960's.

Howard Lee ran one of the most complete grocery stores that Sale Creek ever had. In addition to the regular canned goods, he also had fresh meats, fresh vegetables, animal feed, small hardware items, and general home needs. He had the largest selection of groceries that any store in the community had ever carried.

Jim Crawley operated a store on Railroad Street for many years before advancing age and a decreasing market drove him out of business. John Gentry continued in the same location for several years after Mr. Crawley.

Will Fuller ran a small store in Hodgetown for many years until his death. This small store along with many others in Sale Creek provided an important service to the residents of the community but were unable to compete with the prices in the large chain stores that came on the scene in the 1960's. As a result all of them eventually had to close their doors.

The Home Store operated in Sale Creek for several years in the same building that was later known as Ma

Nelson's. An interesting thing happened at this store one day. Al Davis had a goat that his father Ray Davis had bought from a man named Davenport. Mr. Davenport had gotten rid of the goat because it had gotten so mean. Plus, it had recently butted its way through a large plate glass window. Ray bought the goat at a bargain price and gave it to Al.

One day Al and a couple of the Crawley boys that he ran around with decided to go fishing at the Patterson Lake. They hitched up the goat and drove the little wagon to their destination. When they got to their fishing spot, they suddenly realized that they needed a couple of items from the Home Store. Connie Mack Crawley drove the little goat back to Sale Creek alone to pick up the items. When he drove up to the front of the store, for some unexplained reason the billy goat got out of its harness and threw a fit that was unparalleled in all the annals of Sale Creek history.

For the next half hour the wild goat terrorized that part of Sale Creek. He proceeded to whip a half dozen grown men and boys that were standing around Tobe's restaurant next door. Then he charged the occupants of the blacksmith shop across the street. The men in Ott's smithy saw the goat coming with head lowered and quickly jumped up, caught hold of the rafters overhead, and pulled themselves to safety in the rafters of Ott's loft.

The goat spun around in the middle of the shop and charged the screen doors of the Home Store across the highway. Several men who had been standing in front of the store saw Ol' Billy coming with his big horns in ramming position. They quickly jumped inside and closed the heavy inner doors just as the goat slammed into them. He kept banging into the doors with his big horns until he nearly tore the outer screen doors off their hinges.

This assault continued until Connie Mack borrowed a bicycle and rode to Patterson Lake to get Al to come back to Sale Creek to catch his ornery goat. When Al arrived on the scene, the big goat was prancing in the middle of the deserted highway, and there were captives in Tobe's place, behind the locked doors of the Home Store, and sitting in the rafters of Ott Davis's blacksmith shop.

The earliest known medical doctors in Sale Creek came during the late 1880's and early 1890's. Dr. V.J. Kennedy ran a practice in Sale Creek until he died on July 7, 1890. Dr. C.E. Downey was a contemporary of Dr. Kennedy and came to Sale Creek from Scottsboro, Alabama in 1887 to establish a practice and to be the company doctor for the Walden's Ridge Coal Company, later known as the Sale Creek Coal and Coke Company.

Dr. Downey's grandson, Harris, once said that when Dr. Downey went out on a call he never knew how he was going to be paid. It could be in cash, in mining company script, or in produce from a garden. Harris said he might even bring home a heifer or chickens as payment. The family never knew what to expect.

Dr. Downey was fond of good horses. One very spirited horse that he owned was named Frank and was probably his favorite. When the doctor was not out on a call, Frank was kept in the barnyard close to the Downey home. Several of the Downey children, Florence, Kittie, Mary, Ed, Addison, Lewis, and Otis, liked to climb up in a tree in the barnyard and call Frank's name. When old Frank came over and stood under the tree, they would say, "Ho, Frank!" and spit - ptui. The old horse hated this. My grandmother said that the horse then started pawing the ground, kicking, and



Dr. Columbus E. Downey (seated at left) with brothers John, Joe, Doc (standing). Rosalie is at right.

bucking. He hated the children and because of this, they never tried to ride Frank.

Dr. Downey died as a result of being kicked in the abdomen by one of his horses, believed to be Frank. He had stomach trouble which was most likely ulcers, and it is believed by his family that the lick from the horse's hoof caused the ulcer to hemorrhage resulting in his death.

Without the antibiotics and wonder drugs of the modern times, the early country doctors were severely handicapped in the way they were able to treat their patients. Not only this, but the doctors themselves were at risk when they ministered to patients that had influenza, small pox, typhoid, or diphtheria. Dr. Burk Priddy caught smallpox from one of his patients and died on May 3, 1914. He was buried in the Rogers Cemetery in Sale Creek.⁴

Dr. Priddy was not only a doctor, he was also an inventor. He loved to tinker with things. According to one



Howard Lee's Grocery Store was probably the largest and best stocked store that Sale Creek ever had. It was located on Highway 27 at the corner of Leggett Road.



Clarence Dotson and James Dotson stand in front of Dotson's Fruit Stand. This business has been able to survive in Sale Creek even after the large supermarkets placed stores in Soddy and Dayton. Their fresh produce provides a local alternative to shopping at the large chain store.

unconfirmed story about this man, he invented a type of metal detector. Word of this invention had gotten around the community, and he had demonstrated its use to several people. One young lady in the community lost a wedding ring in the area of the old mill dam one day, and Dr. Priddy and his marvelous gadget were reportedly dispatched to the scene of the loss. It is said that he puttered around the area with the device until he finally found the lost ring.

In addition to locating the ring, he claimed that his device turned up evidence of a vein of silver in the mill area. No one has ever found any evidence of this lode, and likewise, no one has ever been able to turn up any hard evidence that the metal detector existed or if it did exist, that it actually worked.

During the time from 1910 to 1930, two doctors are known to have operated practices in Sale Creek. Dr. James M. Richard had his office in the house where Bill and Thelma Ray lived for many years on Leggett Road. He lived in the large white house across the road from Sale Creek School. He continued in Sale Creek for several years before moving to Red Bank where he practiced until he died.

Dr. Warner Gross lived in a large, white two-story house next to Dr. Richard's office on Leggett Road. He maintained his office in this house. He continued in the Sale Creek area until he died and was buried in the Welsh Cemetery. Many older people in Sale Creek remember both of these doctors treating them, and at least one can remember their parents telling them that they were brought into the world by one of these two men.

After an absence of almost fifty years, the medical

profession made a return in 1981 when Dr. Edward D. Johnson built a clinic at the corner of Highway 27 and Griffith Street.

As roads became better, especially after the new Highway 27 was built in 1946, radical changes occurred in Sale Creek. The Ell-Dee Orchard Company went out of business shortly thereafter. With transportation improving, more and more workers began commuting to Chattanooga to work. This caused the agricultural business to plummet. In addition, the large chain stores began putting the small grocery stores and other establishments out of business. By 1965 there was only a handful of businesses left in Sale Creek including no more than five grocery stores, five gas stations, one restaurant (Rocky Side), one garage (Bill Gothard's Exxon), and two saw mills and building supply stores. The Dotson family operated a fruit stand which withstood this assault on the sole proprietorship. It still operates on the west side of Highway 27 close to the Methodist Church.

During the 1950's and until approximately 1965, the Home Stores operated a distribution warehouse and creamery in Sale Creek. Owned by Roy McDonald, this chain of grocery stores operated in every small town in Hamilton County as well as some of the surrounding counties. McDonald's creamery which was located close to the warehouse produced Honey Moon milk and ice milk. These products were the Home Stores' own brand and appeared in all of their stores.

During the middle 1960's Roy McDonald sold his chain of stores to the Mulkey and Jackson (M & J) Food Stores chain. This brought to an end the last large employer that operated in Sale Creek.

Now, twenty-five years later, there are no grocery stores as there once was. Bill Gothard still carries auto parts and does small engine repairs; however, he took his gas pumps out in 1988. Currently, only two businesses sell gas in Sale Creek, Therle Francisco's Sale Creek Market and Calfee's.

Sale Creek has one of the finest volunteer fire departments in Tennessee. It was started in 1972 with two old trucks and has grown until now it operates over ten vehicles out of three fire halls. Rescue and paramedic service are available, also.

There are no large employers in Sale Creek as there were fifty years ago. For that matter there is very little agricultural business at all. There are two or three small peach orchards left. Occasionally, small tomato truck farms operate on the sides of some of the hills. One or two dairies still operate, and several people raise a few head of beef cattle. Other than that the agricultural business has vanished.

The coming of better roads, better cars, and better jobs coupled with the rise of large chain stores plus other factors has caused the death of business districts in small towns like Sale Creek and has robbed them of the laid back atmosphere that characterized small town America for so many years. Yes, times are better now, but that good old "Mayberry Effect", or maybe we should say that "good ole Sale Creek Effect" will be sorely missed by those who remember what it was like.

Notes

1. Personal records of Luther G. Coulter.
2. *James County: A Lost County Of Tennessee*, College Press, Collegedale, Tennessee, 1983, p. 11.
3. *James County: A Lost County Of Tennessee*, p. 92.
4. *James County, A Lost County Of Tennessee*, p. 112.

Chapter 4: Camping On The Old Sale Creek

Since the time of the Indians, there have been encampments of one type or another around the Sale Creek area. Indian villages dotted the banks of the Sale Creek at one time. One of the largest of these numbered at least 19 dwellings on the upper end of the Sale Creek just south of the Rhea County line.

Colonel Evan Shelby camped between 600-900 soldiers at the mouth of the Sale Creek in 1779. Union and Confederate troops camped here during the Civil War on the grounds of the Sale Creek Cumberland Presbyterian Camp grounds. The Roosevelt Administration built a camp for young men who were employed in the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression, and the U.S. Army built a small temporary prisoner of war camp here during World War II.

Although there were no major pitched battles fought in Sale Creek during the Civil War, there were several incidents involving Unionists and Confederates. One of the most interesting of these involved an extremely loyal Unionist named Col. William Clift and a band of his followers.

Many people in East Tennessee were loyal to the Union during the war and refused to fight for the Confederacy. Because of this fact, they were often harassed by the Confederates. Col. Clift lived on a large plantation at Soddy and was known for giving haven to anyone who was being oppressed for his views concerning the war. Although he owned slaves, he was fiercely Union in his thinking.

As the summer dragged on that year, more and more refugees assembled on his farm. Therefore, he decided to bring all of them to Sale Creek and camp them on the grounds of the Sale Creek Cumberland Presbyterian Church campgrounds on the north end of what is now Coulterville. This camp was located just north of the old site of the railroad depot.

The local Confederate authorities from Rhea, Hamilton, and Meigs county decided to attack his camp and clean out this nest of Union sympathizers. As this force assembled and moved closer to the camp, many of Clift's friends realized that they were not adequately trained or supplied to fight this group. Therefore, they prevailed on Col. Clift to reach an agreement with them whereby bloodshed could be averted.

Col. Clift sent representatives to meet with Col. James W. Gillespie who was the assistant adjutant and inspector general for the state of Tennessee. Terms of a truce were hammered out which allowed the situation in Sale Creek to be defused before anyone got hurt.

Under the terms of the truce, the Unionists acknowledged their loyalties to the Union cause and further acknowledged that any further divisions and dissensions among them would only cause fighting to break out in the local area. This fighting would pit family members against one another, destroy the land and material wealth of the residents, and would not have any effect on the overall outcome of the conflict.

With these grave considerations in mind, it was agreed that the two sides would not take up arms against one another and that all the people of the county, Unionist or



This field and creek flats on the east side of Coulterville Road are the approximate location of the Sale Creek Cumberland Presbyterian Church campgrounds where Unionists mustered in the fall of 1861.

Confederate, would live peacefully together as loyal citizens of Tennessee. In return the Unionists were assured that there would be no reprisals against them by members of the military of the state.

With war beginning to rage closer to home, it was only natural that the truce broke down. Each side blamed the other saying that the other side had engaged in subversive activities. The Unionists once again gathered at the camp in Sale Creek and fortified it with earthworks and other defenses. Between 200-250 men gathered this time.

Several enterprising lads decided to build a cannon for the camp. Cutting down a large gum tree, they hollowed the center of it out to accept an eight inch diameter cast iron flue from a steamboat boiler. This was used as the barrel liner. Blacksmiths fashioned steel straps around the trunk barrel for added reinforcement. A set of oxcart wheels was used as a carriage for this Keystone Cop project. At last it was finished and ready for use.

This strange looking piece of ordnance intimidated any would be attacker for a short period of time. Then one day the gunnery crew decided to test the big gun for accuracy. They loaded it with a more-than-adequate charge of powder and iron slugs. Then one brave lad touched off the piece. According to records, the sound of the explosion was heard as far away as Chattanooga, thirty-one miles to the south. There was no piece of the cannon itself left that was any larger than a splinter, and not one spoke of the oxcart carriage could be found. It was further reported that the Unionists were scared so badly that many of them wished that they had never met up with Clift.

The 6th Alabama Infantry upon receiving news that Governor Isham Harris had directed local Confederate forces to march against Clift in an order dated November 14, 1861, also moved against the camp. The governor's order stated, "Mustering all the armed forces possible without calling on Zollicoffer, and capture Clift and his men, dead or alive." Zollicoffer was the commander of the 6th and received word

of this movement anyway. General Zollicoffer reported on November 17 that his men had arrived at the site of the Union encampment at Sale Creek and discovered that the insurgents had dispersed the night before.

Colonel Clift and some of his followers had wanted to stay and fight but were out-voted by the other members of the regiment. One hundred men voted to try to reach Kentucky and continue fighting there. Of this number about 65 followed a Lieutenant Colonel Shelton to Kentucky. Two hundred others voted to disperse. Approximately 10 or 12 went with Colonel Clift to the mountains where they continued their resistance.¹

Later in the war when the Union forces had gained control of the area, they maintained a field hospital at the camp ground and guarded it with a battery of artillery mounted on the hill above the camp. This battery was located close to the grounds of the old Sale Creek Cumberland Presbyterian Church.²

Union sympathies ran deep in the Sale Creek community. Jessie Shipley served in the Union Army and fought in several battles during the war. He served with the 6th Tennessee Volunteer Infantry Regiment which was stationed at Blythe's Ferry in October of 1863. This regiment of Tennessee Unionists eventually helped capture Atlanta late in the war. Its losses numbered 6 dead and 54 wounded.³

During one of his visits home to his family when his unit was passing through the area, the local Confederate forces closed in on the Shipley farm to capture him. When Jessie realized that danger lurked outside the house, he slipped out the back door and ran toward the darkness of the nearby woods. Gunfire erupted and ricocheted off the iron spiked fence as Jessie passed through the gap.

Jessie's brother, Cooley Ben Shipley, tried to live out the war without going to fight for either side. If truth be known, he was probably more sympathetic to the North than he was to the South. At least his actions seemed to prove this. One day while Ben was plowing his fields, he noticed a contingent of mounted Confederates approaching. He knew that they were there to conscript him for service in the Confederacy. He made his break for the woods before the soldiers were able to cut off his retreat. Leaving their horses, the Confederates continued their pursuit on foot.

With the soldiers gaining on him, Cooley Ben tried desperately to think of a way to escape certain capture. Then it dawned on him. He remembered that there was a large hollow log lying on the ground not too far from him. As best he could recall, it was big enough for a man to crawl into. With this thought in mind and high hopes in his heart, he turned up the speed and put a little more distance between himself and his pursuers.

When he arrived at the log, he hit the ground in a slide and scooted right into that hollow log. Using his hands and toes just like a mole, he pushed himself into the log as far as he could get. His heart was pounding and he was gasping for wind as he tried to lie very still while the soldiers milled around in the woods and grass around the old log. Finally getting his breathing under control, Ben was able to listen to the conversations as the men yelled back and forth at one another. One of them even came over and rested his foot on Ben's log and talked with one of his compatriots.

The search continued for some time until the Confederates were satisfied that Ben had escaped their dragnet in the woods. Finally, they mounted their horses and



Jessie Shipley, Sixth Tennessee Mtd. Infantry

left. Cooley Ben, as far as is known by any of his descendants, managed to stay out of the Confederates grasp for the remainder of the war.

Much is heard of the actions of men in battle during times of war; however, there were two Sale Creek women whose courageous deeds have been remembered and passed on down through the generations since the Civil War. One of these was an unknown lady who was out working in the woods when she noticed a lone Union soldier slipping through the trees. According to the story, she asked him where he was going, and he replied that he was trying to escape a party of Confederates that were chasing him.

In a matter of seconds, she heard the approach of some men thrashing through the thickets behind them. "Quick, hide under my skirts," she was supposed to have said. She was wearing the old hooped skirts with full petticoats with a bustle in back. She sat down against a large rock and puffed her skirt up after the soldier had crawled under the edge of her garments. Soon the Southern soldiers appeared and approached the young lady. After inquiring as to whether she had seen any Northern soldier that day and having no reason to believe that anything that large was hiding under her skirts and petticoats, they went on their way. The Union soldier then re-emerged from several layers of camouflage, thanked the lady, and was never seen again. Union sympathies seemed to run deeper than modesty in this time of war.



CCC Camp TVA-41 - An excellent shot of the camp as photographed from the water tank tower. The tank was located alongside Railroad Street. In the foreground of the picture can be seen the barracks. Beginning in the lower right hand corner and going counter clockwise are Barracks 1, 2, 3, and 4. In front of Barracks 2 in a clockwise order beginning on right side of the camp road were the main office, the Army officers' quarters, the forestry officers' quarters, and the quartermaster's building. The two buildings on the other side of the road beginning at upper left were the mess hall and the supply house. At upper right is the old Methodist Church which sat across Highway 27 from the present church. In the far background is the lower end of List Hill.

Elsie Iles's grandmother Shipley lived in Chattanooga at the time of the war. As she went to draw water for the family one day, she came upon a Union soldier sitting beside the spring. His head was hung over as he appeared to be very tired from the terrible fighting that was going on. Upon seeing the young lady, he told her that he needed his handkerchiefs and some other small items washed and would pay her handsomely for doing so.

The young woman took the soldier's garments back to her house and washed, dried, and ironed them. When she was asked by her mother what she was doing, she showed her the money that she had been paid for doing the wash and said that she had to return to the spring to deliver the items to the soldier.

Grandmother Shipley took the garments back to the soldier, and he thanked her very kindly and went on his way. Elsie said that her grandmother's idea of the young man changed considerably two weeks later when she came down with small pox as a result of handling the clothes of this young man who undoubtedly had small pox at the time that she washed his clothes.

For seventy years after the Civil War, there were no further encampments of the magnitude presented by the armies of the North and South as they passed through the

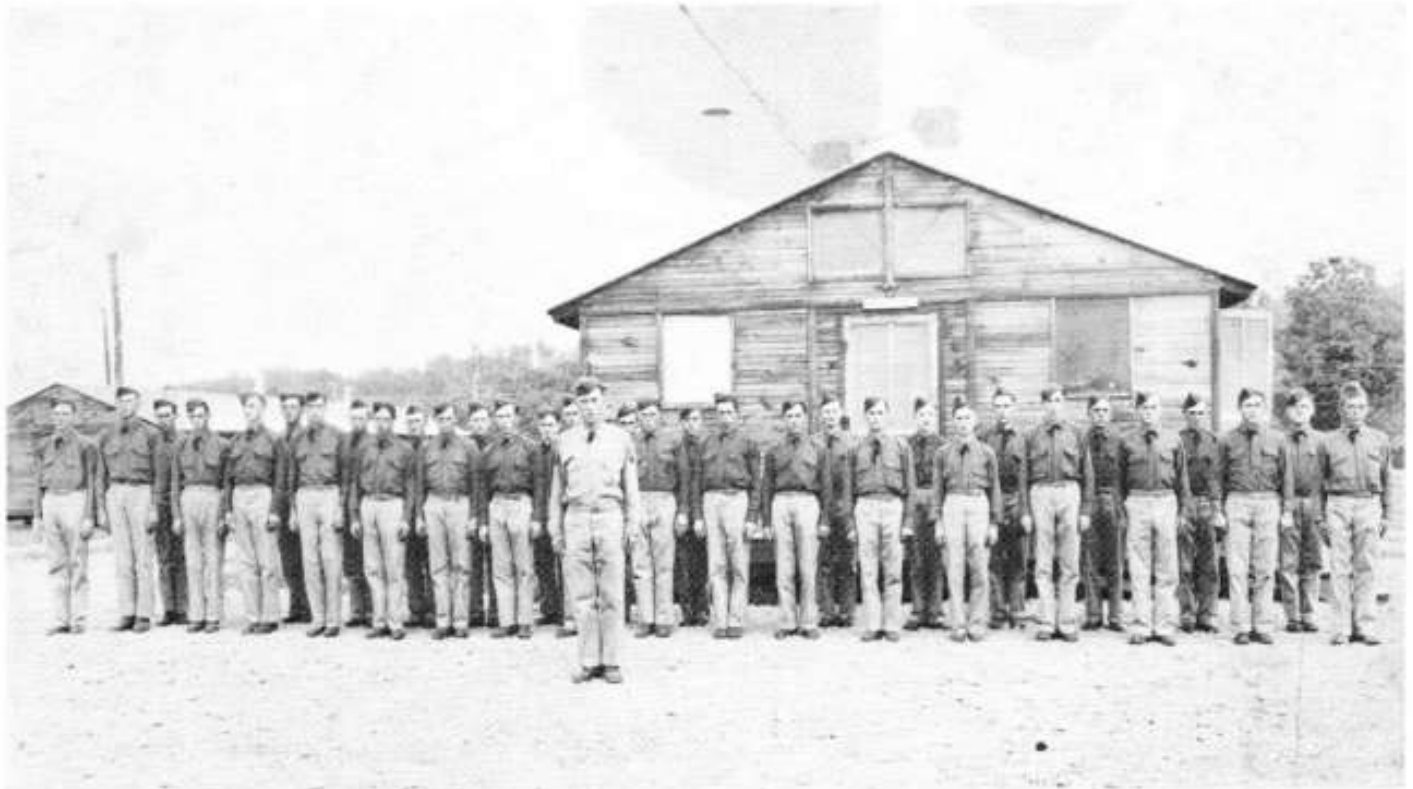
area. Then in 1929 the Great Depression struck the country bringing economic collapse to the economy of the entire country.

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) launched the New Deal recovery programs that were passed by the Roosevelt Administration in 1933. The purpose of the CCC was to put young, unemployed men to work at useful conservation projects.

The CCC participated in conservation endeavors such as planting trees, building dams to control flooding of rivers and streams, and fighting forest fires. Before it was abolished in 1942 after World War II began, more than two million young men had served in the CCC.

The camp at Sale Creek, Tennessee was established in the spring of 1935 and consisted of four main barracks in two rows running parallel to Highway 27. They were located in the field just north of the present day Sale Creek Methodist Church on the west side of the highway. The barracks were located approximately midway between the highway and Railroad Street.

Beginning on the north end of the camp, the first building alongside the highway was the mess hall and next to it was the supply house. Next came the entrance to the camp. On the south side of the road entering the camp was



In a picture taken in 1935, the men of Barracks 4 stand at attention while awaiting inspection. They are dressed in their uniforms. Their leader (front center) is a U.S. Army staff sergeant.

the main office. Directly behind the main office was the quartermaster's building. Along the highway and on the south side of the main office was the army officers' quarters. Directly behind the army officers' quarters were the forestry officers' quarters.

Each barracks held approximately fifty men so the capacity of the camp as originally planned was a little over two hundred men.

When the camp was built in early 1935, the buildings arrived in sections and were assembled on the camp site.

The sections of the buildings were then bolted together on their foundations. The regulations concerning buildings at that time stated that if buildings were nailed together, then they became a part of the land on which they resided. If they were bolted together, however, they were considered temporary and could be removed by the builder. Such was the case with the Sale Creek camp.

Men who came to the camp came from many different areas. Of course, some were Sale Creek men - Bill Ray, Loather Slatton, Bob Jordan, Tillman Fuller, Dave Gothard, Joe Hines, George Elsea, Sam Jones, Leonard Iles, and Willard Hodge to name just a few. Many others were sent here from towns in north Georgia. The first group to come to Sale Creek came from two camps on Lookout Mountain and was made up of men from Georgia. Some Sale Creek men who signed up in the CCC were sent to camps on Lookout Mountain, north Georgia, LaFollette or Crossville. Willard Hodge was at the Crossville camp until he got a bad case of pneumonia that forced CCC officials to transfer him to Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. They feared that he had a case of tuberculosis, but after examination by a doctor at that base, it was discovered that he had a case of double pneumonia. After recovering he went to LaFollette. After a short tenure there, he was moved back to Sale Creek where he finished out his enlistment of two years.

The CCC was run just like a military post. Each man wore a uniform that looked like an Army uniform. They were organized in squads and companies. The camp itself was administered by U.S. Army officers. The first camp commander was 1st Lieutenant David T. Ansted of the U.S.



The men of Barracks 4 won a trip to Norris Dam in 1935. They are shown in a group portrait with their commanding officer.



The CCC Camp had its own baseball team. Posing for their picture (1935 or 1936) are: (seated on ground) James "Cannonball" Ables. First row, left to right: Tillman Fuller, Boyd Renfro, Captain Byrd, company commander, Loather Slatton, unidentified, Walter Dismuke, Knappy Camp, George Carter. Back row: Charles Woolbright, Robert Jordan, Lester Nuby, unidentified, Joe B. Sanders, and John Emerson, manager.

Army Quartermaster Corps. His seconds-in-command were 1st Lieutenant Charles V. Giorlando, Infantry, and 2nd Lieutenant Edward D. McCrackin, Infantry. Dr. Albert C. Broyles, M.D. was the contract surgeon for the camp. Many people in Sale Creek remember this doctor as the one who either delivered them or their children. For many years he had a hospital and practice in Dayton, Tennessee.

Alfred Clark, one of the first camp residents who arrived in the spring of 1935, said that when he first came to Sale Creek, he smelled strawberries for over a mile before his bus reached the camp. It was strawberry time and there were strawberry fields everywhere in the valley. As a matter of fact, he said, there was a large strawberry field close to the camp, and workers were loading strawberries at the railroad as he got off his bus.

Mr. Clark related that the Sale Creek camp was involved in soil erosion work in this area. Their work area covered the distance from Tiftonia to Dayton. In speaking with Willard Hodge, he said that their territory sometimes covered more area than this.

The CCC enlistees were responsible for digging ditches, planting trees, and building dams. Alfred said that his group would take a hillside that was gullied from runoff from rains and would build terraces and earthen dams to prevent floodwaters from carrying topsoil into the river. This was at a time when TVA was getting ready to build Chickamauga Dam and about two years before construction started. It was their objective to prevent soil erosion from reaching the river while the dams were being built.

Willard Hodge and Marion Thornton were two of the truck drivers for the Corps at Sale Creek. They hauled the men out to work in the morning. Then if equipment or supplies were needed, they drove back to the camp and picked that up and delivered it to them. At lunch time the drivers picked up the men's lunches and delivered them to the men in the field. Late in the evening they returned and picked the men up for their trip back to the camp.

Willard said that when he entered the CCC's around 1935 that the men were paid \$30 a month. The boy got \$5.00 a month to live on while the remaining \$25.00 was



Allen Harper (left) and Walton Cameron (right) hold a 105 pound catfish on a pole prior to cooking it for the men of the CCC Camp. The men in the CCC were fed well even though times were hard.

Faithful Mascot of CCC Camp Is Killed

Members of CCC Camp TVA-41, near Sale Creek, stood with bowed heads Tuesday and paid tribute to the oldest veteran of them all—"Faithful Bob."

"Faithful Bob" was just a dog. He was of indeterminable ancestry, but he had the distinction of holding the longest service record of anybody in Camp TVA-41. He "enlisted" with his master over two years ago.

Bob was ambling along the side of the road Monday when a speeding automobile ended his CCC career.

He was buried with full CCC honors Tuesday. His human comrades joined in a day of mourning, and over his grave they put this epitaph:

"With grieving hearts we say good-bye.

To Faithful Bob, our friend. Though only a dog in the CCC He was faithful to the end."

With many men living in a strange town, it was only natural for them to become lonely and homesick. One camp resident brought his dog with him to keep him company. This old dog became the camp mascot and was loved by all the men.

When he was killed by a careless motorist one day, the obituary and memorial at left were found in the camp newspaper. All of the men felt that they had lost not only a friend but also a link with home, that link being the memories of their own dog.

sent home to his family to help them out during the hard times. With the CCC supplying all of the boy's food and clothing, it was easy to live off the \$5.00. "All you had to buy was tooth paste or cigarettes or something like that. Of course, you could take that \$5.00 and it would go a long way. You could buy cigarettes then for fifteen cents a pack," he said.

Other items in the camp store included razor blades, shaving cream, even beer. This store was very similar to the base exchange at many army bases.

All of the men who were in the CCC's lived on the camp grounds. Willard said that they were expected to live in the barracks and that they could go home on weekends. Even if an enlistee wanted to go to Dayton or up in Sale Creek, he had to get his sergeant's or corporal's permission to do so. It was just like the army. Alma Slatton, however,

said that Loather was able to live at home because his house and property were adjacent to the CCC camp.

With two hundred men in the area, it was sometimes hard for CCC officers to keep the men busy with work. As a result the CCC would often go out on private property and do jobs for individuals. One particular job of this sort involved some work that was done for J.T. Patterson. The old Patterson home that had belonged to Jacob Alfred Newton (J.A.N.) Patterson was right in the middle of what was soon to become Patterson Lake, a backwater of Chickamauga Lake. When the CCC came around to clear the area of trees, they removed the chimney stones and a large mill stone for Mr. Patterson and transported them to the present Patterson property at Patterson Curve. The large stones now compose a large porch and patio that Mr. Patterson built with them.

There was a differing of opinion about the men of the CCC within the ranks of the residents of Sale Creek at that time. Some people were afraid that with two hundred unmarried and mostly young men in the community that Sale Creek would become a small army post town with the drinking and carousing that usually accompanies a large influx of soldiers. Other people in the community recognized the situation for what it was, a group of young men who needed a job and who, for the most part, were very well behaved.

The latter turned out to be the fact. Most men in the camp were very well behaved. Many of them met, fell in love with, and married Sale Creek girls. Others who did not, took part in the community and went to church with the residents of Sale Creek. Most fears of bad behavior proved to be unfounded.

Willard said that some of the men did get in trouble in Dayton because "they fee-grabbed up there." (Fee grabbing was the practice of putting someone in jail under the flimsiest of pretenses for the purpose of collecting a fine or bail.) He said that there were a few boys who got into fights or got drunk but that was about it.

The CCC camp continued in operation until approximately 1939 when it was disbanded and the remaining men sent to other camps in the area. A stove mill was later constructed on the CCC camp grounds.



This bunk badge belonged to Alfred Clark and was used at Chatsworth, Georgia and later at Sale Creek, Tennessee.

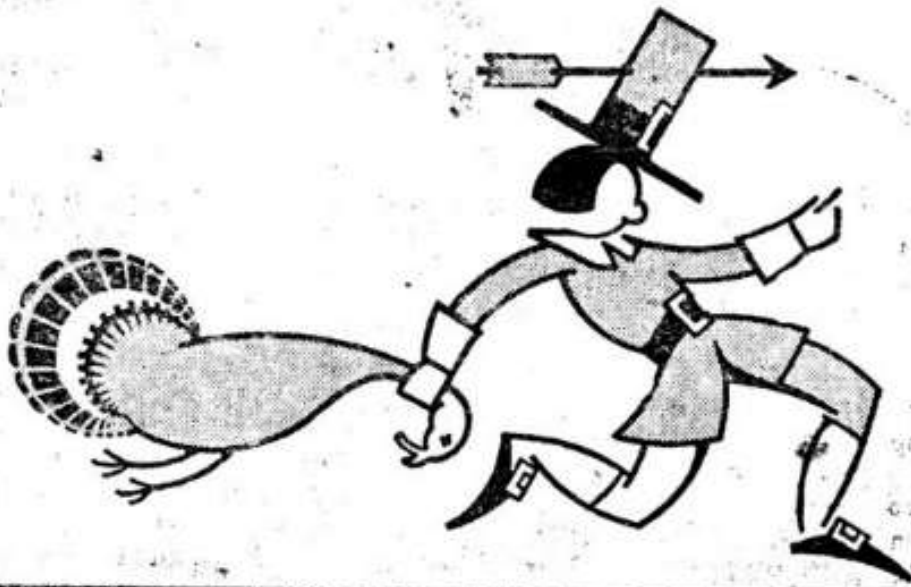
THANKSGIVING

M E N U

November 26, 1936

CCC Company 3470, Tenn. TVA-41

Sale Creek, Tennessee



COURTESY OF THE KELLOGG COMPANY, BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN

This menu for the 1936 Thanksgiving Day dinner identified the CCC company as CCC Company 3470, Tennessee TVA-41 located at Sale Creek, Tennessee.

OFFICIAL PERSONNEL

David T. Ansted, 1st Lieut., QMC.....Commanding Officer
 Charles V. Giorlando, 1st Lt., Inf....Side Camp Commander
 Edward D. McCrackan, 2nd Lt., Inf..... Exchange Officer
 John A. Emberson.....Camp Educational Adviser
 Albert C. Broyles, MD.....Contract Surgeon
 A. H. Bryan.....Project Superintendent
 E. B. Bryan.....Junior Forester
 William E. Schulz.....Junior Foreman
 V. W. Waller.....Junior Foreman
 Vernon Jones.....Squad Foreman
 E. R. Frick.....Squad Foreman

LEADERS

Robert Baker	Walton Cameron	George Carter
Allen Happer	Joe Hines	Ray Lowery
Carl Pickard	Alvin Rives	Marion Thornton

ASSISTANT LEADERS

Everett Blalock	David Gothard	Jesse Jones
Robert Jordan	Moore, Ernie	Frank Morgan
Pat McNabb	Claude Shadwick	Leather Slatton
Ewing Smith	Ernest Southern	Louder Taylor
Clarence Welch	Albert Withrow	Charles Toolbright

MEMBERS

James Ables	Lanis Adcock	Herbert Anderson
Douglas Austin	Idisa Benson	William Tibbrey
P. H. Billingsley	Menzo Blackwell	Lock Brackin
Sam Cates	Robert Caughron	Alfred Clarke
Lee Clark	Corbet Coffee	Erwin Coleman
John Condra	Gordon L. Cook	Charlie Cox
Nina Cravens	James Cruise	Jesse Cunningham
Harold Davenport	Asa Davis	Bill Davis
Clyde Davis	Joe Davis	Walter Dismuke
Harold W. Dobson	Turkett P. Doll	Bose C. Dorsey
Ernest Dunaway	Earl England	Lawrence Floyd
Tillman Fuller	James Fultz	Norman Gardiner

The inside of the menu program contained the names of the official personnel of the camp. The leaders in the middle of the page were the squad leaders. Many of the older residents of Sale Creek will remember many of these people as either Sale Creek residents or as men who married Sale Creek women.

James A. Gatlin	Jack Gear	Robert Gossett
Rued Griffin	James Cunnella	Edward Hale
Mose Hamilton	Benton Hargis	J. D. Harrell
Powell Harris	Glenn Henderson	Chester Higdon
Willard Hodge	Charles Holder	Thomas Holley
Ray T. Howell	Gilbert Howell	George Hudgens
Orville Hutchings	James Hutson	Robert Jackson
Vester Kelsey	Paul W. Keltch	Selvin King
Joseph C. Kiser	Hollie Lafever	Wesley Lafever
Eugene Lambert	Paul Lawson	George S. Lee
Vergil Locke	Alfred Lowe	Lewis Mainord
Jim Manis	Ernest Mayfield	Eugene Miller
Raymond Mitchell	William Mitchell	Franklin Myers
Tom Myers	Charlie McBride	Marvin McBride
Steward McDaniel	Robert McGraw	Raymond McLeod
George Neojin	Lester Nuby	Jim Odell
Vaughan O. Cody	Thurman Page	Fred Parks
Walter Payne	Ellis A. Pearson	James Pennington
Larrest Phillips	Hollis Phillips	Alva Pistole
John Pleasant	Robert Ratchford	Bill Ray
Raymond Reno	Willie D. Robbins	Walter Rollins
Jack Russell	Joe Sanders	Loyd Sanders
Willie Sanders	Cordell Scott	Loyal Shaw
Donald E. Simmons	William Sims	Sam Sliger
Sidney Smartt	Leonard Smith	Otto Smith
Mather Spicer	Fred W. Staley	Willie Stoner
Eyron Sweeten	Dudley Swindell	Will Ed Swindell
Herbert Tackott	Randel Templeton	Jesse Terry
Throneberry, Dave	Oliver Thurman	Doyle Tucker
Clyde Vance	Sud Venson	Charlie Walker
Robert Walker	James Wallace	Walter Ward
Alton B. Weeks	William Welch	J. D. White
Jessie Winnett	Smith Winnett	Thurman Young

This is the remainder of the CCC roster of Company 3470, Tennessee TVA-41.

M E N U

THANKSGIVING DINNER

Thursday, November 26, 1936

	Celery Hearts	Olives	Pickles
Roast Turkey	Oyster Dressing		Giblet Gravy
	Sliced Tomatoes		
	Hearts of Lettuce		
	Cranberry Sauce		
Candied Sweet Potatoes			Mashed Potatoes
	Early June Peas		
	Sweet Corn		
Parker House Rolls			White Bread
	Mince Pie		Pumpkin Pie
	Apple and Celery Salad		
	Fig Pudding		Plum Pudding
Punch	Butter		Coffee
	Fruit Cake		
Apples	Oranges		Grapes
	Mixed Candy		Mixed Nuts
	Cigarettes		

Times might have been hard, but that did not keep the men of the CCC camp from enjoying a wonderful, bountiful meal.

Camp Chatter

"Knappy" had better appoint some guards to patrol the highway this weekend while he is on weekend duty as leader. Oh, Femme.

Look out, Johnny. Are you slipping, old pal?

Mr. Cameron says, "Has you got a date wid this lady?" Slabtown Blues.

We wonder what's wrong with "Preacher" and Helen.

Look out Mitchell, O'Kelléy is going strong.

Why does Thornton sing "My Wild Irish Rose"?

We wonder what Pickard and Manis were doing in Coulterville Sunday night. Chasing Jim's Black Cat, maybe?

We wonder why "Tall Daddy" (Oscar Williams) is so happy these days.

"Cris" Woolbright and "Skinny" Beavers, the ridge runners of Co. 3470, are at a loss as to what to do.

We wonder why "Chigger" Parson is now selling Candy instead of Lumber.

We wonder what Rives was doing walking up the highway Saturday night.

Don't call him "Papa Lard" just call him Alfred. Meaning Mr. Clarke.

We wonder why "Cowboy" Welch is staying in so close.

We wonder why Durden is mad at "Preacher." Or will be.

We wonder why Mr. Gilbreath is so sad since Tall Daddy is so happy.

We wonder why Lt. Rheberg goes to see Keener so often.

We wonder why Ab Withrow doesn't go to Slabtown any more.

We wonder what "Cris" thinks of the Forest Service now. Whoa, Jonesy.

We wonder what "Cookie" Sorrows goes to Chattanooga for so often.

Carter likes Brock's candy, too.

The Ragged Reporters.

CCC boys kept up on the latest news by reading *Camp Chatter* which ran regularly in the CCC Camp paper. This particular article occurred in 1935 or 1936.

Many of the men in the camp had nicknames as is evident. Several of these men also married Sale Creek women.

Oscar "Tall Daddy" Williams married Margaret Martin, daughter of Zack Martin. Oscar lived the rest of his life in Sale Creek, and his children still reside here today.

Walton Cameron married Mildred Standifer who was the daughter of Oliver Standifer.

Oscar "Knappy" Camp married Oliver Standifer's other daughter, Thelma.

Alfred "Papa Lard" Clark married Irene Swafford, daughter of Major Swafford.

M. H. (Marion) Thornton married Lois Coulter, daughter of W.L. Coulter.

camp. He referred me to the US Army Military History Institute at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. I called the institute and told one of the officers there what I was looking for and asked for his help in locating a picture of the camp. I was told that they would do a search of their files to see if anything could be found.

Two weeks later I received a letter stating that there was no official record of there ever having been a camp at Sale Creek, and, therefore, there were no file photos of the camp.

I decided that at that time there was nothing left to do but to locate individuals who remembered the camp and write down their testimony as to the authenticity of the camp. Their recollections of the camp were more than enough to paint a picture of what life was like around the compound.

During 1943 when the war effort was getting in high gear and so many young men were leaving Sale Creek to go to fight, there was a real shortage of farm help. Peaches had always been big business in the community ever since around 1900 when W.H. List started the first large orchards here. With all the younger, able-bodied men of the community gone off to war, the orchards were falling into a run down condition, and there was fear that there would not be enough help to pick the crop that year.

The U.S. Army had already begun bringing a number of prisoners to the United States to be used in agricultural jobs to replace some of the men who had left for service. One of the Tennessee prison camps was at Crossville. However, there was a closer one located at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia.

In all more than 378,156 Germans were brought into the United States to help fill critical shortages of manpower. Of course, only a small fraction of this number were sent to Fort Oglethorpe, and the number that stayed at Sale Creek only numbered between 100 and 150. Archie Poole was a military policeman during the war and made several trips to Fort Oglethorpe to deliver prisoners from bases along the East Coast.

During that year a number of prisoners from the Fort Oglethorpe garrison were sent to Sale Creek to help out in the peaches. From the people that I spoke with, it seemed that most of them worked in the Grover Eldridge orchards close to the river and in the Hodgetown area.

Tom Crawley recalled that he was close friends with Johnny Shipley when they were in high school during that time period. On numerous occasions he spent the night at the home of Johnny's parents on Leggett Road not far from the camp. He and Johnny walked down to the camp occasionally and listened to the prisoners sing at night after their work was finished. He said that he always enjoyed listening to them sing their German songs as evidently several other people in the community did, too. Small groups of local residents formed outside the compound to get a glimpse of the Germans and to hear them talk and sing.

Tom said that he did not remember the group of prisoners staying long in Sale Creek, possibly just a few weeks while the crops were being gathered.

Probably the most interesting bit of information that I ran across concerning the camp came from Tom. He said that he had spoken to someone about the camp several years ago, and this person recalled a television show that was broadcast by one of the national broadcasting companies. There was a guest on that show who was a German visiting this country. During the course of the conversation on this

Probably the most disappointing aspect of writing this series of stories about Sale Creek has been the inability to turn up a picture of the German POW camp that was established in Sale Creek during the summer of 1943.

When I was a little boy growing up, I often sat and listened to my parents and grandparents talk about a prisoner of war camp that was located here during World War II. I never showed more than a passing interest in the whole idea at that time, but as I got older, I spoke with them again about it, and they assured me that it actually did exist.

In my search for information concerning the camp, I asked many of the local residents who lived in the area of the camp if they might have a picture of it. I also contacted the state archives and the libraries in Chattanooga. Finally, I contacted Colonel Edward Alexander (US Army), in Germany. Edward had worked in the Pentagon at one time, and I felt that he might be able to tell me where I could find the information that I sought as well as a file photo of the

show, the German fellow told the host that he had been in the United States many years before as a prisoner in a small POW camp in the South. He said that he had picked peaches in Sale Creek, Tennessee in 1943. Tom said that he cannot remember who the person was who told him this story or when it was told to him.

The camp itself was located alongside the railroad tracks about 250 yards south of Leggett Road crossing on the west side of the tracks. It was just south of the Ell-Dee Orchard Company packing house and the Pat Hoffman sawmill. The entrance to the compound was on Wall Street close to the old Perry A. Wall house.

Sylvia Hodge said that she remembered the camp having high barbed wire fences, much higher than a man's head. Tents were used to shelter the men, and the ground was covered with wood shavings and sawdust from Pat Hoffman's sawmill next door. Willard Hodge said that he had talked with the guards on several occasions. The guards were all Army troops that had been sent up from Fort Oglethorpe.

George W. (Billy) Ray has a vivid memory of this camp. He was a young boy of twelve or thirteen years of age when it came to Sale Creek. At the time he was working for Grover Eldridge in the peach shed. He said that one day a group of soldiers came into Sale Creek and began stringing barbed wire in the field across the railroad from Grover's packing house.

"We used to go down there along the railroad and play on the old planer saw dust pile. That thing was bigger than a house. We'd get boards that Pat Hoffman had discarded and get up on that pile and slide down it just like you would if it had been snow," he recalled.

"We kept seeing them build a big old fence right down beside the old planer mill. I guess it was right over there where they were going to put that coal crusher at one time. Somewhere around there close. They kept building this big old fence."

"Well, we kept wondering what was going on. Being kids we were curious and too afraid to go and ask. Then along about peach season, they started putting up tents. They didn't have any permanent structures, or even portable structures, just tents you know."

"One day they brought them in. Said they were the peach pickers. Why, I guess there were 75 or 100 prisoners in there. I know there was a bunch of them. They picked for Grover Eldridge. They didn't pick for Ell-Dee at all. I don't know how Grover swung the deal, and I don't even know where they came from. I know that the guards were out of Fort Oglethorpe."

"The guards asked us one day where a good swimming hole was, so we told them. They used to take us up to the Boom swimming everyday. They were the only ones around that had enough gas in a truck to get up there and back every day."

"They (the Germans) had their own cooks. The Germans did their own cooking and the Army did their own cooking. I know they had a bunch of portable kitchens across from the old peach shed there. I've been down there early of a morning before we started work and seen smoke rising from their fires over here, and smoke be a risin' from the Army's fires over there."

"There were at least twenty to twenty-five soldiers guarding the Germans - at least that many, maybe more. There had to be to guard that many Germans," he continued.

Billy said that to his knowledge none of the prisoners ever tried to escape. "It wouldn't have done them any good. Probably ninety-nine percent of them could not even speak English. You'd hear 'em jabbering when they got off the trucks at the end of the day. Course, they probably wouldn't have spoken English in front of anyone anyway, but I never heard 'em speak English."

Actually, there was no possible place for them to go even if they had tried to escape; therefore, there was never any known attempts to do so.

Billy also confirmed what Willard Hodge and Tom Crawley had told me, that a good crowd of Sale Creek folk often gathered at the compound to hear the prisoners sing at night. "Yeah, we sat on the railroad tracks and they'd be over there just having a big time. There would be a pretty good crowd of people over there listening to them. They sang some good harmony, too. It was some pretty good singing."

Billy said that there were two gates. The main gate where the trucks went in and out was located at the end of Wall Street as previously stated. There was a smaller gate alongside the railroad. "That was the gate I went in when I went to get my foot worked on," he said.

Most likely, Billy was one of very few Sale Creek residents who ever got a chance to go into the compound, and he would not have been accorded this distinction if he had not stepped on a piece of barbed wire and cut his foot.

At that time most children did not wear shoes much during the summer months as they worked around the peach orchards and the packing sheds. One day as he was turning peach baskets, he stepped on a piece of barbed wire and cut his foot. He left it unattended for a couple of days until it became very painful, and he developed a limp.

Mrs. Grover Eldridge noticed Billy limping around that morning and feared that the cut had become infected. She called one of the guards from the compound and told him to take Billy over to the German doctor to see if he could do something about the cut on his foot.

"She told the guard to take me over there and he did. The doctor said, 'Ya, ya. No lines, no lines. No blood poison.' (He meant that there were no tell-tale red streaks extending up the leg which would have signaled blood poisoning.) He used broken English, he didn't speak fluent English. He swabbed a little Q-tip type of thing in the cut and cleaned it."

"The guards were armed and guarded the fence at all time," Billy continued. Sentries with bayonet tipped rifles patrolled the outside of the fence and kept anyone from getting too close. "They didn't want you hanging around the fence. About the closest we ever got was, like I say, over there on the railroad tracks along the side, except for the time the guard took me inside."

Al Ray Davis also had vivid memories of the camp. A youngster of 13 or 14 years at the time that the prisoners were here, he remembers many details of their stay in Sale Creek.

When asked about the size of the camp, he said that it was a large barbed wire enclosed compound that extended from Pat Hoffman's sawdust pile at the end of Wall Street all the way to its southern boundary at Reavley Road. From the railroad it was about seventy-five yards deep, a long rectangular shape.

Al remembered that there were either 16 or 18 tents with each tent holding eight prisoners. This computes to a

maximum of between 128 and 144 prisoners. Al also said that there were several Army trucks at the compound that transported the prisoners to the peach orchards where they picked.

The only jobs the prisoners were allowed to perform were picking the peaches, some loading onto train cars, and unloading supplies. They were never allowed in the packing houses where the women, children, and old men were working.

Al remembered quite well one incident that happened one day as a group of these men unloaded basket liners from a train car on the tracks.

Basket liners were cardboard or heavy paper liners that went on the inside of the baskets. This liner protected the peaches from being bruised or cut against the wooden slats of the peach baskets.

The liners were packaged inside one another much like cupcake wrappers. Then they were wrapped in brown paper packaging. These large bundles were what the prisoners were unloading that day.

As the work progressed, one of the bosses in the peach shed noticed that the prisoners were dropping a lot of the bundles off the train, supposedly by accident. In actuality they were hoping that one of the bundles would break open so that they could see what was in the package. Finally, the boss in the packing house told the burly sergeant who was in charge of the soldiers what the prisoners were doing. This sergeant was a veteran of the North African campaign and had been wounded in action. Therefore, he had been sent home to the States to recuperate. That was the reason he was guarding prisoners in Sale Creek.

When he heard about the problem, he walked over to the prisoners. He was armed with a .45 caliber pistol and a Thompson submachine gun. He patted the machine gun lightly as he spoke to the prisoners.

"Now, I know that you all let on like you do not understand English, and I know for a fact that you do understand English, so I'm telling you just one time. If one more bundle of liners hits the ground then I'm going to blow your rear ends off!"

Al Ray said that the remainder of bundles were handled like they were egg shells.

This incident helped dispel the idea that none of the Germans could speak English. Many of them could. They just did not speak it unless they were spoken to by an American or unless they had a real good reason to do so.

Al said that he spoke to several of the prisoners while they were here. The guards did not let anyone hang around the fence along the sides and back of the compound; however, anyone that wanted to talk with a prisoner could approach along the railroad tracks and ask permission of a guard, and they were usually allowed to converse freely.

One day Al got into a conversation with an older German. This soldier said that his home was in a town close to Berlin and that he had been captured in the North African campaign as had most of the other prisoners in the camp. He also vented his hatred for Hitler and told Al that he was disgusted with the Fuhrer. Al said that this German spat each time that he mentioned Hitler's name. The prisoner also said that his entire family had been killed in an Allied bombing raid, and he held Hitler responsible.

Al heard another prisoner say that America was a beautiful country, and that he would like to live here.

Of course, the main question that arose in all of this

was, "How did people in Sale Creek feel about having over one hundred German prisoners in the middle of Sale Creek?" Al said that he heard comments about them. Many people disliked the idea and resented as well as hated them for what they had done and for what they stood for. Even still, I have heard many people speak with compassion about these poor fellows who were so far from home.

Boots (Lane) Crawley said that she had been in a group of young people who had gone down past the camp one day. As they passed by, they sang a song to the men in the compound. To their surprise and astonishment, the Germans sang a German song back to them.

Although Al could not remember this next incident personally, he was told that it did actually take place. He said that a group of town folk put together a small entertainment show and, after securing permission of the commander of the camp, went inside the compound one night and performed for the prisoners. One lady even played the piano for them.

Loretta (Troutman) DeFries told about one experience she had at the camp. Loretta said that she was down by the camp one day with some other girls when she noticed one good looking young man standing at the fence looking in their direction. Later she received a note from the German saying that he would like to talk with her. He said that he was originally from the state of California but had gone to Germany to fight when the war first began. He was captured early in the war in North Africa and was sent to Fort Oglethorpe to prison camp.

Loretta said that she did not go back to see the young man because, first of all, she was afraid of what people in Sale Creek might say about it, and secondly, she was afraid to talk with him.

When Al Davis was asked about whether he knew of any escape attempts, he said basically the same thing that Billy Ray had said, that there were none of which he knew, and even if the Germans had escaped, they had nowhere to go.

Al had the presence of mind as a young boy to ask one of the guards about this very subject, and the guard had answered that it was very unlikely that they would attempt to escape. He further stated that they (the Germans) did not really want to escape because there was nowhere for them to go to find haven.

One rumor that floated around at one time was that one or two did escape and were recaptured close to Dayton. No one has been able to confirm this allegation.

The only other misconduct that Al remembered was an incident that involved some swastikas scratched into the skins of some peaches that came down a conveyor belt one day. The graders on the line noticed several of these odd peaches with the Nazi symbol scratched into the skins. They collected several specimens and called one of the guards and showed him. "Just don't worry about this, it'll never happen again," he said. "I'll see to that." No one knows what happened, but the incident was never repeated.

"They were here about six weeks. They tore it (the camp) down when they left after the peach crop was over," Billy Ray said. At the end of the packing season that year, a season that saw the Germans pick thousands of bushels of peaches and touch the hearts of many residents, the Army loaded the prisoners up one day and shipped them back to Fort Oglethorpe. The Peach Pickin' Afrika Korps was history.

Notes

1. *A History of Hamilton County, Tennessee*, James W. Livingood, Memphis State University Press, Memphis, Tennessee, 1981, pp. 58-59.
2. Conversation with David H. Gray, October 1986.
3. Untitled history of the 6th Tennessee Volunteer Infantry Regiment.

Chapter 5: The School At Sale Creek



The first school at Providence was this one-room wooden building located at the end of Shipley Hollow Road. It stood in that location until 1914 or 1915 at which time it burned. It was replaced with a brick structure around 1916. None of these pupils are identified. It is thought by several of Sale Creek's older residents that the man in the picture was Mr. White Abel. By best estimates, the picture was taken between 1900 and 1910.

Since before the War of 1812, the Sale Creek community has striven to meet the educational needs of its children. Today there is only one school, that being the K-12 facility on Patterson Road. Earlier in the century; however, there was one at Bakewell, Oakdale (Possum Trot), and New Providence, as well as the wooden school in the middle of Sale Creek. There were two at Coulterville - a Black school and a school for white children. There had also been a one room school house on Sale Creek Mountain during the 1880's.

The first school in Sale Creek was a mission school to the Cherokee Indians started by Gideon Blackburn, a Presbyterian minister who came to Sale Creek in 1806.

The Presbyterian Church Assembly appointed Reverend Blackburn as missionary to the Cherokees in 1803. After observing the needs of the Indians and feeling that they were especially in need of education in order to civilize them as well as to promote peace between them and the white man, he toured many northern churches in an effort to gain the capital needed to establish a mission to them. He was able to raise \$10,000 from churches and from the Presbyterian General Assembly. The state legislature of the State of Tennessee also voted \$200 for his support in this worthwhile

endeavor.

Blackburn established two schools, one at Hiwassee Garrison in Rhea County and the other one at the mouth of the Sale Creek. In the schools he taught the English language, customs, games, and values, as well as subjects such as agriculture and carpentry for the boys and domestic arts for the women.

His efforts with the Indians continued for five years until he was forced by bad health to give up his work. However, he never lost his interest in helping the Cherokees.¹

As a result of his work the Tennessee legislature issued a proclamation on September 11, 1806 which stated that:

"Whereas the promotions of literature ought to be encouraged by all well regulated governments and as it appears to this legislature that the Rev. Gideon Blackburn of Blount County hath taken considerable pains to instruct the children of many of the Cherokee Indians, and hath made a considerable progress therein, resolved that the General Assembly of this state highly approves of the conduct of said Blackburn in thus enlightening and civilizing the said Indians."²

The first known white school at Sale Creek was

conducted by Robert Patterson and was for the instruction of his own family and the children of the settlers. No date has been found for this school other than that it occurred after 1807 which was the year in which Patterson migrated to Sale Creek.³

The first school building at Sale Creek was known as the Sale Creek Academy and stood approximately thirty or forty yards south of what was known for many years as the Happy Sam Gentry house, approximately where the Sale Creek Post Office now stands. It was built in 1858 by the Free Masons and had students attending from as far away as Chattanooga. Students paid a tuition fee of one dollar per month to attend, and many had to board in Sale Creek.

When the Civil War broke out, the school was closed. Unionists and Confederates camped around the school grounds as the different groups moved through the area. After the war the school reopened, but it never regained the popularity and prestige that it had enjoyed before the war. The school terms only lasted three or four months at the longest.

J.A.N. Patterson was the foremost teacher at the school from 1865 until about 1871. Squire William Beene taught the last term at this school in 1872.⁴

Beene had been involved in a fracas in 1869 when he and his brother conducted a school. During the course of one school day that year, he administered corporal punishment of a severe nature to one of his students. The boy's father promptly swore out an assault warrant for the teacher's arrest.

The local constable took along the boy and one other

man to serve the warrant on Beene that evening. Beene resisted arrest and pulled a gun. A gun battle ensued in which Beene killed the student and the constable. Beene and one other man were both seriously wounded. In a much disputed trial, Beene won acquittal.⁵

As was common in those days, Rock Creek flooded badly around 1871. The violent waters washed the building off its foundation and almost turned it over. Squire Beene completed the 1872 term with the building in this precarious position.

At the same time that the Sale Creek Academy was built, there was a small school built at Coulterville. This school was built in the same location where the railroad depot later stood. With the coming of the Cincinnati Southern Railroad in 1876, the small school had to be torn down because the tracks passed through the school grounds. Hence, the building was removed at the same time that the school at Sale Creek was dismantled. The lumber from both buildings was used to build a new school on Coulterville Hill.

In November of 1878, the Sale Creek Masonic Male and Female Institute (at Coulterville) sold half its interest in five acres of ground and the bottom floor of its building to the Sale Creek Cumberland Presbyterian Church for the



This group of children is thought to be the student body of the Welsh school that operated in Slabtown from 1874-1878. This assumption is based on interviews with several Welsh descendants and the age of the sixth child on the back row, Martha Parry. In addition, all of the children are Welsh. Standing in back: Mary Jane Thomas, Kate Lloyd, unknown, Ollie (Price) Coulter, Ester Jenkins, Martha (Reese) Perry, Ellen (Price) Hetzler, Mary (Woosnam) Reese. Second row: Unknown, Ida Lloyd, Kate (Jenkins) Hair, Maggie Lloyd, First name unknown Davis (later Mrs. John Price), unknown. Seated in front: Gwin Woosnam, unknown. The man in the chair is thought to be Professor Lloyd.



The Oakdale or Possum Trot School was located about one mile northeast of present day Brown's Bridge. It was discontinued in 1922.



The 1907 student body at Possum Trot. Front row left to right: Joe Jones, Roy Iles, Coy Iles, Maida (Adams) Craun, Lillie Jones, Mae (Burton) Fox, Beatrice Adams, Mary (Iles) Elsea, Vergie (Burton) Morgan, Carl Adams, Bill Iles, and Wilbert Adams. Back row: Edie Rose, Idell Burton, Lizzie Potter, Maude Burton, Alpha (Bandy) Ingle, Blanche (Iles) Shipley, Clara (Burton) Fox, Maude (Iles) Thomas, Kate Jones, Myrtle Burton.

sum of \$700. The building was used entirely as a church from that time until it was blown away in a windstorm around 1910. (See Appendix A)

The period 1874-1878 witnessed the absence of any school in Sale Creek except for a few short terms at the Welsh school about one hundred yards north of the Slabtown Bridge. This building served both as a church and a school.

Around 1880 a one-roomed school was built on the lower part of the present day campus. Several landowners in Sale Creek gave land for this building. Adolphus J. Coulter sold two acres for \$80.00 and Dave R. Griffiths sold one acre to the school for \$20.00.⁶ Mr. Griffiths was one of the original Welsh miners in the area and had built a coal tram to the river. This tram passed through what was later to become the school ground. His acre was most likely part of this old tram way. The total amount of land purchased was 11.02 acres.

In 1885 an upstairs was added to the building to accommodate the rapidly growing enrollment. Joe Rogers was assistant teacher at the school from 1885-1905 during

which time he taught every class from first grade to eighth grade. Perry A. Wall served as principal during this period.

When this building was first built, the desks were all home-made benches and were capable of seating eight students across. In 1885 the school received forty new desks. This was still not enough to seat the total number of students enrolled. A short time later enough desks were obtained to seat everyone.

This school which was also known as the Academy, remained on the school grounds for approximately forty years. After the present school was built, it was used as a gym and later as a classroom for instruction in manual arts.

In 1908 the high school at Sale Creek was completed and students were able to get high school diplomas in the community for the first time. Some students who had been attending some of the outlying schools began enrolling at Sale Creek because of the addition of grades 9-12.

Because of the high school being located in Sale Creek proper, the small outlying schools eventually had to close their doors. Coulterville and Mayflower closed in 1920, and Oakdale followed suit in 1922. The seventh and eighth



Sale Creek High School as it appeared around 1910 during Samuel H. Proffitt's principalship.

grades from New Providence School were transported to Sale Creek beginning in 1932. Several years after that the New Providence School was closed, and all students were moved to Sale Creek. This left only Bakewell with an elementary school. It continued in operation until September 16, 1962 when it was closed. The students were transferred to either Soddy Elementary or Sale Creek.⁷

Providence was lucky enough to have two schools. Although no construction date was given for the first, it is known that this one-room school operated until 1914 or 1915 when it burned. All of the students finished out the year at the Providence Methodist Church which was used as a dual school-church for the remainder of the term.

According to Drewey Crawley who was a student at the school at that time, the Providence students were transported to Oakdale the following fall. Meanwhile, a new brick building was constructed on the same plot of ground where the wooden building had stood. It was completed about midway through the school term at which time all Providence students returned to their own community for their schooling.

Originally, Providence School had been known as Central Grove School; however, there was another Central Grove in the county, so the school at Sale Creek changed its name to Providence.

Since the original Sale Creek High School building was constructed at a cost of \$11,730, there have been numerous additions. In 1915 a northwest wing was added to the building. In 1931 a wooden annex was built on the lower campus. It was removed in 1965.

In 1938 the WPA built the school a gymnasium for \$30,490 and named it the Thomas E. Downey Memorial Gymnasium after the late T.E. Downey who had died the year before.

In 1951 a cafeteria and indoor restrooms were added. In

1958 two classrooms were added on the east side. A major renovation occurred in 1961 which upgraded lighting, remodeled the home economics department, and repainted the entire building.

A new kitchen, dining room, science department, music room, and remodeling of the library occurred in 1965.

In 1971 portable classrooms were added to alleviate crowding caused by an expanding enrollment. This was followed quickly in 1973 with the construction of a new gymnasium, four classrooms, administrative offices, and the renovation and extension of the mechanical shop building.

The total cost of all buildings and major renovations to the school over a period of sixty-five years was \$897,816.28. This does not include repairs or equipment purchases, nor does it take into account inflation.⁸

With a history that spans 82 years, there would have to be an episode that warranted mention over any other. I found such a story.

Modern day schools are afflicted with problems of lack of equipment and books, civil rights, drugs, teen pregnancies, AIDS, weapons on school grounds, ad infinitum. The schools of yesterday had never heard of some of these things. Their problems were simpler and much easier to pronounce. Though their problems might seem less important to us, to people in those days they were just as grave and worthy of notice as drugs are today. Such was the case in September of 1916 when a group of Sale Creek residents journeyed to Chattanooga to protest a troublesome situation at the school.

Professor Samuel Houston Proffitt was the principal at Sale Creek High School and had been since the school first opened in mid-winter of 1908. He was described by his superiors as an excellent school man and was praised for running an exemplary school. One of the county commissioners at the time, Willard Springfield, stated, "It is

practically agreed by the leading educators of this county and state that Professor Proffitt ranks at the top of the ladder as a principal, instructor and school man, and it is not disputed that he has built up a splendid school at Sale Creek." Professor Proffitt's morals were also above reproach.

The other person involved in the controversy was the man holding the position of janitor, Abner (Ab) Morgan. Ab was a poor man who needed the job of janitor to support his family. However, in addition to being just a poor school janitor, he was also one of the elected county squires for the Seventh District of Hamilton County. Squires were also known as justices of the peace.

Early in September of 1916 after school had started, a large delegation of Sale Creek residents showed up at the county courthouse for a meeting of the school board to petition this august body to refuse to re-elect Professor Proffitt as principal at Sale Creek High School for the coming school year. This group was made up of Dr. James M. Richard, William H. List, himself a former member of the county court, James Coulter, John Patterson, J.A.N. Patterson, James I. Brown, James C. Jones, H. Arthur (Ott) Davis, Luther Coulter, Phil McDonald, John Francisco, Ben Shipley, Walter Davis, William M. (Bill) Beene, Ed Downey, John W. Beene, Lewis Wallace, and John Scybert.

According to the leaders of the group - Ed Downey, J.M. Richard, and W.H. List - "the position of janitor in the Sale Creek institution of learning is one of eminence. In fact, it is the most important position in the school." They further stated that Professor Proffitt in the administration of the school "seldom took definite action on any question without first consulting his janitor and getting his views."

These charges were all made in Supt. J.L. Hair's office after the group had waited fruitlessly for the school board to convene at 1:30 P.M. that day. Dr. Richard sat in the office of Commissioner Stagmaier that morning and heard him converse by phone with Supt. Hair about when the meeting was to be held. The Sale Creek group along with Chairman Bates and Commissioner Spurlock went to the superintendent's office at the appointed time but no meeting was ever held.

Commissioner Springfield, the county register, was sick at his home and notified his office on Vine Street that he would not be able to attend. Commissioner Byrd was reported to be in the rural sections of the Sixth District and unable to attend. Commissioner Allison was in the Suck Creek gulch supervising state convicts who were building Suck Creek Road.

Even after it was apparent that there was to be no meeting that day, the Sale Creek delegation continued hanging around the superintendent's office and refused to be ushered out. They complained that the meeting had been intentionally sabotaged that evening because of their presence and their intention of asking for the ouster of Proffitt.

The delegation was not only after Proffitt. They also wanted the school board to release Ab Morgan as janitor.

It was reported by a *Times* reporter that "this group came early and stayed late. They hung around in the rotunda of the courthouse like Grant around Richmond." They finally went to the education office and asked for an audience with Superintendent Hair and Chairman Bates. In his office they discussed the situation for well over an hour.

Professor Proffitt had supporters present that day, also,

with a petition signed by 145 persons. The document was addressed to the board and sought the re-election of Professor Proffitt.

J.C. Jones, a member of the opposition to Proffitt, stated that the petition was signed by several citizens of Rhea County. Others on the petition were not even patrons of the school, and he further pointed out that some people had even put their names on the list more than one time.

The main delegation's petition was addressed directly to Professor Proffitt himself and called on the board to politely refuse to re-elect the principal. Dr. Richard, spokesman for the group, said that his petition was signed by property owners who represented ninety percent of the property in the Seventh District.

When asked what their complaint was concerning Proffitt, the group answered almost in chorus that he had "spent his day of usefulness at Sale Creek." They further stated that they were not working for the election of anyone in particular; they just did not want Proffitt returned.

One of the influential members of the group stated, "They talk about keeping the schools out of politics. If they are trying to do that, why does the county persist in electing Willard Springfield, county register, as our commissioner? He does not even live in the district."

"Then again, why is Ab Morgan, justice of the peace, installed every year as the janitor up there? Who ever heard of a janitor being the moving spirit in a school? Looks like every little peanut politician in Sale Creek has got to confer with the janitor, even the principal of the school."

Superintendent Hair took a calm view of the situation. When one person asked him why the group was still milling around outside, he quipped, "Maybe they thought I was going to cut a melon." Possibly he felt differently about this group the following year when he was assigned to Sale Creek High School as principal where he served from 1917-1921.

At the next board meeting in mid September, the opposition finally had their chance to unload their guns on Proffitt and the county fathers, this after two unsuccessful previous trips. Phil McDonald was the first spokesman for the delegation. He said that charges had been brought that the delegation wanted to get rid of Proffitt because of religious and political differences. He denied these charges and said that the delegation members came from both political parties as well as being members of the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches. Some members of the group had no religious affiliations at all.

J.A.N. Patterson spoke next saying that he had personally written the superintendent a letter spelling out the community's concerns about the relationship between Morgan and Proffitt. He then called on the superintendent to produce the letter "if it hasn't been pigeon-holed." The letter was brought forth at that time and read to the assembly.

Dan Davis came forward next and spoke in Professor Proffitt's behalf. Professor Proffitt spoke in his own defense after Mr. Davis. He stated that he had been the principal of the school ever since it had opened eight years earlier. During that time the enrollment of the school had risen from twenty-three students to the current enrollment of sixty-three.

After listening to William Beene, another anti-Proffitt man, Commissioner Spurlock called on W.I. Williams to state his views concerning the controversy in general and

Mr. Proffitt in particular.

W.I. Williams had always been known in the Sale Creek and Coulterville community as a fair and generous man. He had always been interested in the schools of the area and had been instrumental in obtaining the construction and staffing of a school for Black students in Coulterville in the very early years of the century.

Mr. Williams stated that he was a personal friend of Professor Proffitt and found himself in a very difficult position to say anything against his friend. However, he said that it seemed to him that Sam Proffitt had "lost his grip" on the boys in Sale Creek. He further pointed out that in the last graduating class at the school there was only one boy.

Ed Downey was the final member of the Sale Creek delegation to speak. A very influential man in Sale Creek and the whole of northern Hamilton County, Mr. Downey had always shown a strong interest in the local school. He let his concerns and criticisms of the Proffitt-Morgan issue be known at this time.

After listening to the testimony of both sides, the school board voted unanimously to re-elect both Sam Proffitt as principal of Sale Creek High School and Ab Morgan as janitor. There was one stipulation, however. Mr. Proffitt was to be elected for a one year term only. After school closed in the spring of 1917, another principal was to be installed.

This was not satisfactory to the anti-Proffitt people at that time; however, in less than a week their biggest problem was solved. Ab Morgan resigned as janitor on September 17, 1916. His statement follows:

"Before I became a member of the Hamilton county court, I was acting as janitor of the Sale Creek High and Grammar school, and I have always considered that doing this janitor service was as honorable a way of making a living for myself and family as tilling the soil, working in the factory, or in any other capacity, as I have always been taught that work was honorable, and my living has always been made by the sweat of my brow."

"Since being elected a justice of the peace for the Seventh civil district I have never opened an office and have drawn not exceeding \$10 as criminal or civil costs."

"Some people and some of my constituents have seen fit to criticize me for holding the position of janitor while I was a member of the Hamilton county court. I don't think such criticisms are justified as there is no remuneration to me in being a member of the county court unless I choose to go to the city of Chattanooga and open an office, and there probably would be some that would criticize that action, but to remove any cause or reason for criticism I have today tendered to Supt. Hair my resignation as janitor to take effect at once."⁹

Notes

1. *Old Frontier*, John P. Brown, Southern Publishers, Inc., Kingsport, Tennessee, 1938.
2. *The Senate Journal*, September 11, 1806.
3. *A History of Hamilton County, Tennessee*, Memphis State University Press, Memphis, Tennessee 1981, p. 94.
4. *The Orange and White*, "Sale Creek School Founded Before Civil War", March 8, 1935, p. 1.
5. *A History of Hamilton County, Tennessee*, p. 264.
6. Handwritten note by Ron McEwen from Chattanooga Times March 4, 1879 edition.
7. *The Orange and White*, p. 2.
8. Personal notes of Ron W. McEwen.
9. *The Daily Times*, September 17, 1916, p. 5.



Picnics were favorite activities for families during the early years of the twentieth century. In a picture taken around 1911, the Pattersons, Wallaces, Graves, Gray, Holman, and Wall families gathered around the bank of the Patterson Spring. The spring was a favorite spot for this type of activity.

A community cannot exist without a good water supply. Sale Creek has always had ample amounts of water that were supplied by Rock Creek, Sale Creek, the Tennessee River, numerous branches, springs, and man-made wells. The Indians built villages on the banks of the creeks and rivers because these streams supplied them with water with which to drink and cook. These streams also provided excellent fishing and trapping for the Indians as well as for the settlers who came later.

Much is heard about Rock Creek and Sale Creek, but one of the best known water sources was the Patterson

Spring. This eternal supply of bubbling, fresh water was found on the J.A.N. Patterson property in the middle of what is now Patterson Lake. Before TVA backed the water up, Patterson Road snaked around Patterson Curve, straightened out for about two hundred yards, and then turned left across the creek bottoms. The road passed the Patterson home place and then crossed the Sale Creek at that point. The bridge pilings are still visible during the winter months when the water is low. Just a few yards from where the bridge was located, another small road turned left and went down to the spring.



The Patterson Spring gushed forth such a stream of water that it created this branch known to Sale Creekers as the Spring Branch. This young lady is sitting beside the branch. The Patterson Spring is behind her and to the right of the picture.

This land was owned by the Patterson family for many years. J.A.N. Patterson obtained the land and the spring when he married Elizabeth Coulter who was a daughter of General Thomas J. Coulter. It continued in the Patterson family until the TVA bought it during the 1930's and used it as a backwater for the Chickamauga Dam. At that time the Civilian Conservation Corps had a camp in Sale Creek and was in the process of clearing banks, building earthen dams and terraces to fight soil erosion, and planting trees on the hillsides.

A large group of young men from the camp came to the Patterson house to tear it down to make way for the rising waters of the lake. John T. Patterson, son of J.A.N. Patterson, asked them if they would move the rocks in the fireplace as well as a large mill stone from the old house site to the newer home on Patterson Curve. They consented and moved these huge stones as well as the large mill stone. Mrs. Patterson even persuaded them to dig up the large japonica bush that grew near the house. John built a patio porch with the chimney stones. The mill stone lies in the yard today almost in the shadow of that same japonica bush.

Close by the old family home was the famous Patterson Spring. The Patterson family used this spring for years and never wanted from the lack of water. It never went dry no matter how dry the weather. Katharine Sanders, a fifth generation Patterson who lives in the Patterson home today, said that the spring always bubbled, gushed would be a better term. As the spring flowed out of the ground it formed a small branch that made its way to the Sale Creek

located close by. Katharine said that the water was so cold even in July and August that children could not even wade there. From the point where the large spring gushed out of the ground to the point where it entered the larger creek, there were small bubbling springs all along the way. Mrs. Sanders said that there must have been a tremendous amount of water under the ground in that area.

At one time someone had dug out around the spring and placed a large concrete tile in the middle of it. This facilitated the dipping of water into barrels and tubs. Of course, the spring filled this tile in just a matter of seconds, ran over the sides, and started on its course to the Sale Creek. My father recalls going to the spring for water to water the peach orchards. There were several barrels in the wagon that he was driving, and there were several boys on the wagon. They decided to see if they could bail water out of the tile fast enough to drop the level in the tile. Each one of them got a bucket and started bailing as fast as they could. The old spring was gushing water so profusely that they never made a dent in it. As soon as they pulled their bucket out of the tile, the water was running over the rim again.

The sides and bottom of the Sale Creek in that particular stretch are nothing but limestone. Because of the large number of springs that were coming forth out of this limestone, the water in the creek was extremely cold. Katharine said that it was very hard to swim in the Sale Creek during the summer months because of this cold water.

During times of drought the residents of Sale Creek often came to the spring with barrels, tubs, jugs, and any other type of container that they could find and hauled thousands of gallons of the pure spring water away from the spring. It did not matter because there was always more than enough water for everyone. It just kept gushing out of the ground.

Because of the beauty of the area and the coolness of the woods around the spring, it became a favorite picnic area for not only the Pattersons, but for many other Sale Creek families besides. People sat and talked, courted, ate picnic lunches, and played around the spring and the branch. It was truly a favorite spot in Sale Creek.

When the Chickamauga Dam was completed in 1940, the waters of Chickamauga Lake were backed over the site of the spring. "That's one thing that TVA did that was terrible was to cover that spring up," Katharine Sanders said. Truly a landmark in the community, the spring refused to die. If one passes over the site of the spring even today, fifty years later, the water still bubbles to the surface of the lake. The location of the old spring is very evident. For over one hundred years this spring served the fresh water needs of the residents of this area until man destroyed its usefulness and beauty himself. What an absolute shame!

Chapter 7: Going Up The Hollow

No depiction of Coulterville would be complete without a description of the Black families that lived up the hollow on what is now known as Swafford Road. "Up the hollow" was an expression used by the residents of that day to describe either where they were heading or where the little community lay. Any time that one of those older residents tells about something happening back then or about one of these old people, this term is always used.

There were about a dozen families of Black people that lived in the hollow during the early years of the century. Most recollections of the people who remember these folks do not include any reference to many small children being around, so it must have been a community on the decline even then.

By the 1940's there were no families left in the hollow, most of them having moved away and some just dying off. The black people did not bury their people in Coulterville, but chose to take them over to the black cemetery in Bakewell.

The Black community had been in that area since before the Civil War, and some of the immediate ancestors of the Coulterville Blacks, parents and grandparents, had been slaves; however, none of the blacks that lived there after the turn of the century were known to have been slaves according to the older people who I interviewed.

Marjorie (Williams) Harris probably remembered the Blacks better than anyone. Marjorie was the daughter of W.I. Williams, a well known and influential man in Coulterville, Sale Creek, and Graysville for many years. Mrs. Harris remembered several of these families, including one lady especially who was known as Rose Howard. Mrs. Harris said that Rose was a wonderful person. She worked for Mrs. Williams, cleaning, washing, and doing odd jobs around the house. Rose had one daughter, Rena, who was called Renie. Marjorie said that Rose did many types of work around their house and that she was there just about everyday; however, Rose never cooked for them because she was not a very good cook.

Whenever Mrs. Williams needed to have some cooking done for a special occasion, she sent for Lizzie Hickman who was an excellent cook. Lizzie was a very hard worker, just like Rose, and was married to George Hickman. George was described as a real character and a delightful person to have around the house.

In speaking with Mrs. Harris about these families, it was quite clear from her speech that she loved these gentle folk. Many times she reiterated the fact that, "They were our friends, our good friends." One of their best friends was a big, strong fellow called Big George Coulter. Big George did a lot of work outside for W.I. Williams and was well spoken of by many Coulterville residents. He was especially dear to Mrs. Harris because he was always friendly to her when she was a small child, doing little things for her and always taking time from his adult world to be concerned about the affairs of a child.

Big George's sister was Rose Howard, and he also had a brother known as Freedom. Most people called him Free Coulter. Free had been a coal miner for many years and

worked for the Sale Creek Coal and Coke Company as late as 1907, his name appearing on the March, 1907 payroll book of the coal company.

Big George worked for several of the farmers along Coulterville Road. He helped Ben (Red Ben) Shipley rob some bees one day. He had never done this task before and was not prepared for the bees to swarm around him when the hive was opened. As they flew out and landed on his shirt sleeves, he ran over in the freshly plowed ground and rolled over and over and over until he had gotten rid of the bees and looked like a large, dirt-covered mole. Ben was not able to continue his work for laughing at Big George rolling on the ground.

Every now and then a group of the young men and boys from the community gathered around the depot in the evening and did what boys always do together - run races, wrestle, and tell big tales. One former resident remembered Jim Hickman and Big George being in the group one night when everyone started telling ghost tales. Big George and Jim were both superstitious and got so scared that they had to be walked home that night.

The Mal Mills family also lived up the hollow. Mal had been a coal miner at one time in Slabtown and was a hard worker. Mal worked for the railroad later in life and became a section foreman. He had two boys, Az Mills and Charley Mills. Az followed his father into railroad work. He worked on the section gang before becoming a fireman on one of the coal burning steam engines. Later, Az became a conductor on one of the Pullman cars.

According to Mrs. Harris, Charley Mills was not a worker. He did not like to be tied down around a house or to a job. He loved to roam around the woods. She said that her brother and Charley Mills did a lot of hunting and trapping in Burton Hollow and on Sale Creek Mountain in those days, and Charley was able to make a meager living in this way.

Frank Tulloss and his family lived at the end of the hollow on top of a high hill. Mrs. Harris remembered Frank's wife being sickly and ill most of the time and very little more about this family.

Rufus and Phoebe Conley were another well known couple up the hollow. Rufus was the preacher at the small black church. Rufus was very faithful about his position in the church and maintained the building as well as preaching in it. He never went to services without his long, frock-tailed black coat and wearing his high, stiffly starched white collar. Marjorie said that the children in her family loved to go to Rufus' church and listen to him preach. They also loved to hear the people sing. She said that it was some of the most beautiful singing that she had ever heard.

When W.I. Williams heard that some of his children had been up to the Black church, he told them he did not want them to go back because he thought that the children were just going in fun or to make jest at the Black people. Mr. Williams took offense at anyone who exhibited racist behavior toward his friends in the hollow and did not want his children to do anything that might be considered inappropriate. Marjorie said that just the opposite was true.



The Coulterville Baptist Church, shown in a late 1950's photograph, was originally the black school up the hollow. In the early 1930's it was moved over a half a mile to its present location where it has been renovated several times. Another sign of that time period is pictured in the yard - the outside toilet.

"We went because we wanted to hear Rufus preach and because we liked him," she said.

Phoebe, or Aunt Phoebe as she was called, was Rufus Conley's wife. She was feeble minded as most of the folks around Coulterville best remembered. Phoebe frequently came down to the Williams home and just sat by the fire for long periods of time. Marjorie said that Rufus probably had to do all the cooking at their house because Phoebe could not cook to her knowledge. Other than that, Marjorie said, Aunt Phoebe was a delightful person.

That was not the impression that several other Coulterville children had about Aunt Phoebe. Whether true or untrue, many of the children and some of the adults in the area were afraid of Aunt Phoebe because they thought that she carried a straight razor in her pocket. For this reason many of the children avoided her if at all possible.

One boy in particular had a run-in with Aunt Phoebe. Bennett Shipley was one of the biggest yarn spinners in Sale Creek for many years. He was a brother to Walter (Wa-wa) Shipley who ran a garage in Sale Creek during the 1930's. In January of 1964 Bennett told a story about going to milk the family cow one morning around 1900 and going back home carrying two pails of fresh milk. He was a small boy at the time and was having a struggle with the milk pails.

Not having enough troubles with the sloshing milk, he happened to look down the lane ahead of him, and, "Lordy, there come Miss Phoebe!" he said. He said that there was a rail fence on one side of the lane and a briar patch on the other. It was either jump the fence and risk losing most of the milk or run into the briar patch and lose it all. He said that he jumped the rail fence and ran as hard as he could across the field toward home, the milk sloshing every step of the way. He was amazed that when a person is scared and is running real hard with a heavy load of milk how much lighter it seems to get.

The Black children at Coulterville went to school at an all Black one-room school house that was located in the hollow. W.I. Williams had been instrumental in obtaining county funds to build this school shortly after the last white Coulterville School was built. No construction dates have been found for either school. The teacher for the Black school was Mrs. Az Mills.

In the early 1930's after the small school had disbanded because of the exodus of the black families from the community, the building was moved to the other end of Coulterville and placed on the side of a hill. It still stands in the same location as the Coulterville Baptist Church.

Chapter 8: John A. Murrell's Hidden Gold

The following legend was narrated by Mark David Alexander.

This story dates back to about the mid eighteen hundreds. I was nine or ten years old when I heard it from an old gentleman who was in his late eighties at the time. We lived by him and he was more or less a quiet sort of a fella, he didn't do a whole lot of talking. I was a nosey kid, had a whole bunch of ears, and I was a good listener. We got to talking about when the old gun slingers used to roam around in the mountains and go up and down the railroad track, hold up the trains, and go to the banks and steal their gold.

I asked the old gentleman if he knew if any of these gunslingers had been in this part of the country. He told me about one that I'm not sure whether he personally saw the guy or met him or whether he just heard about him. Anyway, like I say, I was just a kid sitting there drinking in everything he said. He said, "I remember a guy by the name of John A. Murrell." According to him Murrell went up to Kansas and Oklahoma, and out in there, a holding up banks and robbing trains. He came back through here on his way back to Alabama. Legend has it that he was originally from Alabama and he came back through here with his gold. I said, "Well, did you see it or did you get any of the gold?" And then he began to tell me the story.

He said, "No, John A. Murrell went west and he hooked up with three or four other gun slingers out there, and they had pretty good success robbing banks and trains and anything that was hauling gold. This guy was more or less a professional robber. He'd take anything of value, but he would turn it into gold. He wouldn't just carry around watches and the guns or anything of value because he didn't have a buckboard or a covered wagon or something to haul it in. He was on horse back and he'd convert all his loot into gold."

The old gentleman told me that John A. Murrell hooked up with either three or four other gunslingers because one man couldn't do the job by himself, and, of course, they made their rounds out there. They were all going to participate in these robberies and train holdups and bank holdups. Then they were going to get together when they felt that they had enough loot to run them the rest of their lives. They were gonna split it three or four ways, ever how many there was in the group. They went that route for a good long while and they accumulated so much gold that they couldn't carry it in their saddle bags. They had to have a special horse to carry the gold. This one horse John A. Murrell led behind him carried all the gold because he was the Judas Iscariot of the group. He wouldn't trust any of the rest of them with the loot. He was the head gunslinger.

The law got pretty tight on him out in Kansas. It was early in the summer that they got so close after him that Murrell and his men had to break up and leave. Murrell headed back east. He thought he had shaken the other guys loose and he was getting away with all the loot. As the story goes, he left out there in the early summer and made it back this way, course, I don't know how the bridges were across

the rivers, and all like that, but I guess they had ways of getting across. But anyway, by the time he got into this part of the country, he had evaded the law enforcement officers all the way through. Now, he was well known and his crew was well known and by the time he got to this part of the country, he was by himself, just him and his two horses, the one he was riding and the one that was carrying the gold.

The law got real close on him up here just above Coulterville. Now he travelled the railroad whenever he could, and there was a little old dinky railroad coming up and down through here. The way I understood, he was coming down on the railroad and I guess the law people almost got in sight of him or else maybe he was told that they were right behind him. So anyway, he left the railroad on which he was travelling to Coulterville. He hit a holler that goes up through what is now David Gray's Sanctuary, that's where that holler starts, and he went up by the spring up there at the beginning of that holler, and followed that holler between the first ridge and the main mountain range. He followed it all the way to the foot of Sale Creek Mountain. So then he said, "I can't go down the creek because if I do the railroad is right down there and the main road's down there. So he made it across the creek, bore back south a little bit, then hit into what we call Coalbank Holler. It's a holler that runs north and south between the ridge and the mountain range.

He went up Coalbank Holler and there's another holler that sort of, well, it don't just join with Coalbank, but it sort of overlaps and there's somewhere between a quarter and a half a mile that you actually have two hollers there. He made his way back into the main holler running down through there and then that becomes what we call Tildy Holler. The old timers around here knows where Tildy Holler is. So he went down Tildy Holler and all the way down through a field that was cleared many years later I suppose, but people around Sale Creek and Hodgetown referred to it as the old Cranmore field. The people around Bakewell called it the old Jack Field. He went on through this old field to the foot of Bakewell Mountain. There is a creek there and he turned left and went down that holler.

It was getting so dark, the way I understood it, that he couldn't go on, so he crossed the railroad and the highway without being seen. By that time, his horse that was carrying the gold had already come up lame. As he came through these hollers (I don't know whether it was up near Coulterville or whether he got on down to Sale Creek, or between Sale Creek and Bakewell), anyway, in this holler his gold horse, the one wagging the gold, just couldn't go on. He said, "I can't stop here, I've got to keep going but the horse can't continue to carry the gold." So he took the gold out and buried it. He found a three-pronged poplar tree where there's three branches of this tree coming up out of the ground. I don't know how big they were, but anyway, there was three poplars coming up out of the ground. He buried the gold that was enough to almost break a horse's back.

He went on after he had covered it up the best he

could. When he got to the foot of Bakewell Mountain, he turned down the old road there and like I say, it was almost dark. The way the story goes, he supposedly had gone down east following 'Possum Creek where an old house is across the creek there. Somewhere in that general vicinity, he went into this farm house and asked them if he could spend the night. Of course, they took him in. "Yah, come on in, spend the night with us," the master of the house said.

Well, the next morning his old horse was so sore that he couldn't go. So he asked the people if he could just stay there a while longer till his horse got to where he could travel or he could find him another horse. They noticed that he didn't go and come the next day, he stayed in the house. Now, the people he was staying with didn't know what the story was. So he stayed in close especially during the day. He'd scout around and look for a horse in the late evening or after it began to get dark because he was afraid the government men were still after him, which they were.

He stayed at that house for two or three weeks, trying to find him another horse. There wasn't too many horses around there, and the horses they had were these plow horses that weren't much for riding.

In the mean time, the G-men were closing in on him, and it just so happened that one of his old gang got on his trail, too, and was asking questions, and headed this way. He was looking for Murrell because he wanted his part of that loot. The law got closer and began to inquire about him in the area. They began to scout around and ask questions. "Hey, see any strange men around here?"

They finally found out that, "Yah, there's a strange man staying at that house over there." Well, when they went in to flush him out, legend has it, that he was shot while they were trying to make the arrest. He was shot so badly he could hardly be moved. So they posted their guards around the area so he wouldn't get away.

He just stayed there with the old woman of the house playing nurse maid. In the mean time his buddy that he dumped back in Kansas caught up with him. He made his appearance and went in to talk to Mr. Murrell. "You dumped me and I'm going to shoot you! I'm going to kill you," he said.

Murrell said, "No, don't do that, we'll get together and we'll--I know where the gold is, and we'll go on from here."

But the guy said, "No, I trusted you once and I'm not going to trust you again."

John Murrell figured, "Well, I'm never going to come out of this alive, anyway, I might as well tell the old boy what he wants to know." So he told him. "I buried that gold at the root of a three-pronged poplar."

Murrell couldn't tell him exactly where it was, because it was late in the afternoon when he came through there, and he was trying to make as much time as he could. I don't know how much time elapsed between the time he buried that loot and before his ex-partner came down there and found him, but it must have been five or six weeks. Murrell might have gotten his directions wrong, plus the leaves had fallen since he had buried the gold. Anyway, his partner went back to look for the gold, but he never did find it.

Now while this old man was telling me all this, I was sitting there with my mouth open and I said, "Have you gone back and looked for these three-pronged poplars. Let's Saturday evening, you and papa and my brother take a walk back through there and see if we can find that gold."

The old man said, "Well, yah! I'd like to go walk up through there!"

We didn't go all the way down to the old Jack Field or all the way down to the foot of Bakewell Mountain and start up from there. We went over the ridge down from Hodgetown and picked up the holler there right at the north end of that old big long Jack Field and went north and then we went down the Tiddy Holler, crossed over, went down Coalbank Holler and crossed Rock Creek and hit the Burton Holler Road. Then we went down that holler all the way to Coulterville. We found lots of three pronged poplars but none that we found had gold buried at the foot of it. But that old man said that it was a fact that John A. Murrell had enough gold to break a horse's back.

As best as I can remember, Johnny Murrell never did leave the house over there where those people were caring for him. He died right there. Now that poplar may have been cut down, burned down, and some new ones may have grown up there, but that gold must still be there, buried in that Tennessee soil. When do you want to go look for that gold?

Note: John A. Murrell is buried in Pikeville, Tennessee in a grave that lies east and west instead of north and south. Many strange occurrences have taken place both in that area as well as in the Sale Creek area that legend claims have been the doing of John Murrell's ghost.

Chapter 9: Tales Of Pitty Pat Holler



Gene Shipley stands in the middle of Shipley Hollow Road in the heart of Pitty Pat country. The date of the picture was approximately 1927. Elsea Hollow is located over the ridge in the background.

For the life of me, I have never been able to figure out why people enjoyed having the living daylights scared out of them. This is a fact. If it were not, there would be no roller coasters, spook houses, Halloween movies, or the like.

I have seen people get on roller coasters when their friends had to drag them into the cars, have seen their looks of fright and apprehension as that car pulled out, and have heard them promise their Maker that if he just lets them live through this just once, they will never do it again. Then when the ride was over, who was it that jumped out and ran to the ticket booth saying, "Boy, that was great. Let's do it again."

I have also seen children sit around an old coal stove or fireplace and listen to their parents or grandparents spin yarns about banshees, boogers, hain'ts, and ghosts that used to descend upon poor unsuspecting travelers in the days of yore. Some of those little children were scared so badly that they had to be led by the hand of an adult if they even went into the next room. Even after having been scared witless by these tales, they would always come back and ask their grandparents, "Please tell us another story about hain'ts."

Probably more scary tales have filtered out of Pitty Pat Holler than any other part of Sale Creek, most of these being stories about the legendary creature known as the Pitty Pat.

Shipley Hollow, or Pitty Pat Hollow as it is often called, was a farming area for many years. The inhabitants of the hollow were primarily farmers all their lives. During one year when there was a terrible drought, one that was causing heavy damage to everyone's crops, it got so bad that the farmers were crying for rain. One fellow named Marion Burton was complaining about the lack of rain one day and lamenting his plight when one of his daughters reminded him that the weather was in God's hands. "Now, Father", she said, "God is good, he will provide."

Mr. Burton replied, "Yes, Daughter, I know that God is good, but it appears that he doesn't know much about farming."

The drought got worse until the people in the community decided that it was time to take the matter to God in prayer. They met for the purpose of having a community-wide prayer meeting for rain. The day was quite hot, and the deliberations continued until an elderly man named George Spivey reminded everyone, "Tain't goin to do no good to pray for rain today. The wind is out of the east."

Captain Samuel Pinkney Elsea was one of the most famous personalities who ever lived in that hollow. He was a riverboat pilot on the Tennessee River after the Civil War and made runs from Chattanooga to Knoxville in his stern wheeled paddleboat carrying goods and passengers between the two points on the river.

According to Elsie Iles, a granddaughter of the old man, he was quite a character as evidenced by at least one of his shenanigans. During one of the great floods that inundated Chattanooga in the latter part of the nineteenth century, Captain Elsea decided to try to maneuver his steamboat down Market Street. According to Mrs. Iles, he did not do it to rescue anyone, "he just did it for the devilment of it."

The water was so high that the steamboat was able to navigate down the wide street, however, the boat captain was soon discouraged from going any farther when gun fire from the second floor windows began blasting chunks of wood and windows out of the wheelhouse. It seems that the wake from the large river boat was breaking windows on the second floor of the shops, and the shop owners returned the wake with a torrent of shotgun, rifle, and pistol fire aimed at the old man. He quickly reversed his engine and backed out of the street and into the river.

Of course, the thing that Shipley Hollow is most remembered for is the Pitty Pat. Washington Irving and his story of Ichabod Crane and the Legend of Sleepy Hollow could not be any more interesting than these old tales of boogers attacking people and animals in the hollow.

Pitty Pat Hollow, now known as Shipley Hollow, is located approximately two miles east of Highway 27. After crossing the Mill Dam Bridge, Daughtery Ferry Road snakes around Reno Curve, straightens out and runs for about a half a mile before forking at the entrance to the hollow.



Captain Samuel P. Elsea

Shipley Hollow Road bears to the left and Daughtery Ferry Road (formerly known as the Plank Road) bears to the right. The stories of the Pitty Pat have taken place from one quarter mile west of the old Mill Dam Bridge to the upper end of Pitty Pat Hollow.

No one has ever been able to put a date on the beginning of the Pitty Pat stories; however, they go way back well into the 1800's. This is known because of some of the principal characters involved in the tales. Supposedly, one of the first stories involved a man who was returning home from work late one night in a wagon. As his team plodded along on its slow trek home, he encountered a woman dressed in white in the vicinity of the old Mill Dam close to Reno Curve. He reined his team in beside her and asked her if she would like a lift home. She told the man that she was trying to get home and needed a ride through the hollow. He told her, "Climb aboard, I'll take you as far as I am going."

The lady climbed into the wagon seat beside the man, and they began their slow ride through the darkened hollow, the trees causing strange shadows to fall over them as they drove along. The conversation of the pair covered families and friends and people in the community. However, as they began their approach into Shipley Hollow, they fell strangely quiet.

The man could not understand what a beautiful woman like her could possibly be doing out in the middle of the night in a God-forsaken stretch of road like this. And why was she wearing that pure white dress?

As he pondered these thoughts quietly to himself, he noticed that he had reached the point where the lady had asked to be let off. He turned to her to say goodnight and to wish her a safe journey, and suddenly, a cold chill ran up his back. She was no longer on the seat beside him! She had disappeared into thin air!

Many such incidents were reported similar to this one over the years. One of these involved a young woman who was heading home with her young children. The night was very dark and misty with fog covering the road. The fog seemed to thicken as the lady neared the fork of Shipley Hollow and the Plank Road. Suddenly a strange shadowy creature sprang across the path of the horse drawn wagon. The woman swerved the wagon to one side in an effort to miss the creature. As she did, the front wheel of the wagon went off the shoulder of the road causing the wagon to lurch to one side, overturn, and spill all of the occupants into the ditch. The wagon then came to rest upon the unlucky occupants, killing the mother of the two children instantly.

The creature, which was lurking in the dark shadows, now came to the wrecked wagon, plucked the two small children from under the broken wagon, and carried them off into the night.

For many years after this, people told this story to their children and to strangers to the hollow. They say that no one is certain as to what happened to the children after that, possibly (and most likely) they were eaten by the creature. However, no one ever saw either one of them again. What is known is that on dark foggy nights the sound of pitty pat, pitty pat, pitty pat could be heard ringing through the hollow, hence the name Pitty Pat Hollow. Some of the old people say that this was the sound of the children running on the road, trying to find their way home while others say that it is the sound of the Pitty Pat stalking its next victim.

Mr. Drewcy Crawley said that "just down from the old

Oscar Aslinger house there used to be a big white oak tree stood on the bank. They said a horse threw its rider way on back there (in the 1800's) into that tree and killed him there and that (the Pitty Pat stories) come after that. You know how things get started."

More than one sober resident of the hollow has sworn that he or she has heard the tell tale sound of the Pitty Pat as they walked home at night. It is well to remember that the stories began in the days before street lights, security lights (or a need for security lights), electricity, or cars. Therefore, the roads were very dark, and night noises, wind, and shadows tended to make people a little spooky as they walked along. Now, if anyone has ever been up that hollow about midnight, they can appreciate how lonesome and down right scary that place can be, so it is no wonder that this was a wonderful place for the Pitty Pat to scare the living daylights out of unsuspecting travelers.

These sober minded people told the story of how men and women would be walking home at night on the road and see a woman dressed in white just appearing out of thin air. But before they saw the woman, they heard that eerie pitty pat sound. Then the apparition approached them from behind and moved up alongside of them so that they could see her with their peripheral vision out of the corner of their eye. By this time the travelers were scared sober if they had not been that way already. From the testimony of these babblers, it was ascertained that the lady was riding on a large white horse, riding side saddle. However, when the victim turned his head to get a better look at her, she and the horse and the pitty pat sound all three vanished. Because of these strange sightings, there were other strange things observed along the road at night, namely the sight of people running at "blue darter" speed up Shipley Hollow road as they attempted to out run the boogers and h'aunts that seemed to be everywhere. It is said by several old-timers that people of the hollow concluded their business early so that there would be no reason for them to be out at night where they might have a run-in with the booger.

Other people told about how they heard the faint sound of pitty pat, pitty pat, pitty pat behind them. They testified that they wheeled around, and --- nothing! What an eerie thing to happen to someone. These same people said that they could feel the presence of something watching them, following them, seemingly always ready to pounce on them at every dark bush alongside the road. For this reason most of the people who lived in the hollow were good sprinters and could probably have turned in some record times in foot races today.

One lifelong resident of Black Oak Ridge, which by the way has had its own chronicle of strange occurrences, told the story about a young woman from the hollow who rode a horse into Sale Creek during a time before the advent of the car. She made the near fatal mistake of staying in Sale Creek until dusk. By the time that she turned up the hollow, it was pitch dark. As bad luck would have it, she heard the awful sound. Taking the reins of the horse, she lashed the poor nag into a dead run. One person's recollection of the event said that the flash that went by his house was incredible, the lady's white dress and the light color of the horse went by so quickly that they resembled a shooting star.

Faster and faster the woman and horse flew up the hollow. The horse's ears were pinned to the sides of its

head in fright, its mane was on end, a wild look in its eyes because it knew that some type of hell fire and damnation were following in its path.

At last the familiar settings of home appeared to the woman, and she started screaming and crying as she got within earshot of her house. (Earshot on this night had been extended by about a half a mile because this woman was screaming bloody murder for all she was worth!)

The woman's father had become apprehensive about the young lady when she did not return home before dark. He was outside of the house getting ready to hitch up his team to go looking for her as the horse and rider hove into sight. It is little wonder that he heard her long before he saw her. He recounted later that he heard three things, clippity, cloppity, clippity, cloppity, pitty pat, pitty pat, pitty pat, "Lord, help me, it's about to get me!" The father quickly ran to the barn and opened the door. By this time the horse was churning across the yard throwing dirt clods hither and yon, the family pack of hound dogs was barking and jumping, the woman was shrieking at the top of her lungs, and the horse had its eyes dead set on the barn door.

According to one version of the legend, the climax of the whole affair was the most earth shattering crash ever heard as that poor old nag ran full tilt into the small barn. The girl's father hastily slammed the barn door just as he heard something hit against the outside of it. Running to the door and looking out a knothole, he was able to espy a dark, cat-like shape leap into the shadows in the nearby woods.

The woman was a helpless, screaming mess on the floor of the barn where she had been thrown when the horse entered at such high speed. When the horse came to an abrupt stop from its break-neck speed, the young lady had become airborne and landed head first in a pile of hay. As she was hoisted out by her father, her natty hat was shoved down around her ears until her ears were sticking out. Hay was in her hat, her face, her hair, and her clothes. The fright of being chased by a hain't that was certainly trying to kill her, the frantic ride up the hollow, and the abrupt ending of that ride had left the lady shaken for several days. It is said that she was never known to go to town late in the afternoon again as long as she lived. The horse settled down the next day, and the man's coon hounds were not seen for three days.

Another version of the same story claimed that the girl's father closed the barn doors before the horse could get in because he knew that the barn door was too low to allow a rider to get into the barn. Mr. Crawley said that the horse made several wild passes around the barn before it could be caught and calmed down so that the lady could get off.

The Pitty Pat did not always bother people in the dark. Sometimes he set upon them at dusk as evidenced by a group of young men who had been swimming at the Ann Shipley Spring which is located about one quarter mile downstream from the Mill Dam. This group of boys had a good time that day and finally decided to go home just as it was getting dusky dark. They picked their way alongside the creek until they reached the Plank Road, or what is now called Daughtery Ferry Road, turned right, followed it about a quarter of a mile, and came to Pitty Pat Hollow.

Now a group of boys are usually not scared of the devil himself in daylight hours, but the Pitty Pat after dark was something that no one wanted to tangle with. Their talking and laughter made them oblivious to any danger that they might have been in until one of them thought he heard

something strange in the darkened woods beside them. "Ssh", he said. "Ssh, listen. What is that!"

All of the boys had come to a dead stop in the road. Darkness was closing fast around them. They listened, listened intently. Their eyes were as big as saucers, cold sweat was on each brow. Hair on the back of their heads began to stand on end. Each one was poised like a coiled spring to burst into a run for their lives because they knew that only one thing was making those noises in the woods - the Pitty Pat.

Suddenly, there it was - pitty pat, pitty pat, pitty pat. It was coming up the road toward them! One boy in the group later said that he only remembered one short sentence being uttered. "Run, run for your life." There was no need for the words to be uttered the second time because the entire group was in full flight after it was said the first time. Lightning and the devil itself could not have matched speed with those boys. Such a cloud of dust and gravels has never been seen as that which was produced by the flurry of feet as those boys bolted for home. They ran like deer as their only goal was to reach the first one's house over a quarter mile up the hollow before that dreaded booger caught up to them.

On they rushed, the movement of their legs resembling whirling windmills, their lungs taking in great drafts of air, arms pumping. It did not matter if the larger boys were longer legged, the short boys were performing equally well as they kept abreast of the others. Each one of these fellows knew that to falter or to let someone get ahead of them meant certain destruction. This was a run for their very lives!

For what seemed like an eternity but was really only a couple of short minutes, the boys sprinted for the nearest house. The sound of the pitty pat could be heard gaining on them. By this time the boys' feet were beginning to pull out in front of the rest of their body as they tried to evade the hain't's clutching at their pant legs. They resembled modern day highstepping football players that are being chased by huge linemen, their only goal was getting away. Catching sight of a light in a window of their destination, they left the road, jumped a wide ditch as one, and jumped on the porch as a group. The door flew open and they fell gasping on the floor of the house, more than a little relieved that they were safely inside a house. It is said that not a one of this group of stout lads would venture out in the night again without someone going with him.

It is funny how so many stories of the pitty pat were similar. Gladys Iles told me about a group of Elsea and Shipley boys walking home from a shindig at Oakdale (more commonly known as Possum Trot). Possum Trot was an area on the upper side of the present day May Road, just past Brown's Bridge. At that time there was a small, one room school there that went by the same name. This group of six boys all lived in Shipley and Elsea Hollows and had been to the school house that night, evidently for some type of social event.

After the activities of the night were over, which, by the way, lasted until well after dark, this group of strapping lads began their walk home. They made out quite well until they got into the dreaded Pitty Pat Hollow. As they walked along talking softly, they suddenly noticed that there was a headless white form in the road ahead of them.

To say that the boys faced a dilemma would have been an understatement. The only way that they had of getting

home was down this road. They had to do it. First of all they tried yelling at the white hain't ahead of them. Their next act of self-defense was that time-honored Sale Creek self defense method of throwing rocks at the form. The rocks passed around and through it. Finally they decided that they would run after it and catch it to put to rest all these tales. Breaking into a run, they chased after it until it glided off the road and in behind a large tree. Three of the boys went around one side of the tree, and the other three went around the other side. When they met on the other side of the tree, there was nothing there. By this time the boys were getting more than a little scared. But at least the booger was gone. They did not see any sign of it in the woods around them or back out on the road.

They quickly stepped back into the road to continue their walk home. After they had taken a few steps, there it was! The white form was going ahead of them again. One of the boys had enough of this foolishness, so he pulled a small revolver from his coat pocket and shot six times at the spook. It was still there as healthy as ever with the exception of its missing head.

There was never any mention of the apparition trying to hurt these boys, only of them trying to hurt it. Therefore, it is not surprising that they reached home safely. The Shipley boys all lived in Shipley Hollow, and one by one they stopped off at their houses until they came to the last one. At that point the two Elsea boys decided to stay the night at the last Shipley house rather than to continue their trip home over into Elsea Hollow because they did not want to face the Pitty Pat as a party of two.

As might be expected, the stories of these experiences with the strange creature known as the pitty pat became known far and wide. Many of the old people said that travelers became so afraid of going through the hollow that many of them took the Plank Road and detoured all the way around the hollow no matter what time of the day that they passed through even though it might mean an additional two miles added onto their journey. Such was the fear among the local people of encountering the dreaded creature of the hollow.

Most stories that were told about the pitty pat concerned unnamed individuals. At least two stories involved two of the local doctors in the community.

Dr. Columbus E. Downey came to Sale Creek around 1890 and started a practice, a lot of it for the coal mines that were flourishing at the time. He, like all country doctors at the time, had to travel the roads to visit his sick patients. On this particular occasion Dr. Downey was sent for to come to a family's home in Pitty Pat Hollow. Dr. Downey either disregarded the idea of running into the creature or his duties as a doctor overcame his fear of the hain't because he proceeded bravely up Shipley Hollow Road.

For once the pitty pat made no sound. It crouched in silence in the dark shadows as the doctor approached. Closer and closer came the doctor. The pitty pat's muscles were tense, ready to pounce. Just as the doctor's horse passed, it sprang out of its hiding and landed squarely on the back of the horse surprising both the horse and Dr. Downey. Stark terror filled the two as they struggled to free themselves of the grasp of the thing which had them in his grasp.

The struggle lasted only briefly as the thrashing and bolting of the horse and rider finally shook the booger off their backs. The bucking and turning of the horse carried

them over into the brush and weeds that were beside the road. When the horse felt relief from the burden on his back, it took off at full speed. Dr. Downey barely had the presence of mind to pull the rein of the bridle to the left as the horse turned out on Shipley Hollow Road.

Faster and faster the horse ran with the doctor hanging on its back, kicking and goading him to greater speed. Pitty pat, pitty pat, pitty pat came the spook behind them. The poor girl on the horse mentioned earlier never held a candle to the speed of this pair as they set new records for getting up that hollow.

As Dr. Downey turned his horse into the path leading up to his patient's house, he realized that he had gotten safely away from the pitty pat. He asked the man of the house to put his horse up for the night and let him stay also. He went home the next morning well after day break.

Dr. J.V. Kennedy was a contemporary of Dr. Downey, and he, too, had a similar experience in the hollow. It is not surprising that two doctors would have tragedy befall them in the same way and in almost the exact same spot since they had to travel around so much, and invariably, it seemed that they had to go out in the middle of the night.

Not as much is known about Dr. Kennedy's misfortune except that he was much more fortunate than Dr. Downey. The pitty pat was of a very benevolent nature that night and gently got on the back of the horse behind the doctor and rode with him to his patient's house. Many of the pitty pat tales tell of this occurrence where the creature just got on a horse or buggy and rode very amicably to the end of the hollow where he jumped off as silently and unobtrusively as he had gotten on in the first place. After tending to his patient, Dr. Kennedy is reported to have asked, "Sir, do you have an extra bed for me to sleep in tonight? If you don't, then I'll just sit up by the fireplace until morning because there is no way that I am going back through that hollow tonight." People in Sale Creek remembered this man as a real tough customer, and if something scared him, there must be something to it.

Captain Sam Elsea had an experience with the pitty pat way back in the latter part of the 1800's when he was returning home from a trip on his riverboat. As he walked up the Plank Road just past Reno's Curve he said that he felt that something was following him. As luck would have it, he was very close to a house owned by an elderly black man whose name was Mose. He quickly ran up to Mose's front porch and banged on the door.

When the man of the house came to the door, Captain Elsea is reported to have said, "Mose, you've got to let me spend the night with you. There's a booger after me out here, and I'm not walking any farther tonight in this hollow."

"Mista Sam, I's only got de one bed, and I's be usin' it," Mose replied.

"Well, scoot over, Mose," he said. "Sam Elsea is sleeping on the other side of your bed tonight."

Many years ago in the early part of this century, Aunt Ovie Reynolds lived along Daughtery Ferry Road in close proximity to the present day Willis Jordan property. Early one morning she hitched her little mare to her buggy and drove it to the depot in Sale Creek to catch the Oakdale Accommodation, a local rail passenger service. Each morning the Accommodation took passengers to Dayton and points north, and then each afternoon it made the return trip south.

Aunt Ovie boarded the train that morning and rode to Dayton. She did her business there and then caught the Accommodation on its return trip to Sale Creek. As was common with trains in that time, the Accommodation was delayed, consequently, it was late in arriving back in Sale Creek. When Ovie got off the train, her patient old mare was waiting on her, but it was almost dark, too. She quickly got into the buggy and started for home. Up the Valley Road she drove to Daugherty Ferry Road. The mare instinctively pulled its load past the old mill and across the Mill Dam, around Reno Curve and right into the heart of pitty pat country.

Ovie made her approach to the hollow but then turned up the Plank Road to continue on her way home. Just as she made her turn up the John Penney Hill, she flipped the reins and clucked to the mare so that it would pick up speed in order to make the grade. That is when she noticed it. Something was on the back of the buggy, something very heavy. It had made no sound as it stalked Aunt Ovie's buggy, no tell-tale pitty pat at all.

Aunt Ovie knew what it must be. She cracked her buggy whip in an effort to get the mare to pick up speed. The little horse did its dead level best to oblige. It strained with every ounce of strength it possessed and made a fair showing of getting up the long grade in a short time. The weight on the buggy seemed to get heavier and heavier as the mare approached the top. Then just as the buggy crested the hill, the pitty pat was gone, vanished into thin air. In the words of Elsie Iles, "The thing was gone but it had nearly pulled that little mare to death."

Elsie also described how some boys were walking along Shipley Hollow Road late one evening and heard the sound of a chain rattling through the air right over their heads and landing in the ditch beside them. Nothing more is known about this incident because none of the boys stayed around long enough to investigate the ditch, they were too busy high tailing it up the hollow to safety.

Two local residents of the hollow encountered an apparition close to Reno Curve one night. Jim Clingan and John Poole were out for a ride on their bicycles. At that time there was little if any automobile traffic and few houses along the road, hence, there were very few lights. The night was inky black, but the two boys had small battery powered headlights on their bicycles. As they approached one curve in the road, both of their headlights shone over on the ditch bank. There, standing on the side of the road as big as life was a headless man!

Now, when Bill Iles told this story, he always said that the two boys stopped to investigate because "they weren't afraid of anything." (Elsie said that Bill was always impressed with people who showed no fear.) The boys ran toward the specter. It glided swiftly and effortlessly across the road and into a deep ditch where it disappeared. The boys piled right into the ditch after it. They later said that the thing simply vanished. There was no way that it could have gotten out of that ditch without them seeing it. Another odd occurrence transpired in the hollow, another routine appearance for the pitty pat.

Bill Iles had an experience in his young adulthood that at first he thought might have been the Pitty Pat but actually turned out to be something quite normal. His wife, Elsie, related the story about how he had been over to her house one night courting and was on his way back to his house on May Road. Of course, Bill was walking at the time, just

about everybody did back then. There were few if any cars to drive. Boys might take the family horse or mule, or they just walked if it was nice out.

Bill was accustomed to walking at night in total darkness. He had done it all his life and took pride as mentioned earlier in the fact that he was not afraid of anything in human form and not many things in animal form as long as he could see it.

As he neared the old Shelton home place on May Road and within shouting distance of his own home, he heard something in the woods beside him. There was a grunting and growling mixed in with a terrible grating and stomping sound. Twigs and branches were crackling and crashing in the woods just off the side of the road. One of the sounds coming forth was like none other that he had ever heard made by any animal around Sale Creek.

Bill did not stay around long enough to find out what the hain't in the bushes was as he raced for home as hard as his legs would carry him. He was oblivious to the fact that he had left whatever kind of booger it was far behind him when he ran into his own yard and collapsed with exhaustion on the front porch. His father was just inside the screen door of the house. Looking over at one of the other children, he said, "Well now, I thought for sure that I heard Bill come up outside."

A faint small voice permeated the darkness from the front porch and answered painfully and weakly, "You did." That is all that Bill was able to get out of his mouth.

Elsie laughingly said that the thing that really embarrassed Bill later was the fact that the booger that scared him so badly was just an old cow that had a yoke around its neck to keep it from pushing through a fence. The old cow had gotten loose in the brush beside the road where Bill was walking. It was this thrashing and stomping that Bill had heard. The scraping sound was that of the yoke being shoved along the rough ground by Ole Bossy.

Bill Iles loved to tell the pitty pat stories to his children when they were little. He told them so many, and he told them so vividly for the truth that his son, Tommy, said he was afraid to go outside at night when he was little. "I was so full of those Pitty Pat tales when I was little that I was too scared to go out and stand in the road at night," he said laughingly.

Virgil Blake told a story once about an experience that he had in Pitty Pat Hollow. Virgil lived in a house on the side of John Penney Hill at the time. He had just gotten married and was still living with his mother while he and Mary were looking for a place for themselves.

The house they were living in was a large one with several bedrooms. Virgil and Mary had their own room, of course, and were preparing to retire for the night. It was summer time and very warm, so Virgil had raised all the windows in the house to let a breeze come in and cool things off. There were no screens on the windows at the time. Everything was in place, the lights were turned off, it was time for sleep.

Virgil said that the hillside was very rocky and there were a lot of gravels in the yard outside the window. He said that all of a sudden he heard a noise that sounded like something had jumped out of the window because something landed in the gravels outside making a skidding, sliding sound.

Virgil and Mary both sprang from their bed, tripping and fumbling their way through the darkened room to the

door. Groping their way to his widowed mother's room, he and Mary spent the rest of the night on the other end of the house.

The next morning Virgil went outside and inspected the area around the window. There were no tracks under the window, no kind of tracks in the gravels, nothing seemed to be disturbed. This occurrence has remained a mystery to Virgil to this very day.

Many of the accounts of strange happenings in the hollow are many years old; however, there have been at least three bonafide "happenings" in the last forty years. John Iles related to me how he hit something with his car in this area during the late 1950's but was never able to find it. It happened while he was coming home from work late one night. He had worked second shift one night and was coming home after midnight. He turned off Highway 27 and proceeded out Daughtery Ferry Road. As he approached the Mill Dam Bridge, something darted off the bank beside the road. John said that he only got a glimpse of it, just a dark blur, and then a dull thud as it struck the side of his car.

John said that the blow to his car was a heavy one, as if a large dog had run into the side. He slammed on his brakes and backed up to the spot where the accident had happened. Getting out of his car, he inspected the side of the road to see what he had hit. Knowing that a lick like that would have surely killed a dog or fox, he checked both sides of the road, both ditches, and the edge of the grass alongside the ditch. There was nothing there. Very strange indeed.

Next, John turned his critical eye to his car which he was sure was damaged. He walked around to his driver's door and felt of it. There were no dents. John then got his flash light and shone it on the door. On closer inspection he found that not only was there not a dent in the door or fender, there were no scratches and no blood or hair which should have been in evidence if something normal had hit the car that hard.

John said that he went back the next day but could still find no sign of an animal or anything else. It was as if the accident had never happened. He said that he would not have thought anything about the incident if the same thing had not befallen Glenn Francisco a year or two earlier.

Glenn Francisco tells of an experience that he had in exactly the same spot in the road where John Iles said he hit something. In the late spring of 1953 Glenn was working night shift. As was his customary practice, he drove home by himself after midnight. His thoughts were on ordinary things that preoccupy people when they are driving by themselves, nothing in particular - just preoccupied. About one hundred and fifty yards before he reached the Mill Dam Bridge and at the location of an old house site that used to sit right alongside the road, a dark shape that resembled a man rose out of the bushes alongside the road and ran right into the side of Glenn's car, right on the passenger door. Not expecting anything of this sort, the blow to his car scared the daylight out of Glenn. He said that it shook the whole car. He was so scared that he sped away, across the Mill Dam, around Reno Curve, and all the way to the Swallows place at the forks of Daughtery Ferry Road and Shipley Hollow

Road. He was concerned that he might have injured or killed someone, so he wanted to go back to the spot with someone else. Then, too, he did not have a flashlight in the car with him.

He ran into the house and told the Swallows family what had happened. Together with one other man, he returned to the spot in the road where the thing had hit his car. Armed with the flashlight, they both got out of the car and investigated both sides of the road, and they found nothing - nothing at all. There was no blood, no hair, no clothes, no grass bent down - I'm telling you - they found nothing!

When Glenn related this story, he said, "Now, I'm telling you, I wasn't drinking. I was as stone sober as you are. I hit something in the road hard enough to kill anything, and there wasn't even a dent in my passenger door. I hit a deer one time in the same area and it tore my car up, but this thing didn't even dent the sheet metal. We talked about this a long time over at Swallows' and we never could figure it out."

Glenn reiterated the fact that this was no tall tale that he had made up. It actually did happen to him, and thirty-seven years later he still does not know what it was.

The strangeness of the whole matter was the fact that here were two men, Glenn Francisco and John Iles, who had exactly the same thing happen to them in exactly the same spot in the road under exactly the same conditions and approximately four or five years apart. I listened to both of them tell their stories and there is no way that I know of that they could be anything but true. Something did happen on that road both nights. Something did hit both of those cars, but no one knows what.

In the late winter of 1967 when the high school basketball season was drawing to a close, Dell Killough and Phyllis Howse were passing this same area when a very strange and frightening thing happened to them. The team bus had just let everyone out at Howard Lee's store, and everyone had dispersed and gone home. Dell offered to take Phyllis home over on May Road. When these two were put together, there was always a lot of talking and laughing in the car. Such was the case this night as Dell drove Margaret Gentry's old 1953 Chevrolet out Daughtery Ferry Road. Just as they got to the Mill Dam Bridge, one of them just happened to look out in the water of the old creek, and there were two large green lights in the water that looked like two huge eyes looking up at them. I think it is safe to say that there was more than a little screaming going on as Dell threw the shifter up in second gear and floor boarded the old Chevy. I remember both her and Phyllis telling about this strange occurrence the next morning at school. Neither girl got a real good look at whatever it was, and neither one really took the time to look the second time because they did not want to see it again.

Dell could not even remember how she got home that night because the only other ways home would have been to go across Black Oak Ridge and back out onto Highway 27 and then south to Sale Creek or back across Brown's Bridge and wind around May and Mayflower to Patterson Road

and then back to the highway. Either way would have been several miles out of the way.

Twenty-three years later Dell still swears that there was something in that water around the old mill area that night in 1967.

From talking to some residents of the Pitty Pat Hollow,

I understand that there are still some pitty pat sounds up there at night, especially around the area of the old Shipley Cemetery. Anyone interested might want to go up there and find out for himself about the boogers in that hollow. Who knows, we might be writing about their disappearance next.

Chapter 10: Black Oak Ridge Has Big Old Woolly Boogers, Too!

Pitty Pat Hollow has had more than its share of ghost tales, but Black Oak Ridge has had some good ones, too. One of them concerned an old house located on Black Oak Ridge Road. This house was known as the Oliver Shipley House.

Oliver Shipley lived there for many years. He had been a farmer all of his life. Margie Shipley said that one of the most unique things about him was the fact that he operated a small canning operation during the summer months. From his fields he gathered beans, tomatoes, and anything that he could can, processed them, put them in Mason jars, and then peddled them around the community. In company with Andy (Poy) Thomas, he peddled his wares all the way into Sale Creek and probably Graysville. These two men had even had one encounter with the Pitty Pat in Shipley Hollow.

After he moved out, the old house was left vacant. Carlos and Judy Cordell rented the house from Ruby Ducker, who was the owner of the house at that time, in the spring of 1964 shortly after they were married. Another man in Sale Creek was wanting to rent it and live there; therefore, he needed them out of the house. Not wanting to hurt the man's feelings by telling him quite bluntly to forget about living in the house and that they intended to stay there, they decided to tell him a little spook tale to cause him to lose interest in the house.

Strange things had been happening around the house anyway, so they were really not stretching their blanket too much when they told him that there was a ghost in the house. It happened this way.

Years ago houses did not have basements or a lot of closets, mainly because people were too poor to buy junk with which to fill them. People used to hang clothes on hooks and nails on the walls or behind the doors. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Oliver Shipley house on Black Oak Ridge had only one closet. When Judy and Carlos moved into the house, they were like most other young married couples. They did not have a lot of plunder and were able to survive for a while until Carlos could build one.

This closet just happened to be the one in which Oliver Shipley used to keep his hat and coat. Carlos and Judy noticed that the door was prone to come open. They could close it and walk into the next room, and when they returned, the thing was standing wide open. Carlos said that it was just the settling of the old house. Judy said that she had been in the bedroom several times and the door just opened for no apparent reason.

Finally, Carlos got a small latch and placed it on the door so that it would remain shut. This time when he closed the door, he figured that it would stay that way. Not so. In a little while he and Judy heard that closet door creak open while they were in the next room. Going back into the bedroom, there it was - gaping wide open again.

One day while Judy was home by herself, the prospective inhabitant stopped by to talk to her. Judy took

this opportunity to mention very nonchalantly that there was a ghost in the house.

"What do you mean, a ghost in the house?" he asked.

"Well, this closet door will not stay shut," she answered.

"What do you mean that it won't stay shut," he inquired.

"Well, it keeps coming open no matter what we do to it. We figured that Mr. Oliver Shipley keeps coming back looking for his overcoat and hat," Judy replied.

Judy said that this elderly man looked real carefully at her and then left. She said that she never heard another word about someone wanting to rent the house after that. Evidently, word got around quickly that the house had spooks.

Judy said that she and Carlos figured that it was the settling of the house that caused the door to come open even after they had installed the little wooden button on it.

Everything went smoothly for about two weeks. Then one day Judy came home late one evening. In her own words she said, "The doors were still locked, the windows were still locked, and every pair of my shoes were sitting on the front porch in a half circle and perfectly paired up. That we have never explained."

The next year Carlos and Judy built their new house a short distance from the Oliver Shipley place. They dug a basement and built a nice brick home over it. There was a long wooden staircase connecting the two levels of the house.

Judy's brother, Sam, lived with his parents just down the road from Judy's new house. She said that Sam frequently came over to her house to shoot basketball on her basketball goal in the yard. Then he came in the house and took a shower in the basement bathroom before he went back home or to work.

One day while Judy and Carlos were gone, Sam came over and played basketball for a little while. Then he went inside to take his shower. That night he told Judy that there had been someone in the house but that he could not find them. He said, "I know they were up there because I heard them walking on the tile floor. Then I heard them on the carpet in your bedroom. Then I heard a door open and close twice. When I went upstairs, there was no one there. It kind'a frightened me."

"We didn't think anything about it at the time," Judy said. Still, Sam heard the noises several more times and told his sister about it.

One night while Carlos was at work on a long shift and Judy was home alone with her small son, Joel, she heard the door open and close. She thought, "That's Carlos." She waited and waited. Then she heard footsteps coming down the hall. Next, she heard softer footsteps as though they were in the room with her. "Carlos, is that you?" she asked. Nothing but silence. She decided to get up and investigate.

Turning on the light, she looked around the room. No Carlos. Next she went into the hallway and looked. No one was there. Then she heard a door open and close, just like Sam had heard. She said that when she was satisfied that there was no one in the house, she just went back to bed and slept the rest of the night.

A couple of nights later Carlos called from work and said that he was going to be late again. That night Judy heard the noises again. When she mentioned it to Carlos, he said that it was because the house was new and it was settling. "You're going to hear some creaks and groans when you first get into a new house. There's some explanation for it," he said.

Judy went on, "Well, Sam complained of it again. He said, 'I was in the basement and heard someone walking. I figure that the house is haunted'."

Shortly thereafter Judy went to visit her Grandmother Jessie Poole. They began talking about this and that, and eventually the topic of the strange occurrences in the Cordell home came up. Judy told her grandmother about the strange sounds and also about the smell of a strange cologne scent that was left in the air after visits from their friendly spook.

Mrs. Poole listened carefully and then said, "Well, it looks like you've got the ghost from the Beene house." The old Beene house sat right on the top of Black Oak Ridge in almost the exact spot where Glenn Morgan's home is today. Glenn tore it down to build his own house.

"Granny, I don't believe in ghosts, but if you say so, then I guess it is," Judy said condescendingly, not wanting to dispute her grandmother's word.

Granny Poole continued, "No, I'm not kidding, Judy, the whole time that I lived in it, you could hear someone walking on the stairs and opening and closing doors. We've stayed up and listened, trying to figure what it was. We never saw anything at all."

Judy decided that on the next night that Carlos had to work late, she meant to stay up and catch whatever it was that was making the noise. She got her chair and sat at the end of the hall right beside the door that came up from the basement because she remembered that Jessie had said that the ghost loved stairs. She also put her a lamp there for light and got a book to read while she waited for the spook to appear.

Along about 11:30 or 12:00, she heard footsteps on the stairs coming up from the basement. Then she heard the sound of the door opening and closing. She was less than three feet from the door when she heard this sound. The door never once moved an inch. Then the footstep sound went down the hall toward Judy's bedroom and got fainter as it entered the carpeted room. Shortly thereafter, the footsteps came back out of her room and came down the tile floored hallway.

Judy thought to herself, "Well, I'll just put my hand on the door to make sure that it's not moving in any way. And as the footsteps came by me, I heard the sound of the door opening and closing again with my hand still on the door. I also smelled that same aroma of a strange after shave as well as the fragrance of pipe or cigar tobacco. That door did not ever move, but it sounded like it did."

When she told this experience to her grandmother, Jessie said that this ghost had been run out of Glenn Morgan's house because when Glenn built his house, he made the stairs leading from the lower level of his house

come up the outside of the house rather than through the floor of the main part of the house. Hence, with no stairs to climb inside the house, the spook was driven down Black Oak Ridge to Judy's house.

Over the years the sounds have diminished inside her house until now there is only the occasional sound of breaking glass or a footstep or a picture falling off the wall. However, on investigation Judy has never found any broken glass or a fallen picture.

These eerie happenings have never been explained. Judy said that she still does not believe in ghosts, but she likewise cannot explain the strange goings on around her house at night.

Something that has been explained, however, is the sighting of a panther over the years on Black Oak Ridge. Black Oak Ridge is a long, high ridge that straddles the Hamilton and Rhea County lines. If a person leaves Sale Creek and goes out Daugherty Ferry Road to Shipley Hollow Road and follows it to its end, they run into New Providence Road. Following it for about a half a mile, one encounters Turner Road on the right. Turner Road runs for about a half a mile and makes a three sided corner with Aslinger Circle and Andy Thomas Road. Andy Thomas bears to the left at that point and continues on to the county line. Black Oak Ridge Road turns to the left off Andy Thomas about one half mile from the junction of the three roads. This puts the visitor squarely on Black Oak Ridge.

It has only been in the last fifteen or twenty years that the Black Oak Ridge area has been what you might call "more densely populated" so it is really no wonder that a large cat could pass back and forth through this area seemingly unnoticed.

Archie Poole had his first encounter with the big cat in the fall of 1947 or 1948 as it was making its way back to the mountain from its summer stay along the river. That was the first time that Archie heard it scream. He knew what the sound was and really did not think too much of the matter at that time, just an old transient cat passing through the area. Archie said that it seemed to stay in the mountain during the winter and went to the river during the spring and summer months. He never thought much about it at that time.

Then in the spring he heard her again as she went back through the area on her way to the river. She never bothered any of the Poole stock or anybody. Judy said that the panther screamed a few times as it passed through and sent a few chills up and down people's spines, and then went on its way. All of the Poole children looked forward to spring and fall because they knew that they might spot the cat or hear its awful scream.

Although the Pooles tried many times to catch a glimpse of the panther, there was only one time when they finally got a brief look at this beautiful animal. "If you've never seen a panther up close, you've missed out on one of the most beautiful sights that you can ever see," she said. "The eyes are so beautiful. The slick coat appeared velvety black in the darkness that night."

One night Archie's family heard the sound of the cat, and they all went out into the woods near their house to try to get a look at it. Finally, Archie noticed a slight movement in the dark and flashed a light right into the big cat's eyes. The panther just backed off and went around the assembled family. Judy said that by this time the cat was old

and was missing teeth. They could tell because the cat's mouth was partially open when they shone the light on her.

In the pitch darkness that night Judy and her brothers heard the spine tingling scream of the cat at a very close range. She said that it was something that resembled the sound of a woman's terrified screaming for help.

The last occurrence of the panther passing through the area was in the fall of 1968. Judy and Carlos had a litter of puppies around their house at the time. They had been kept away from humans by the old mother dog, so they were wild and wary of everyone. It was warm that night so Judy propped the basement door open as she worked. She

thought it very strange when the whole litter of pups suddenly came in the basement and collected right around her feet, something that they had never done before.

It was then that the panther let loose with its blood curdling scream. "Scared Carlos out of his wits. I heard him hit the floor overhead and he was down to the basement. He said that he thought someone had broken in and was murdering me," she said.

That was the last time that the Pooles and Cordells saw or heard the old cat. Judy surmises that she either died of old age or possibly was the victim of an accident. "I just hope that nobody shot her, she was so beautiful," she said.

Chapter 11: That Old Post Office Crowd

For many years the post office was the busiest place in Sale Creek. This was true for several reasons. First, everyone used to come there to get their mail, and they were more dependent upon the U.S. Mail at that time than they are today. With no telephones the post office was an important place for news to be found. Up until the early 1950's the depot was located close by with its telegraph for really lightning fast communication. Plus, several times a day one of the fast trains came through carrying the mail. This was an expression that was used in the days of the mail trains before cars became so fast and powerful. At that time the passenger trains were the fastest means of public conveyance, hence, if someone was running real fast, he was said to be "really carrying the mail." There was no other expression that adequately described speed in those days.

Another thing that brought people to the post office was that it was a main gathering point several times a day as people waited for the mail to be worked. This allowed people to wait together and exchange pleasantries. With all this influx of people around the office, there was bound to be a lot of memorable characters that one would remember from that time, and several of these characters were the post office staff themselves.

This group consisted of my father, Luther (Pig) Coulter, who was the postmaster for 41 years, Fred Burton who was the rural route carrier, Grover Jones who was the mail clerk, and Jim (Banty) Cox who hung the mail and met the train. Next to the blacksmith's shop that operated years earlier down along the highway, there was probably more foolishness per square foot that went on at the post office than anywhere else in Sale Creek. With the aid of Dolph Lane who ran the store across the road from the post office, Daddy, Fred, and Grover pulled more good natured fun on Jim than I can describe.

Fred Burton always had something going, and I cannot remember a time when he did not bounce into the office after a day on the route, a big smile on his face, and say "Chicken dinner on toast" which was evidently a favorite dish of his. Or he might be heard singing "Way back in the hills where the cucumbers grow." I never heard him sing any other verse of the song so I do not know but what this could have been the shortest song that was ever written.

He always drove a Ford truck for his mail delivery and farm work. I say he always did except once when he broke down and bought a Chevrolet. Jim Cox was a Chevrolet man and thought that they were made of gold. He considered it a personal triumph when Fred finally "took his advice."

Deep down inside Fred was pleased with the truck, but he would not tell Jim this because he did not want Jim to know how he felt. Instead, he made little disparaging remarks about the truck, just to keep Jim on his guard.

When Fred finished his route each day, he reported back to the post office, wrote his money orders, straightened his desk, mailed any letters that he had picked up, and then went home. By this time it was usually after the 12:40 mail train had run. Jim always picked up the mail and brought it into the office. Then he usually crossed the railroad tracks and walked two doors down Leggett Road to his house. Fred was a good natured person and told Jim on several



Jim and Molly Cox

occasions, "Jim, if I can get that old Chevy started today, I'll drop you off on my way home and save you some steps." Invariably, Jim took Fred up on his offer and hopped in the cab of the truck.

One day just for the devilment of it, Fred made the offer to Jim, Jim accepted, and they both got into the truck. Now this truck was the type in which the driver had to turn the key and then mash the starter button on the floor board with his foot in order to start the engine. Fred turned the key and faked mashing the starter with his foot. He exaggerated his motions so that he could get Jim's attention. Then he said in mock disgust, "Well, Jim, this good-for-nothing Chevrolet won't start. We're going to have to push it off."

This was an intentional dig at Jim's preference of motor vehicles, but Fred was nonetheless surprised when Jim jumped out of the truck and said, "Never you mind, Fred, you guide it and I'll push it for you."

Fred sat up in the truck with much pomp and dignity while Jim pushed and pushed and pushed that truck. At one point he turned around backwards and really applied the lee-vrage to it. He finally got Fred backed out onto Leggett Road. Then he scurried around to the back of the truck and started pushing from behind, pushing the truck toward the railroad crossing.

Fred was in stitches in the cab. He quickly started the motor and yelled to Jim, "That got it. Let's go."

Jim, thinking he was responsible for "pushing it off" and chagrined that a Chevrolet would act that way, quickly jumped in the passenger seat and off they went. After pushing the truck out into the road, Jim needed a short ride home. I do not know to this day if Jim ever caught on to what Fred did to him.

Fred and Jim were really good friends or else Jim would not have put up with the foolishness on the corner. Singing in church was one of Jim's favorite activities, and several of the churches in town had asked Jim at various times to attend their services and sing. One day Fred asked Jim to sing at Lake Drive Baptist Church on the following Sunday morning. Jim agreed and Fred picked him up early that morning. When it came time for Jim to sing, he walked up to the pulpit, opened his songbook, and nodded to the pianist. She launched into the number and Jim started singing. Now, Jim was the type of singer that held his book well out in front of him and referred to it occasionally as his eyes scanned the crowd.

Suddenly, right in the middle of the second verse with the congregation listening to each word out of his mouth and with the pianist playing beautifully, a stark look of terror appeared on Jim's face and he stopped singing. The music stopped. You could have heard a pin drop. Then Jim let the truth slip, "I've lost my place." The congregation engaged in a substantial amount of unholy mirth at Jim's slip up; however, Jim was not daunted in his efforts. He found his place, nodded to the accompanist, and took off one more time.

Jim's job around the post office was to hang the mail on the mail hanger so that the train could pick it up as it came barreling through town three or four times a day. For those young people who have never seen mail exchanged from a speeding train, it was a procedure that was a sight to behold.

First, my father bundled the mail in the bag. If a train was heading north, the bottom of the bag held all the mail for Dayton and towns north of Dayton. In the top of the bag he placed the mail for Graysville which was only about four miles north. When the mailman on the mail car snatched the mail off the hanger, he opened the mail bag and found Graysville's mail, the next town on his way north, on the top of the bag. He quickly placed this mail in a little cubby hole marked "Graysville", and then, if he had time, he worked the mail on the bottom of the bag.

As he neared Graysville, he got all of the mail for that community, wound it with thin twine, dropped it into a large canvas bag, fastened the lock on the bag, and gave it a toss. This procedure was repeated many times a day as the train moved north and was reversed on the next train that came south. A regular letter could be sent from Sale Creek to Graysville in a matter of five minutes, to Dayton in ten minutes, and to Spring City in twenty-five minutes if the letter got in the mail at the right time of day.

As the trains blew their whistles for the crossing in Sale Creek, people came from all over to wait for the mail to be worked. When the big locomotives neared Leggett Road crossing, there was usually a bunch of children and elderly men standing out in the road to watch the exchange of mail and to wave at the people on the passenger cars. At the point when the mail car cleared the trestle heading south,



Fred M. Burton

the mail man on the car swung a steel arm out of the open doorway of the car and struck the mail bag that was stretched taut on the hanger. The bags were struck with such force that they were wrapped around the arm. Then the man retracted the arm and safely dropped the bag on the floor of the train car. In his other hand he held the incoming mail for Sale Creek. When he got to the Leggett Road crossing, he let fly with a bag of mail, the force of which could have knocked an elephant cold. When the bag hit the ground, it bounced and tumbled before coming to rest on the pavement, in a ditch, or maybe in a clump of weeds. I never got tired of watching the mail train and would give anything to see it again.

Well, this was Jim's job, to hang the mail and "meet the train" which meant to go to the crossing and pick up the mail after it had been thrown off. This he did for many years until the mail and passengers were taken off the rails in the late 1960's, a truly sad day in Americana.

Jim would occasionally hang the mail and then go in the back room of the post office where he fell asleep on one of the tables. One day my father saw him fast asleep back there, and he was struck with an idea. It was summer time and Jim was wearing his straw hat. When he laid down for his nap, he put his hat on a peg just inside the back door. My father took two flat headed nails and nailed Jim's straw hat to the wall and waited. When Old Number 4 blew its whistle at the trestle, Daddy rushed into the back room and said, "Jim, Jim, the train is blowing!"

Jim jumped up, took off out the back door, and reached for his hat. His hand made good contact with the brim of the hat just as his leading foot disappeared out the door, then the rest of his body. The hand on the hat hesitated briefly before it and a portion of Jim's hat went out, also. The nails held firm - and the brim of the straw hat did, too!

At the time that my father worked in the post office, the Post Office Department did not provide what you might consider plush furniture in the office. There were a couple of old shackle-ty chairs, a wooden stool that usually had Grover Jones perched upon it, and two desks that looked like they had been through torment and back. In the center of the office was a large coal stove. That old stove warmed more back sides and feet than you could shake a stick at.

One evening after Fred Burton had returned to the office from his route and had finished his work, he and my father indulged in a few moments of conversation before Fred departed for home. As they were talking, Jim walked into the back room, waiting for his ride home. Daddy had a habit of rearing back in his chair and putting his feet on his desk. The only reason that he was able to do this was that he had wired the legs of it together to keep them from giving way and collapsing the whole chair. As he reared back, the wires were stretched as tight as guitar strings. Dad noticed that when the chair was in this position, he could strum the wires and make a "thrumm, thrumm, thrumm" sound.

On this particular day Daddy was thrumming away pretty good as he talked with Fred. All of a sudden a quizzical look came over Jim, and he said, "What is that sound, Pig?"

"That's just that old Regulator clock on the wall," Daddy said in reply.

"Well, that's a strange sound for that thing to be making, isn't it," Jim asked inquisitively.

Fred joined the fray at this point. "Jim, that sound is caused by the winding mechanism needing a good oiling. Isn't that right, Pig?"

"Oh, yeah, it's about time for it to be oiled, Jim," Daddy chimed in. Thrumm, thrumm, thrumm. The thrumming got louder this time.

"Well, how are we going to do it," Jim inquired. This had suddenly become a "we" job.

"They tell me that the only way to oil that mechanism is to put a drop of machine oil on a chicken feather and stick the end of the feather back in there and swab it around until it stops making that noise. Ain't that right, Pig," Fred put in.

Daddy replied, "That's right. We've got to have a feather to oil the clock with, but there's not any around here." Thrumm, thrumm, thrumm.

To say that Jim Cox was not obliging or helpful would have been completely untrue because he said, "Well, there's a whole bunch out in Dolph's (Lane) chicken roost. I'll go get one." And he dashed out the front door of the office.

It was all that Fred and Daddy could do to keep a straight face while Jim was in the office, and when he left in a dash, they burst out laughing. They had to cut their laughter short because in just a few short minutes, Jim was back at the front door with two or three big chicken feathers and ready to fix the clock.

Daddy was still reared back in his chair directly under the Regulator when Jim came in the door. Thrumm, thrumm, thrumm went the wire on the chair.

"Well, let's oil it," Jim said.

"Use this chair, Jim," Daddy said.



Grover C. Jones

Jim stepped upon the seat of the chair, carefully opened the glass door to expose the clock face, and then received the chicken feather dipped in machine oil. Carefully he placed it in the hole that goes into the winding spring. He swabbed it around several times and asked for a little more on the tip of the feather "just to be on the safe side." Sides were splitting behind him. The two jokesters were having a real struggle among themselves to keep from bursting out laughing.

Jim finally got down from the chair and cocked his head to one side as he listened for the thrumming sound. "I believe that fixed it, Pig," he said. "You can keep the feathers for next time." So ended another day at the office.

In addition to working the mail route, Fred also farmed and raised cattle. One day when Fred came back to the office from his mail run, my father was standing at the back of the post office. Fred always parked his truck at the back of the post office at the back stoop. As Fred pulled in, Daddy noticed that Fred had a lot of baling twine in the back of the truck from where he had been breaking up hay bales to feed his cattle. As he unwound the string from each bale, he simply tossed the strings into the back of the truck.

My father always had a use for strings so it was not unusual for him to ask, "Fred, what are you going to do with all that string in the truck bed?"

"Nothing, I just took them off some hay bales while I fed the cows," Fred replied. "Do you want them?"

"Sure, I can use them for something," Daddy said.

Daddy gathered all the strings up and put them in a brown paper bag and placed the bag on the table where he worked the mail for the afternoon train. In a little while Jim came shuffling in the rear door of the office. All the time that the mail was being packed in the mail pouch, Jim was watching the brown sack. Finally, his curiosity got the best of him.



Dolph Lane (left) and Wayne Bryant (right) inside D.D. Lane's store on Leggett Road next to the railroad.

"What's in the poke, Pig?" he asked.

"Just some turnip greens I picked for Grover," he answered. "As soon as he gets here I was going to give them to him. Do you want them, Jim?"

"Yeah, I'll take them if you don't mind," he said.

"Go ahead, I'll get some more for Grover," Daddy said.

By this time the mail was ready to hang so Jim took the sack and carried it up the railroad tracks to the mail hanger. After hanging the mail, Jim waited around the office until the mail train ran. He picked up the sack that was thrown off and took it in the back door of the office and handed it to Daddy. Then he picked up his sack of "turnip greens" and went home.

Arriving home, Jim told Molly that he had gotten some greens from Pig Coulter. Molly told him to just put the bag in the refrigerator and that she would cook them the next day.

The following day Mrs. Cox went to the refrigerator with the intention of cooking the greens. She removed the bag, took it to her sink, and ran some wash water. Then she ran her hand down into the bag to pull the greens out. What she felt was not greens! She pulled the mass out of the bag and identified it - baling twine. Mrs. Cox got a tremendous laugh out of it especially when she recalled who was responsible for it.

Now, Mrs. Cox was a good natured woman and a wonderful soul. She always had a good sense of humor about her, too, so she understood some of the practical jokes that were always going on between the post office crowd. I will never understand, though, why she did not take a dish rag or those baling twines and straighten out two pranksters in the post office.

One of the funniest escapades that I can recall involved

a box of vanilla wafers and Hi-Ho crackers. Jim had to come to the post office three or four times a day to hang the mail and meet the train. He did this faithfully for many years until his death in the middle 1960's. Molly told Jim to get her some vanilla wafers one day so that she could make them a banana pudding that evening. Jim left about five minutes early so that he could step over to Dolph Lane's and get the wafers before he hung the mail.

Dolph's store was a lasting memory of what a country store used to be. Just inside on the left of the double doors was the water cooled drink box. Down the left side of the store were the coolers for pop sicles and ice cream. Along the wall were the sewing supplies, snuff, tobacco, and other small items. There was a counter that ran down the middle of the store. On these shelves were an assortment of items - crackers, cereal, oats, Hi-Ho crackers, and vanilla wafers. In the back left corner was the big pot bellied stove and the television. In the right rear corner was the cooler for the meats and cheese that Dolph sold. The meat cutter and chop block were there also. On the right wall and in the right counter were canned goods. If I could go into that old store again, I could go right over and put my hands on the sardines because I can remember just exactly where Dolph kept those smelly, nasty things. In the right side-room Dolph kept the nails, wire, chicken feed, horse feed, and cattle feed.

It was into this setting that Jim went that early afternoon so many years ago. He walked down the left counter and mistakenly picked up a box of Hi-Ho crackers. He walked up to the cash register, paid Dolph for them, put them in a sack, and then walked over to the post office. He left them on the table beside Fred's desk while he went to hang the mail. After he picked up the mail that the train threw off, he went back to the office and picked up his package and went home.

When he arrived at his house, he gave the sack to Molly. She opened it up, and there were the Hi-Ho crackers instead of her vanilla wafers. "Now, Jim, I can't make a banana pudding with Hi-Ho crackers. I told you I wanted vanilla wafers. Just take these back and swap them when you go back to hang the mail," she said.

Jim waited around the house until it was time to hang the mail for the 4:00 o'clock train. Then he picked up the Hi-Ho crackers and walked back to Dolph Lane's store and swapped them for vanilla wafers. Everything was going smooth until he got to the post office.

Jim was not a secretive person, so when he walked into the post office, he told Daddy and Fred Burton about the situation. That is where he made his mistake. "Boy, I really got in trouble awhile ago about these banana wafers," he said. He always called them banana wafers. "I picked up Hi-Ho's by mistake and took them home. Molly told me to bring them back and exchange them so that she could fix a pudding for supper," he said.

Fred walled his eyes around at Daddy, and both of them had the same idea. Daddy finished working the mail up and handed the bag to Jim so that he could hang it. As soon as Jim was out the door, Fred looked at my father and then at the vanilla wafers on the table where Jim had left them. "Let's switch them again, Pig," he said.

Daddy immediately picked up the wafers and stepped over to Dolph's to make the switch. He told Dolph what was up and Dolph became a co-conspirator with Daddy and Fred. Daddy took a box of Hi-Ho crackers back to the

office and put them in Jim's sack and set the sack back in the exact spot where he had left the vanilla wafers.

Jim met the train and delivered the bag of mail to the post office. Then he walked over and picked up his package and went home. When he walked into the house and handed the sack to a waiting and impatient Mrs. Cox, he really caught flack. Molly opened the sack and pulled out yet another box of Hi-Ho crackers.

"Jim, can't you nor Dolph Lane either one read? You brought me another box of Hi-Ho's. I reckon I'm going to have to go up there and get those vanilla wafers myself," she stormed.

When Molly went stomping into Dolph's store to exchange the crackers, Daddy and Fred were watching safely from the post office and Dolph Lane had one terrible time explaining to Molly why he could not tell the difference between vanilla wafers and Hi-Ho crackers.

Jim did get revenge a couple of times in life. He always walked with a walking stick, more for show than probably necessity. One day I saw him slip unnoticed into the front door of the office and ease over to the little barred window. My father was working the mail right behind the bars. Jim raised his cane like a pool cue stick and poked it right through the bars. There was the shuffling of feet of a back-peddalling postmaster and a muffled gasp from behind the window. Jim had gotten even for the Hi-Ho's.

It is interesting to note that in all the shenanigans that took place between these men, there was never any harm intended and none taken by the participants. These were four men who worked together for years without quarreling or any hard feelings. Their fun was always good natured and was never meant to be hurtful. I am sure that if any of them had felt that their tricks were hurtful, they would never have tried them. As it was, they managed to keep the post office a most wonderful place for growing boys to hang around and acquire memories that lasted a lifetime.

It is peculiar how over the years so many interesting and humorous things can happen around one place. When my younger brother, Roger, was about eight or nine years old, he went down the road to the post office one morning to play around the back of the building. My father finished his tasks for the morning and walked out to the front of the office to while away the time before he went home for dinner. He always had a piece of whittling cedar lying around so he carried it outside with him and proceeded to make curly shavings with his knife as he passed the time away.

Roger saw him at the front of the post office so he left his play and came around to join Daddy. There was a small tree beside the post office, just right for a small boy to climb. Roger proceeded up the tree like a little squirrel. Dad looked up from his whittling and said, "Roger, get down out of that tree before you fall out and break your arm."

Wham! No sooner had the words gotten out of Daddy's mouth than Roger lost his grip, fell out of the tree, and broke his right arm. Talk about a prophet of doom, this was the classic example.

Not only did Roger suffer a fracture, but Mama had to spend the next three hours at the doctor's office, and Daddy, Byron, Kathy, and I lost a pan of cornbread and a pot of pinto beans for dinner. I'll never forgive him for that!

Dolph Lane had a funny wit about him, too. He enjoyed a practical joke as much as anyone else. One day he played one and it backfired even on him.



Luther G. Coulter, Postmaster

During the 1940's the Accommodation was still stopping in Sale Creek to deliver goods, pick up freight, and take on passengers. One day it delivered a large shipment of Roy Acuff flour that Dolph had ordered from Nashville. This flour was in cotton bags which had very attractive prints on them. When the ladies of the community poured the flour out of the sacks, they used the sacks as material for dresses and shirts, an added bonus for buying the flour as well as good sales promotion on the part of the store.

This particular type of flour had an added incentive for buying it. Inside each bag was an unbreakable plate, an unheard of phenomenon for that time. Dolph decided to take one of the plates out of a bag of the flour and demonstrate its strength to his customers. He also thought he would scare them a little bit by intentionally dropping it in front of them while they stood at the counter looking at it.

On the first day that he had the plate at the counter, Miss Bertha Wall came into the store and was followed closely by John (Dummy) Elsea. Miss Bertha was the daughter of P.A. Wall, one of the early residents of the community. For many years Miss Bertha was the librarian at the high school.

Mr. Elsea was a deaf mute and was known as Dummy all the time that I can remember. Now, people did not call him this in a derogatory manner. Most people in the community liked and respected Mr. Elsea because he was an intelligent, hard working, upstanding citizen. He had to communicate with people by hand gestures and writing. Mr. Elsea worked for Ell-Dee Orchard Company and was well liked by the List and Downey families. Alyne List said, "There was nothing wrong with Dummy's mind. He was sharp. You were the dummy, not him, if you thought that he did not have a good mind." Mr. Elsea always was in a hurry as I remember him. I still recall him hustling almost in a run up to the post office each morning to get his mail.

When John walked into the store behind Miss Bertha that day, he was just in time to see Dolph drop the plate in front of her. Of course, it caught his attention right away. Dolph picked up the plate and dropped it again, and again, and again. Finally, Dummy could not hold back his curiosity any longer. He motioned to Dolph that he wanted to try it, too. Dolph handed him the plate with full confidence that the plate would do just as it had been doing.

When Dummy dropped the plate the very first time and with his heart full of expectations of it staying perfectly intact, it shattered into a thousand pieces. Miss Bertha jumped back, Dolph gasped, and the look that crossed John's face was, to say the least, quizzical and comical at the same time. Dolph was sensitive about laughing at Mr. Elsea because of his handicaps, so he politely excused himself and walked into the side room of the store where he exploded in laughter.

Dolph had the most wonderful country store I have ever seen. It was not just what was inside the store, it was who was there all the time. There were always checker games going on outside on the porch. Frank Crawley was a master with the checkers. I really do not know how he got any work done because all I can remember him doing was playing checkers. Or you might see the likes of Will Fleming, Charlie Mayberry, Ben Shipley, Oscar Burton, Charlie Adams, Johnson Hyder, or Ben McClendon sitting on the porch making shavings with their whittling sticks and watching the cars go by.

Life around an old country store in those days was completely different from what it is today. Dolph had an old sow one time that had a large litter of piglets. When these little pigs got old enough to get away from their mother, they went adventuring one day around Dolph's front porch. When it got real hot during the summer, Dolph opened the front and back doors of the store and let the breeze flow through the store. The six little pigs appeared at the front door in single file and proceeded to trot to the back of the store and right out the back past the customers and Dolph. No one even bothered to look a second time at them or even say "sooey, pig." This was country living 50's style.

The last member of the post office-grocery store team was Grover Jones. Grover had one of the most wonderfully humorous wits that I ever knew of anyone having. Invariably he had some old, dry remark to make about things or people. One day Tom May walked into the post office to get his mail. Tom was an old fellow who lived on Detour Road right where Leggett Road and Detour come together. Tom was not in a real good mood for a lot of teasing that day, but Grover was. When Tom asked for his mail, Grover started picking at him good naturedly. Fred Burton had come over from his mail boxes to pick up some mail that Grover had

just sorted, and he chimed in, too. This went on for several minutes until Tom became quite agitated and said, "You might say in a way and all that I've got more sense than the both of you put together." And then he turned and walked out with his mail.

If he thought that this rebuke bothered Grover, he had another thing coming because Grover was already preparing ammunition for his next victim.

Anytime that someone is a public servant, there are certain individuals that kind of rub the fur the wrong way on a fellow. Grover once told me that he considered his day over when he got three men and one woman out of the post office during the day. The men (all unnamed here) would stand around and jaw till the crack of doom, and the woman's shrill voice and abrasive manner made her likewise undesirable to have around.

Grover was not impatient with people. The thing that irritated him was a person who hung around and tooted his own horn and stood in Grover's face at the mail window while he was trying to work. I recall one day while I was helping him sort mail, one of these folks came in and started an hour long tirade on some subject. The look on Grover's face was priceless, kind of a cross between disgust and the look of an animal going to slaughter. After listening to hot air blow for a few minutes, he finally got off his stool and went to the other end of the office and stood behind some mail boxes where he could not be seen. This maneuver worked and the undesirable left the office after talking to thin air for ten minutes.

One of the funniest requests that I ever heard of took place along about this same time. A lady came into the post office one day while the mail trains were still operating. At that time there was regular truck and train mail, and then there was air mail for really quick delivery of a letter. Any letter mailed to a town within fifty miles was delivered the same day if that town lay on the Southern route. As previously stated, mail could be put on the evening train and would be delivered to Graysville in five minutes, to Dayton in ten. Other mail was shipped by truck unless air mail was requested. An extra penny or two guaranteed that the letter would fly to its distant destination.

This lady walked up to the little barred window that day and asked Grover for an air mail stamp because she wanted her letter to get where it was going as soon as possible.

"Grover, I need one of those six cent air mail stamps so that this letter gets there as quick as possible. That's what I want, make it get there quick. Yessiree, it's got to get there because it's real important. Tomorrow at the latest. Gotta get there quick."

Finally, Grover asked her where she wanted to send the letter.

"Graysville," she blurted. Graysville was four miles north of Sale Creek.

In a small rural community years ago it was only natural to put great dependence and trust in public servants. Policemen, telegraphers, doctors, preachers, teachers - all of these fell into that category. However, my father had several unbelievable requests directed his way.

Miss Frankie Eldridge lived near the post office for many years. She was a very forthright person who was not easily embarrassed by anything. She was an elderly lady who held social and political prominence in Sale Creek as well as in Chattanooga. One day she encountered a very difficult situation. She got the zipper hung on her pants and was

unable to get them loose. This was no real problem because she had a good neighbor in Cleo Pendergrass. She walked over to Cleo's house to get her to unzip the troublesome zipper. Cleo was not at home. There was nothing left to do but to go to the post office and have Pig Coulter fix that zipper.

She appeared at the back of the post office late that morning and called to my father who was working the morning mail.

"Yoo hoo, Pig Dahling, can you help me?" she trilled.

My father walked to the back door to ask what he could do for her. She was standing facing him with her hands to her back holding the back of her pants. "How can I help you this morning, Miss Frank," he asked.

"Now, I know that you're a married man and all that, but I'm in a little trouble. I'm due to go to town with Gertie and Alyne List after while, and I've got my zipper hung. Will you see if you can get it loose for me?"

My father was embarrassed to say the least as Miss Frankie turned around to show him her predicament. Her pants had the type of zipper that zipped up the back and it was indeed hung. He began to pull on the little tab on her zipper and the tab came off. "Oh, Lord, help me," he thought. He was already holding the top of her pants with one hand and the tab was in the other. He did not know how he could get the zipper unhung without possibly touching her bottom in some way. He already had his head turned so that he would not see something that he should not. The situation was very grave now so he allowed himself one short peek at the troublesome situation. To his utter horror and dismay, he found the source of the problem - her panties were hung in her zipper. This was just too much. How could he ever explain this one! Here he was standing at the back of the post office, in full view of passersby, trying to get a woman's pants unhung - and with her panties hung in the zipper.

Finally, after sweat had broken out on his face, he said, "Miss Frank, the zipper is torn up and it's your panties that are hung in it. I don't think I better try to do any more," he said.

"Now look here, Piggy," she said. "I've got to get these d--- pants off so that I can go to Chattanooga. Just get your knife out and cut down the side of the zipper so I can get out of these things."

My father very carefully cut down the edge of the zipper and released the troublesome fabric. "There, it's finished," he said, being greatly relieved that the situation was over. The last that he saw of her she was going back across the railroad to her house with both hands clasping the troublesome pants to keep them from falling down.

Miss Frank always drove big expensive cars, Cadillacs and Lincoln Continentals. In 1960 she bought a brand new baby blue Lincoln, one of those models that looked like a big box rolling down the highway. Miss Frankie really liked that car, but it was sometimes more than she could handle.

Her manner of driving was to drive slow, usually no more than 45 mph, tops. Many people in Sale Creek have met long strings of cars that were backed up for hundreds of yards, and invariably it was Miss Frank that was in the lead, her head barely visible above the steering wheel. She had to sit on a cushion so that she could see to drive at all.

Miss Frank lived in the large two story house on Leggett Road known as the Grover Eldridge house, a large Welsh built home that was constructed in the latter part of the

1800's by William Griffith. The house was always kept in immaculate condition and the picket fence around the yard was gleaming white. There was a large gate entrance for her driveway alongside Leggett Road. However, even with this wide entrance, it was difficult for a large car like the Lincoln to make the turn unless the driver made a very wide turn from the opposite side of the road.

Miss Frank left one day on a short trip. When she returned, she made her usual approach to the gate. This time, however, she did not make a large enough turn and struck the gate post. Backing the big Lincoln up, she tried again. This continued for several more attempts until Miss Frank was completely exhausted and exasperated, the gatepost was a battered hulk, and the Lincoln was cross ways of Leggett Road and holding up traffic. At that point she angrily got out of the car and stomped across the road to Foster Pendergrass's house and asked to see Foster.

When Foster came to the door, she said, "Foster, will you be a dahling and please go over there and see if you can get that d--- Lincoln in my driveway. I've torn the gate down trying myself."

Needless to say, Foster put that Lincoln in her garage more than one time while she owned it.

Miss Frank was not rich, but you could say that she was "well-put" financially speaking. Nevertheless, she had been raised to be prudent about her spending. One habit that she had was to take return envelopes from mail that she had received, mark out the address on the center of the letter, and write in the address of the person to whom she was mailing the letter thus saving the cost of buying envelopes. Then she bought a five cent stamp from my father in the post office, put it on her letter, and dropped it into the mail box.

On one particular occasion my father remembered her coming into the office without her regular envelope and requesting to buy a large stamped envelope. He reached into the drawer and handed her one. She proceeded to lay her usual nickel on the counter and pick up the envelope.

"It'll be seven cents - five cents for the stamp and two cents for the envelope," Dad said.

"Well, hell fire and it a'rainin'. I won't pay it," she said, and she stormed out of the office and went back to her house to get one of her own envelopes.

My brother Roger mowed Miss Frankie's yard when he was a little boy. She really liked Roger and always said that he did a "mah-velous job, Dahling." On one particular occasion Roger was mowing the yard along the back fence that bordered Miss Frankie's neighbor, Emma Kate Gann. Now, Emma Kate and Miss Frank had had a minor dispute during the preceding days and Roger's work was being closely scrutinized that day by Mrs. Gann.

"Rogers, (she called him Rogers) how much is Frankie paying you to mow her yard," she inquired.

"Two dollars," Roger replied.

"Well, I'll pay you five dollars not to mow it," Emma Kate said.

If Miss Frank is remembered for some of her eccentricities, she is also affectionately remembered by many people in Sale Creek for her total devotion to the Sale Creek community. She helped scores of people get jobs in Chattanooga and was always willing to do a favor to people who were in need. Sale Creek High School never had a friend like Frankie Eldridge. She and the post office crowd will be remembered fondly for many years to come.

Chapter 12: Frank McDonald's Handcar

One of the oldest families in Sale Creek is the McDonalds. James and Kitty Jones McDonald bought a large farm in Sale Creek adjoining the Rhea County line in 1820. They were two of the very first settlers in this area and have many descendants in Sale Creek and Chattanooga today.



Frank McDonald

James was a devout Christian and member of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. In 1852 he deeded a tract of land to the Sale Creek Cumberland Presbyterian Church for the purpose of building a church. The church was erected on this site and stood for many years until it was dissolved in 1912.

James' son, Benjamin McDonald married Sophronia Patterson on August 3, 1854. They had seven children before her death. He then married Maria Louisa Beard on June 15, 1869, and they had four sons, one of whom was Frank Jones McDonald.

Until this time the McDonald farm had provided the income for the family. The life of the farm was a difficult one, and hard work was the order of the day. All of the McDonalds were devoted church goers and possessed a strong work ethic. It was into this setting that Frank McDonald was born. He, unlike his father and grandfather, decided that

the life of the farm was not for him. Therefore, he decided to make his living in the world of business as a salesman.

After working as a traveling salesman for a time, he went into the grocery business with the Red Stores and then with the Rolling Red Stores in Chattanooga. Later on he went to Knoxville where he started the White Stores. In 1933 he came back to McDonald Farm where he spent summers and vacations with his family.

Frank McDonald did not ever forget his farm raising as evidenced by some of the stories that he later told to his family.

"In my early boyhood days I spent much of my so-called spare time around my father's mill which was located on Sale Creek where the steel bridge is now located just above Rock Creek, a little north of the present community of Sale Creek. My father was a miller by trade, and as such was not permitted to go to war during the conflict between the States. He was not what you would call a strong individual, and as the result, I learned to take hold at a very tender age, and help him with his duties, both on the farm and at the mill."

"Speaking of my father's mill, perhaps I should tell you more about it. The McDonald mill was really a landmark in that part of the country for a great many years."

"Mills were the first essential back in those days in order that the people might have meal and flour, and of course all of them operated by water power. On this mill according to my father, was the original property of John Patterson, who built it in 1820. This, you will see, was some 15 years before the Indians were removed from this part of the country and it is entirely likely that some of the first 'turns' were brought in on backs of Indian squaws."

"In later years, sometime in the 1850's, the mill passed into the hands of my father and his brother James and for 80-odd years it remained in the hands of the McDonald clan."

"During the war father operated it day and night grinding meal and flour for the soldiers, first one side and then the other, as the opposing armies changed territory."

"I have also heard my father tell about an old sawmill that stood on the opposite bank of Sale Creek from the grist mill. The mill was one of those 'up-and-down type' that was run by water power. At this mill, my father and his brother cut the lumber that went into Chattanooga's first railroad station, which is now known as the Union Station, on West Ninth. The lumber was shipped or rafted down the Tennessee River and then delivered by ox wagon to the site of the building."

"Much of the toll from the corn mill was also marketed in Chattanooga, but it was delivered by ox wagon, at which time we often brought also stock and cows from the Chattanooga market. I made many of these trips with my father in later years, after I became large enough to ride a horse."

"Back in those days we would bring cows and calves to Chattanooga. The cows, as a general rule, were tied to the wagon and the calves allowed to walk. Sometimes they would get contrary and I would have to chase them all over the country. Those were eventful days."

"The old mill was acquired not so many years ago by the late Ed Downey, and soon thereafter high flood waters destroyed the dam. The mill was then torn away and never replaced. The site is now owned by the TVA and much of the old concrete and stone foundation remains there."

"I recall I made numerous and frequent trips with father to Dayton, where we did most of our trading. The roads were terrible in those days and it often became necessary to unload our wagons entirely to get them out of mudholes. Then we would reload and proceed until we

encountered another quagmire. Those trips were never taken for pleasure...in fact, we soon learned to dread them."¹

When Frank McDonald was seventeen, he was hired as a stonemason's helper and helped build the foundation for the large water tank at the Coulterville depot. (These stones that Frank McDonald helped carve and set in place are still resting in their original positions alongside Coulterville Road, covered in hedge and weeds.) The mason's crew were all boarding at the McDonald home so he rode the mile's distance between the construction site and his home with them every day on a small handcar.

One Sunday night Frank and the other members of the crew (less the overseer of the group) decided to go to church at Sale Creek about three miles south. They also decided to take the handcar for transportation, an act that they knew the boss would disallow if he knew about it; however, they decided to take the car anyway because there was no way that he would ever know they had taken it. They figured that they would get back before the car was noticed, lock it up safely, and no one would be the wiser. Besides that, they further justified themselves that they were going to church, anyway.

The Cincinnati Southern Railroad ran a fast train at that time known as the Number 1 or Cannon Ball, and it ran a non-stop service between Dayton and Chattanooga.

When this group of church-going travelers stopped at the Coulterville station on their way south, they asked the depot agent where the Cannon Ball was then. He replied that he had gotten word on the telegraph that it had just left Dayton. This intrepid group knew that the train had a long grade to pull just south of Dayton and would be delayed several minutes there, so they decided that they would have time to make Sale Creek before the train caught them.

Eight men supplied power for the hand car while a big Irishman named Mal Grogan stood on the rear of the car with his foot ready to apply the brake if the train was sighted. Frank was stationed on the front of the car looking to the rear to watch for the oncoming Cannonball.

All went well until this group passed the Sale Creek switch light. By his own testimony, Frank McDonald said that he became careless at his job of watching their rear and took a look at the track to the south. When he looked back around, he saw the switch light, and, of course, mistook the bright beacon for the headlight of the Cannonball.

"Number 1!" Frank yelled excitedly.

The big Irishmen on the rear of the car immediately slammed on the brake and brought the handcar to a jolting halt. Caught completely unaware of the situation and, therefore, unable to stop their own forward progress even though that of the handcar was halted, Frank and the other nine men became airborne off the front of the handcar. Upon investigation it was found that all ten men had suffered bloody noses and scratched up faces and hands.

The air soon became filled with the sound of the other nine victims upbraiding and cursing Frank for his carelessness. And that was still not the worst of it. The next

morning the boss found out about their little Sunday night ride after seeing ten scratched up faces and asking them from whence the cuts and abrasions came.²

Frank McDonald went on to become a very successful businessman, and he did it the hard way - with pure, old hard work. This legacy has been passed down through all the generations of McDonalds who followed. None of them have been known to sit on their laurels and do nothing. They all worked.

Another characteristic of this family was compassion. Even though they usually had more than enough for themselves, they were never known to refuse someone who was in need. This is best illustrated by the story of an old hobo who came to Coulterville.

Hobos, for those young people who never saw one of these strange phenomenon, were men who rode the rails to exciting places, romantically speaking. Actually, they were usually men who were down on their luck, drifters, or thrill seekers who loved the life around the railroads. They caught rides on trains and rode all over the United States. When they were out of money, they begged for meals or possibly even stole a few chickens or ears of corn for their supper. Some of them did a few odd jobs in order to make a few cents in order to buy a meal or a bottle of "who-shot-John" white-lightning. Then, it was time to hit the rails again, and they were gone on the next slow freight.

One cold winter day in the late 1800's, an old hobo got off the train at the Coulterville depot. His hands and feet were frozen from the cold ride on a box car, and he was completely unable to take care of himself.

When news of this sick hobo reached the McDonalds, he was taken to their home where he could be fed and cared for during his illness. The McDonald family doctored and fed him for several days as they attempted to nurse him back to health. As they took care of this old hobo, the McDonalds tried to get him to tell them his name, where he lived, or any of his family's names so that they could let his next of kin know of his serious condition. He refused to divulge any information.

Tragically, this lonesome hobo died there in the McDonald home on Coulterville Road. No one knew that the old man had passed. No family member was there to care or to shed a tear of mourning over the passing of this soul into eternity. No friends were there to say nice things about him. No one, that is, except the McDonalds. This Unknown Hobo as they called him was given a Christian burial in the McDonald family cemetery. This Sale Creek family cared about people and could not stand to see this poor old hobo pass into eternity without someone's notice or without a few tears being shed for him. His grave is not far from the railroad that he loved and is one of several graves that is marked simply by the trademark of the community in which he died, a large Sale Creek sandrock that was placed over him by the McDonald family that cared for him.³

Notes

1. *McDonald Farm, 1821-1983* written by the McDonald Family, p. 7-8.
2. *McDonald Farm, 1821-1983* p. 14.
3. *McDonald Farm, 1821-1983* p. 27.

Chapter 13: The Deliverance of Bob Martin



Bob Martin

Anytime that a person dies needlessly, it is regrettable. However, many times a person is responsible for his own untimely demise. Such was the case at Christmas time, 1927, inside Cap Ray's Restaurant at the corner of Highway 27 and present-day Leggett Road.

All towns have bullies, and in this respect Sale Creek was no different than any other place. Grover Porter was one of the worst at that time. He enjoyed pushing younger, smaller boys and men around, and rumor had it that he had even pulled a large wrench out of the back seat of a man's car and ordered him out of it whereupon he robbed the man. Because of his meanness and bullying tactics, many

people were relieved and even glad when six men planted him in the Rogers' Cemetery one cold day at the end of that year.

The other principal character in this tragedy was Bob Martin who was one of Zack Martin's sons. Zack had lived in Coulterville all of his life and was a respected member of the community. Bob lived in Coulterville with his father at that time. Two days before the fateful matchup between Bob and Grover Porter, Bob was using his long bladed knife when he broke the tip off. He took a file and formed a new tip on it, and while he was at it, he put a razor keen edge on the blade. He did not realize at the time that this act probably saved his life.

On this particular Sunday evening preceding Christmas day, the young people of the Sale Creek Presbyterian Church were having their weekly Christian Endeavor meeting which was sponsored by Ed and Licia Downey. They were planning a round of caroling in the community that night. Several of the young people had already gathered at the church and were waiting for the rest to arrive so that they could begin. Bob Martin and Luther Coulter were two who had not arrived yet. They were on their way to the church that evening along with two young ladies when Bob decided to stop at the small cafe to get a pack of chewing gum. Grover Porter was standing on the inside of the establishment.

As Bob walked up to the door to step inside, Grover grabbed him by the shirt collar and started cursing him and insulting him. This badgering and insulting had been going on for some time. Grover had made fun of Bob frequently before because of Bob's diminutive stature. At first Bob thought that the man was kidding him albeit in the most vulgar of fashions. All thought of jest disappeared from Bob's mind, however, when Grover grasped his closed switch blade knife in his clenched fist and hit Bob squarely in the jaw. Bob Martin was a small man, and the blow from Porter would surely have knocked him flat on the concrete had not Porter been holding his collar with his other hand.

As Bob reeled from the blow, Porter let him go. Bob stepped back just in time to see Porter's switch blade knife come open. Reaching quickly into his own pocket, he drew out his razor sharp knife and lunged at Porter, taking a swipe with his knife at his assailant's abdomen. The knife entered the thug at the side and ripped him open around to his front. Witnesses to the knifing said that Bob's knife punctured the man's intestines. Immediately Porter dropped his knife, sagged to the concrete, slumped over, and grasped his bleeding side.

Bob Martin folded his own knife and went into the cafe where he bought his gum. He then told the clerk at the counter that he had just cut the man outside pretty badly, and he was sure that he needed to be taken to the doctor.

Whenever any type of excitement takes place like this, people always gather so it did not take long for word to travel about this unfortunate happening. Happy Sam Gentry lived approximately one hundred yards north of the store where the knifing took place. When he got word, he immediately went to the scene but not before he told his

wife to keep the children from coming down to the store. Sam stayed at the store for a while until Porter was taken to the doctor. Then he returned home and told his wife, "Delph, Bob Martin has just cut the guts out of Grover Porter."

Several men took Porter up Leggett Road, across the railroad tracks to the home of Dr. Warner Gross, the community doctor. After examining Porter, Dr. Gross determined that his injuries were too grievous for him to treat there. Therefore, he directed them to take him to the hospital.

Meanwhile, Bob joined the group that was assembling at the Presbyterian Church for their night of Christmas caroling. As soon as he rejoined Luther Coulter who was waiting down the highway and who had not seen the fracas in front of the cafe, he told him what had happened inside. In addition he got word to Zack Martin of what had happened at the store. Zack immediately notified Ed Downey who had been a close friend of the family since both he and Zack were children. At Zack's request Ed immediately started making plans to go to Chattanooga that night to make bond for Bob if matters warranted it.

Oliver Standifer was the local deputy sheriff at that time, and he was notified directly of the situation on the corner. The law enforcement in those days was much different than it is today. Each small town had their own deputy that was called upon to handle matters such as this; however, deputies in Sale Creek might go for weeks before they had any official act to perform because there was not much in the way of crime going on in those days. Oliver quickly made his way to the scene of the fight and began his investigation.

It was a couple of hours before the Christian Endeavor group arrived back at the church, and Oliver was waiting on them. He promptly arrested Bob and began the trip to the jail in Chattanooga. Zack Martin had arrived at the church by the time the young people returned as had Happy Sam Gentry. Ed Downey picked up Zack and Sam and together they all went to town that night to get Bob out of jail.

Arriving at the Hamilton County Jail, they were told that the judge who usually handled matters of this sort was out of town and would not be back until the next day and insinuated that Bob would have to spend the night at the jail. Mr. Downey asked the man in the charge, "Can't we just make bond for him so that he can go on back home?"

The official thought about it and asked Ed how much bond he was prepared to make. To this question, Mr. Downey answered, "Well, you just name it and I'll pay it." Mr. Downey held his friendship with Zack and his family in high esteem and was determined that Bob had acted in his own self-defense; therefore, he was willing to pay his bail no matter the cost.

Finally, the deputy decided to let Bob go back home with his family and friends until the official inquest was held. No charges were filed that night.

The next day at the hospital, Grover Porter, much to his credit, acknowledged to a Hamilton County deputy that he was the person at fault for the whole matter and further asked that no charges be filed against Bob Martin, that Bob was not to blame in any way and was acting in his own self-defense. Therefore, no charges were ever leveled at Bob.

In speaking with his brother, Harry, on this matter, the question arose as to whether this incident bothered Bob later in life. Harry said that Bob never once mentioned the knifing during the rest of his life, but he said that there were times in Bob's life that he felt that he was haunted by the knowledge that someone had died at his hand, even though it was self-defense.

Two days after the fight Grover Porter died in the hospital and was buried shortly thereafter in the lower section of the Roger's Cemetery in Sale Creek. Thus ended the life of a man who had died needlessly but because of his own deeds. A simple home-made marker beside a sunken grave covered with sage grass is all that remains as a memory of this man. Bob Martin left Sale Creek several years later and lived in Clarkrange, Tennessee for the rest of his life until he died and was buried there in 1971.

Chapter 14: Clarence Edmonds's Birthday

Before the "age of information" and man's penchant for keeping so many records, birth certificates were not as essential as they are today. Nothing illustrates this better than the experience that Clarence Edmonds had with bureaucratic red tape concerning proof of his birth during World War II.

Clarence lived in Bakewell at that time and was running a small garage and service station as well as tending to a small family farm that had been in the Edmonds family for many years. Because of his age and the size of his family, five children and a wife, he was not called to the military to fight.

A skilled acetylene and electric welder and mechanic, he had operated a garage at the corner of Highway 27 and Retro-Hughes Road since 1922. Because the war effort was taking all of the rubber products, and auto parts were hard to come by, Clarence's garage business was suffering greatly. Added to that, the tire rationing board refused to approve his application to get tires because they said that "his livelihood doesn't depend solely on his farm."

After being turned down by the rationing board, Clarence then turned to the Hercules Powder Company for employment. Hercules was a major producer of gun powder and explosives during the war, and Mr. Edmonds hoped to obtain a job in the plant so that he could provide for his family and make a contribution in helping to win the war. It was at this time that he learned that he had to have a birth certificate in order to get a job. When he told them that he did not have a birth certificate, he was told that it would be easy to get one - all he had to do was provide proof of birth from the family Bible and the Bureau of Vital Statistics would issue him one.

This last bit of information was as damaging to his hopes as the knowledge that he needed a certificate of birth in the first place. Five years earlier his home had burned and had destroyed all of his belongings, including the family Bible. In fact, his family had barely escaped with their lives from the blaze. Added to this unfortunate situation, Mr. Edmonds had quit school before his graduation from eighth grade so there were no school records from which to establish a date for his birth.

At this time Clarence and his family picked the last of the 600 bushels of peaches on his farm and then went to Sale Creek on July 15 to enlist help in getting his birth certificate. He first went to Margaret Gentry who notarized his signature on the application, his father's signature and a statement from Miss Maggie McGill who was 72 at the time that she had lived in the community with Mr. and Mrs. Richard Edmonds all of her life and knew that Clarence was their son.

Without either a family Bible or school records to verify his date of birth, he decided to go to his first grade teacher from the Bakewell School. Mrs. Burleigh Eldridge Downey gave him a written statement saying that he had attended the Bakewell School and that she had "taught Clarence Edmonds in the first, second, and third grades, entering him in August, 1913" and that she "knew his father and mother



Clarence W. Edmonds

to be Mr. and Mrs. R.B. Edmonds."

With this ammunition in hand, he then went to the Hamilton County Courthouse and presented it to the clerk there. He was flatly told by the official that the evidence that he had presented "was not worth the paper it was written on." This was a crushing blow to his hopes.

Mr. Edmonds related that his great-grandfather was half Indian, his grandfather was battle scarred in the Civil War and had fought for the Union, and "to beat it all," as he put it, "my middle name is Washington after the father of my country and it looks like I'm not going to be able to prove I was born in it so I can go to work for it."

"I suggested tax records which have been paid on the same farm by my great-grandfather, my grandfather, my father, and by myself. I suggested my grandfather's and grandmother's and my father's and mother's marriage records and they told me my father's and mother's marriage didn't concern me. I told them I doubted that," he said. "Papa says my half-Indian great-grandfather, Nathan Shipley, has more deeds recorded in Hamilton County in his name than any other except the McRees and the Cliffs. Anderson Edmonds, who married Shipley's daughter was my grandfather, and he sold the first kerosene lamp in this county, and I've got records to prove that but I can't prove when I was born."

As Mr. Edmonds' daughters related to me, he did finally manage to get his birth certificate through the assistance of Margaret Gentry and Burleigh Downey. He spent the rest of his life as a mechanic, a vocation at which he was very good.

One of Mr. Edmonds' later jobs in life had been that of a sawyer for Pat Hoffman at the mill that was located alongside the railroad tracks just south of the Leggett Road crossing. He ran a planer for Mr. Hoffman. This machine planed the rough sides of the boards, sized them and smoothed them. One day on the job Clarence's hand

slipped and one of his fingers was caught by the blades of the machine, severing it completely. There were no ambulances at that time so Mr. Edmonds was transported to Chattanooga by his daughter, Wanda. She related that she drove quite fast to the hospital in Chattanooga, barely missing sideswiping at least one large truck in the process.

She managed to get her father to the doctor and get the wound sewed up and dressed, but his finger was missing one joint for the rest of his life.

As a result of the loss of part of his finger, Mr. Edmonds decided to file for his insurance benefits to receive compensation for loss of work, loss of limb, and medical expenses. He wrote his letter and mailed it to the insurance company. Then he waited. In a few weeks he got his answer.

The insurance company told him that they did not cover expenses for losses sustained under the circumstances described by Mr. Edmonds; therefore, there would be no compensation due to him.

After receiving this letter, Mr. Edmonds sat down and wrote them a reply stating that he appreciated their time in answering his letter to claim his benefits and that he understood their position. He further stated that he hoped that someday a steamboat came down Highway 27 right through the middle of Sale Creek because he meant to run out and let it run over his foot. Then he would send them a claim for that accident to see if *those* circumstances entitled him to benefits!

Note

1. Undated article from *The Chattanooga Times*.

Chapter 15: A Dynamite Of A Serenade

For many years it was a rural custom to serenade or shivaree a young couple when they got married. This serenading took place on the wedding night and might consist of cat calls, beating pots and pans, singing as a group, shooting shotguns, or doing any of one hundred and one other things to annoy the victims. In extreme cases the women in the group had been known to take the bride and set her down in a tub of water while the men rode the husband around on a fence rail. After the group had ended their serenade or shivaree, the newly-weds were expected to open their house and entertain the group with cake, cookies, punch, or other goodies.

On one occasion the tables were turned on the celebrants. There was one John Ward who married Lena Capps in Coulterville. They set up housekeeping in a small cabin on the upper end of Burton Hollow. On their wedding night a band of men and women came to serenade them. This group made the mistake of standing right on the front stoop of the house. The new Mrs. Ward was in no mood to be serenaded, shivareed, or anything else for that matter. Opening the front door of the house, she let fly with a bucket of cold water and hit the front row directly in the face.

One of the wildest shivarees that I ever heard of took place when Tyrus Coppinger and Nevada Gentry got married. At that time the wedding couple was preparing to set up housekeeping in a house which sat directly behind Jim Crawley's store on Railroad Street, just between the street and the railroad. The tracks were not more than seventy-five feet from the back of the house. An engineer on one of the passing trains could have thrown a rock right onto their back porch it was so close.

On the night of their wedding Eddie Gann and a group of men and boys proceeded to walk down the railroad from the Leggett Road railroad crossing to a meeting point right behind the house where Ty and Nevada were staying. Eddie decided that this wedding was no ordinary occurrence and that a special serenade was needed. Therefore, he took along half a stick of dynamite and a long fuse in his pocket.

After the group arrived at their pre-arranged rendezvous, Eddie sent one of the sprier lads up a tree that was located across the railroad from the house. The lad tied the dynamite to the top of the tree so that when it went off

it would make a loud boom but would send the worst part of the blast up in the air rather than at the house, or at least that is what he thought would happen.

The dynamite was tied. The young man slid back down the tree gingerly stringing the fuse as he went. When he hit the ground, he handed the end of the fuse to Eddie. At that point everyone took off up the railroad as hard as their legs would carry them. Eddie lit the fuse and then he, too, beat a hot trail for cover. They waited. The glow of the burning fuse could be seen from way up the tracks in the inky blackness of that night. It drew nearer and nearer to its destination as everyone in the group watched from behind the Ell-Dee Peach Shed, from around trees and behind rocks. Everyone had their fingers rammed deep in their ears as they waited for the most gosh-awful boom that many of them had ever heard. With that dynamite tied up that high in the tree, the sound should carry for miles.

Ty and Nevada had already gone to bed at that time, and the thought had probably crossed their minds that no one had been around that night to serenade them. Nevada even had treats ready for the customary shivaree.

Just then the fuse reached the dynamite and the ensuing explosion rocked every house around that part of Sale Creek. Nevada said that the force of the explosion caused both her and Ty to nearly fall out of bed as they scrambled to find out what had happened. Pictures were knocked off the wall of the house, cabinets were opened, dust filtered down out of the ceiling, and windows and walls shook violently.

A red faced Eddie Gann appeared at Ty's front door in as many seconds as it took him to get from his hiding place to the front door. He personally apologized to Ty and his new bride saying that he had no idea that the blast was going to be that strong. Probably the fact that the boom carried for miles and cut the tree in half showering wood splinters and leaves all over the area might have had something to do with his penance.

Fifty years after the incident took place, Nevada related to me that if she knew for a fact that her brother George had any part in this shivaree (which he said he did) she would still beat his eyes out. The gracious part of the whole matter, however, was the fact that Ty and Nevada opened their house to the demolition crew and served treats to all.

Chapter 16: Rock Throwing, Hooty Owls, And Road Tales

If Sale Creek is famous for nothing else nowadays, it is rocks. There are more rocks in Sale Creek than Carter has little liver pills. Digging a hole or trench in the valley is extremely frustrating because of the presence of so many infernal creek rocks. Usually it is a matter of scraping the top layer of dirt off the rocks and then moving them as you come to them until the hole is large enough to meet specifications. Anyone who has ever tried to dig a hole in Sale Creek would agree that this is not stretching matters at all.

It seems that all this proliferation of rocks has had an influence on the behavior of people in the area. Rock throwing has become an art form as a result of the people of the area always having plenty of ammunition around. Consequently, the primary self-defense tactic of Sale Creekers has not been street fighting, knives, guns, or clubs. It has simply been - reach down, pick up a smooth rock, and let fly with all your might. This learned behavior with rocks has also carried over into the throwing of coal chunks, stove wood, apples, tomatoes, and cold, frozen corn cobs.

When I was young, there was always a group of little boys hanging around the post office on Leggett Road. We played cowboys and Indians, war, hide and seek, and anything else that came to mind. One evening there were four or five of us playing in the weed patch behind the office when we came across an interesting development.

Dolph Lane had left his old cow tied out in the field that day, and Old Bossey had left evidence of her presence behind in the form of a fresh cow pile lying in the middle of the little gravel road. As all boys might do, we started throwing little gravels at this manure pile and watching them disappear in the mass. We were all standing real close when we heard something coming behind us. Looking back we saw Kenneth McDonald running toward us carrying a large flat rock like a waitress carries a platter - over his head. He was yelling at the top of his lungs, and we all knew what he was going to do with it. Some of us managed to put some distance between us and the cow pile before Kenneth heaved a lob pass right into the middle of the strange attraction. I escaped unscathed but a couple of boys had to go home to get clean T-shirts after the curiosity disappeared in all directions from the direct hit from Kenny's well-aimed rock.

Rock throwing sometimes got boys into more trouble than they could handle. Such was the case one summer shortly after the railroad started shipping automobiles by rail.

The railroad track in Sale Creek crosses Rock Creek just north of the Leggett Road crossing. Ever since I can remember there has been a good swimming hole under the railroad trestle. The creek gouges out the rocks around the abutments creating large pools that are just right for swimming on a hot summer day.

There was a large group of boys at the trestle that day. They were everywhere - in the water, on the banks, throwing rocks up in the weeds, everywhere. In all this group probably

numbered twelve or fifteen. The only ones that I can remember were my two brothers, myself, and Donnie Hodge who confessed recently of his involvement.

Directly we heard the horn of a freight train approaching from the north. As soon as the engines had cleared the trestle, the air was filled with rocks. Boys were taking all kinds of shots. There were curves with flat rocks, bullets with round rocks, and lob passes thrown grenade style. It was awesome to watch the fireworks display as the rocks pinged and ricocheted off the steel box cars. This bunch of boys did not completely stop throwing these native projectiles when several train cars came by with new automobiles on board. When they passed, the attack was renewed with vigor as the next box car arrived on the bridge. We were all throwing well, but Donnie was standing in knee deep water and chucking rocks like a mad man. He was a big boy at the time and could throw some really admirable rocks.

A couple of days after that, my brothers and I were sitting at the table at the evening meal when my father asked very nonchalantly, "Do you boys know anything about some boys rocking trains?"

There was guilt written all over our faces.

"We threw at some box cars the other day," we said.

"Well, there was a railroad detective in the office today, (hearts began beating rapidly in three boys' chests) and he said that some boys had been rocking trains and breaking windows out of new automobiles. Some have even been shooting the windows out with .22 rifles," he continued. "Now, I better never hear of you all doing that again because the detective said that they are going to be riding the trains and have helicopters flying over them to catch some of these boys."

When I was growing up, postal inspectors and railroad detectives were awe inspiring sights. As far as we were concerned, they roared like lions and were almost as powerful as the President himself, and there was no way that we meant to cross these gods. When word of this got back to the old swimming hole, the amount and direction of rock throwing changed quickly and dramatically.

Years earlier a similar group of boys had placed their lives in jeopardy when they tried to rock two young people who were courting. The carrying of guns and knives was very commonplace even as late as the 1920's and 1930's. Usually the gun was just a small owl-head revolver but also might include the old shotgun, too. Hawk-bills, switch blades, and sheath knives were also popular weapons.

Paul Coulter was a small man who ran a cafe in Sale Creek for many years. At one time he was seeing Mildred Brown who lived in the ridges close to the river. They had been to an activity in Sale Creek one day, and Paul was in the process of escorting Miss Brown home. As he neared School House Hill just past the present day school yard, he espied a group of local ruffians on the hill.

Things are no different today than they were back then.

There have always been troublemakers, and, I guess, there always will be. It seems that there was always a bunch of boys around who had nothing better to do than to throw rocks at unsuspecting couples or drivers of automobiles as they passed by. That is just exactly what this group planned to do when Paul and Mildred passed.

Paul waited, hoping that the inevitable would not happen. Suddenly, rocks began filling the air and falling all around him and his date. Paul quickly reached into his pocket and whipped out my grandmother's Marlin .32 pistol, and in the words of my grandmother, "tore the side of the hill up with it."

Anyone who has ever observed the steepness of the hill knows that its incline is almost vertical. That did not slow down this bunch of rogues as they set new hill climb records trying to get away from the flying bullets that were headed in their general direction. For some reason Paul had perceived that there might be trouble that night, so he had stopped by his brother's house on the way and picked up Grandmother Coulter's pistol. Lucky for him that he did.

It was also lucky for the rock-throwers that Paul was aiming at them, because as inaccurate as that little pistol was, there was very little danger of it hitting its target. Even at that, these would-be thugs gained a wholesome respect for Paul and that little Marlin gun he packed in his pocket.

Willard Hodge described how rowdies liked to come around the Church of God when it was located in Slabtown and stand outside during the services. Then later this bunch of errant and intoxicated fellows tried to talk with the young ladies who went to church there. The young men of the church on more than one occasion hid in the bushes alongside Slabtown Road and pelted the unsaved and intoxicated brothers with creek rocks as they started home for the evening.

Now, my father had thrown a few rocks himself when he was a small boy. He was the rock throwing-est boy that ever lived. He used them like a carpenter used a hammer, and he was good at it - sometimes too good. It seemed to be a family trait because his younger sister, Lois, uncorked a chunk of coal once that knocked him off a fence post and left a scar above one eye for life. Lois also loved to catch my father or one of his brothers, Murrel, Bill, or W.L. in the privy closet and hold them captives for long periods of time by throwing rocks or chunks of coal against the walls of it.

These two were not the only ones handy at throwing things. When a group of people came to Grandmother Coulter's house to serenade Lois and her husband, Marion, on their wedding night, they were soon discouraged when Lois's sister, Beulah, ran the whole lot off with a well thrown Coca-Cola bottle. The entire family it seemed had a penchant for throwing objects.

Daddy had a rooster when he was a small lad. As most roosters do, it had a mind of its own and would not do anything my father wanted it to do. On one particular day when that rooster had been particularly worrisome, Daddy picked up a rock and cut down on the rooster, felling him with a single, fatal blow to the head. There was chicken in the Coulter pot that night. When his mother asked him afterward why he killed the chicken, he simply replied, "Well, I reckon it was my rooster -- I reckon." It was easy enough to get out of this scrape because the chicken was easily replaced and was used for supper that night.

A couple of years later my father was trying to herd his Uncle Paul's old milk cow to the barn. Now, Old Bossy was

just not going to cooperate that day. If he drove her left, she went right. If he drove right, she went left. This kept on for some time with the old cow not getting any closer to the barn. Finally, in desperation he picked up a loose piece of stove wood and let fly with it, striking the old cow on the front leg. She went down like a rock with her leg broken. The farm hands working closeby then had to slaughter her and butcher the meat before it spoiled. Once again there was a full meat pot, but the family was hard up for fresh milk.

As Daddy got older, he only got worse about rocks. After his father was killed in an accident at the pump house at the Coulterville depot in 1921, my grandmother moved into a house that was located about one half mile north of Rock Creek and next door to Ott Davis. One evening after school as Lois was walking home from school, she got into an argument with Rooster Davis, Ott's son. My father's older brother, Bill, entered the argument and soon he and Rooster were exchanging blows rather than rhetoric. Daddy saw the fight from the kitchen window of the house and heard Lois screaming. Immediately he ran out the back door of the house, snatched up a handful of rock, and started running toward the fracas. I recall my grandmother saying that she was able to catch up to him and spoil his aim by hitting his arm before he hit Rooster in the head with it, a lick that would have downed him as surely as the cow had hit the ground.

At any rate Rooster saw him coming, and being aware of Daddy's prowess with creek rocks, disengaged himself from the fight and took off running in an effort to dodge the missile that he knew was most assuredly being launched in his direction. Rooster escaped unscathed as the errant rock whizzed by his head like a .22 bullet. Rooster lived to fight again.

Night life in Sale Creek during the 1920's was Spartan at best. Young people either went to one another's house and visited at night, or they congregated around a few of the business establishments of the day. One of the most popular spots was Paul Coulter's Sale Creek Cafe. In addition to the hamburgers and chili for which Paul was famous in those days, there was a pin ball machine, Coca-Colas, a Rook game, and just plain hanging around to keep people entertained.

On one particular night Daddy had visited Paul's and stayed until the restaurant closed around 10:00 P.M. Stepping out into the dark to begin his trip home, he noticed something that boys dread most - walking a mile home in total darkness. At that time there were no street lights, very little electricity for that matter, very few cars on the road, and all the lights off in the houses along the way. In addition it was a cloudy night with no moon or stars shining.

The Coulter family was still living alongside Highway 27 and about a ten minute walk from Paul's place. Dad was accustomed to going everywhere on foot, day or night, so the prospect of walking home in the dark did not bother him. The only problem was that he could not see a thing. It was inky black.

He decided that he could feel his way home by walking with one foot on the road and the other on the shoulder of the road, thus he could tell where the road was. This was a satisfactory arrangement and worked well until he got almost to Rock Creek.

If anyone has been outside in total darkness at night

and has heard a screech owl, they are familiar with the eeriness of the sound they make. Couple that with a young boy that is trying to stay in the road and the lateness of the hour, and the humor of the situation becomes evident. Daddy related to me that he knew what it was that was making the noise, but he still didn't like it any better. What made matters even worse was the fact that he couldn't see to do anything about the noise. The screeching kept up and got eerier with each screech. From the sound of it, my father knew that the owl was real close.

The stage was set and all the ingredients were present for a real good scare. It was not long in coming, either, and every bit of it was self-inflicted. Daddy bent over and groped with his right hand for a smooth throwing rock. He listened intently as he got the target coordinates in his mind. Every muscle in his right arm tightened as he wound up and launched a broadside at the source of his torment. Little did he know that the owl was perched atop a large metal sign and that his usual pin point accuracy was about six inches low in the darkness. Little did the unsuspecting owl know that there was a creek rock missile hurtling in its direction at 100 miles per hour.

The rock struck the sign with a resounding THWANGG! Ice water instantly shot through my father's veins at the sound of the rock ricocheting off the sign in the pitch blackness. Imagine a young boy running headlong and blind in total darkness, running with one foot on the pavement and one foot in the gravels like he was crippled. His only thought was getting away from the sign and that devilish owl. By his own recollection he said that he wished that he had never thrown the rock because it scared a year's growth out of him. To this day he says that he does not know what happened to that old owl, but rest assured it was scared as badly as he was.

Whenever a person collects stories, they begin falling into categories. Such was the case with owls. With so many people walking the roads in those days and with large wooded areas around Sale Creek, it was only natural that several stories concerning owls would surface.

Andy Reavley was from a large family, and they, like many others at that time, were having a hard time making it during the early part of the century. Andy was fortunate to find a job with John Downey as a regular hired hand on John's farm.

John Downey was a gentle man with a good sense of humor and with a lot of compassion for people around him. This trait seemed to run deep in the Downey family and could be used to describe nearly all of them. John knew that the Reavley family was having a hard time feeding their many children, so he had Andy come and stay with him since he worked at John's farm everyday anyway.

Like all young men and boys at that time, Andy walked everywhere he went and was not afraid to walk home at night in the pitch darkness. There really was not much to worry about in those days because there were not any perverts as yet to drive by and bother someone. About the only thing that a person had to worry about were occasional mad dogs and the Pitty Pat.

Now, the Downey family lived almost half way between Sale Creek and Bakewell on the old highway in a large two story house. One night Andy decided to go to Sale Creek either to visit his family or to attend some social activity. Of course, he stayed until it got dark so he had to walk home by himself in the absolute pitch darkness. This still did not

bother him.

Anyone who has never lived away from a large concentration of houses has probably never heard an old hoot-y owl at night. It is a sound that I love to listen to, but if a person was down in the deep woods or walking home alone late and at the age of fourteen, it would also be a very eerie or frightening sound. Such was the case that night.

As Andy walked along, the hoot owl cranked up. Hoo, hoo, hoo. Hoo, hoo, hoo. Seconds passed. Andy stopped dead in his tracks. When a person is scared badly enough, the lungs refuse to work. Andy's quit working on him and his heart started beating in his throat instead of his chest. Silence!

Andy took several quick, silent steps so that he could listen for the sound of this impending booger in the darkness. It was not long in coming. Hoo, hoo, hoo. Silence. Ice water was running freely in Andy's veins now. He still had a short way to go before he reached the friendly confines of the Downey home. Again he took several short steps.

I have never understood how such a loud, resonant, hollow sound can emanate from a bird that is no larger than a hoot owl. These are large birds, I'll grant you that, but the sound of a hoot owl can carry for long distances. Just let one get close to you in total darkness and start hooting, and you really get the full effect of its scary sound. Andy was getting the full effect that night.

He tried again to move his stubborn feet which had quit working for him just like his lungs had. He just could not figure out who was calling him from out in the woods saying "Who, who, who."

As he crept along trying to put distance between himself and the fowl thing in the darkness, it cut loose one more time. Hoo, hoo, hoo.

Andy thought if he spoke to it, he might help himself out of this frightful experience. He crept along some more. "Hoo, hoo, hoo," the owl hooted.

"It's just John Downey's little boy. If you'll just leave me alone, I'll go straight home!" And with that he beat a hot trail down Old Dayton Pike and up to John's back door more than a little relieved to get away from one old hoot-y owl.

Tooty Francisco had a similar experience walking along an old road. After he got out of high school, he went to work for Du Pont in Chattanooga. He was riding to work with another man at the time, and his ride always let him off at Daughtery Ferry Road. Tooty then walked the rest of the way home.

At that time there was a large sycamore tree on the right side of the road and on the west bank of the Sale Creek as it meandered under the Mill Dam Bridge. As Tooty walked home alone on this night many years ago, there was an old screech owl sitting up in the dead branches of that tree.

The night was very dark. There were no stars out and no lights anywhere around. Just as Tooty walked onto the bridge, the owl let out one of its worst screeches. Tooty said it caught him completely by surprise and scared him so badly that he could not even move. He said that his breath stopped coming and he just froze in his tracks, listening for the sound again.

The sound came a couple of more times until the screech owl finally made a noise when it flew off. Tooty said that it made him feel silly to think that a little old screech

owl had scared him so badly that night. However, with the many tales that had been told about the pitty pat in that area, it is no wonder that Tooty behaved the way he did.

If a person stands on the side of a road and watches long enough, something interesting and funny is bound to happen.

Delph Gentry lived beside the main highway in Sale Creek for many years. She and Happy Sam Gentry raised their children in the last house on the left before the highway crosses Rock Creek heading north. If there is one trait that people think of most when you mention this Gentry family, it is sense of humor. Part of that came from Happy Sam but a large portion of it came from Delph.

After Happy Sam died in the late 1950's, Delph continued living in the old home place along with her daughter, Margaret. Later when Delph's daughter, Jo, died at an early age, she took Jo's adolescent daughter, Dell, and raised her, too.

With no man around the house to do some of the things that men do, Delph and Margaret had to hire people to do some of the things that were more than they could handle. This became especially true after Margaret had a stroke and was unable to mow or rake the lawn. She was also unable to drive her old 1953 Chevrolet convertible anymore. Because of the aforementioned condition, they contracted with my younger brother, Roger, to mow their yard for them.

One day when Roger went to mow the yard, Margaret met him when he arrived. "Roger, mow around this old car real well, and then when you get finished with everything else, I'll get Tony to help you push it, and I'll steer it because it won't start anymore. We'll get it out of the way so that you can mow the weeds that are growing up under it," she said.

This was satisfactory to Roger. He did not care anyway, a job was a job. Roger started mowing. He mowed the bank, out along the sidewalk, the front yard, the side yard, and the back yard. When he was finished, he called Margaret out of the house and told her that he was done and was ready to mow under the car. Margaret called her nephew, Tony, out of the house, and they prepared to move the car.

Now, Tony Gentry was smaller than Roger at this time and was not big enough to mow the yard himself, but the two boys together added up to enough muscle to move that car, Margaret thought.

"Now, boys, I'll get in and knock it out of gear and steer this thing. You push and we'll see if we can move it enough to where Roger can mow under it," she instructed.

Everybody took their places. Margaret was perched up in the front seat behind the wheel. Roger and Tony got behind the car and started pushing for all they were worth. They were pushing so hard that they were stretched out almost in a parallel position with the ground. Their faces were grimacing and sweat was running down as they strove to push that old car out of its resting spot.

Margaret had not bothered to tell Aunt Delph about what was going to happen in the yard. For one thing there was no reason to. The old car just had to be moved so that the grass could be mowed.

Aunt Delph had noticed that Margaret and Tony had gathered outside the house, so she came out of the house and stood on the porch just in time to see the two small boys pushing with might and main while Margaret tried to steer the car. Not realizing the operating condition of the car nor the situation on the ground, she called out innocently, "Give

it a little gas, Margaret!"

It took a while for her to realize why Roger and Tony collapsed on the ground in helpless laughter while Margaret rolled in the front seat of the disabled car.

Innocent or even grave situations bring about the most humorous occurrences as illustrated by the following incident.

Johnson Coulter ran a restaurant and grocery store at the upper end of Sale Creek for many years. It was called Rocky Side. Any resident of the community who is forty years old or older can recall some memories of Rocky Side, whether it was the hamburgers that they used to sell, the pin ball machine and pool table in the back room, the old wooden booths where couples used to date, an ice cold watermelon from the watermelon house, or a drink of water from the bubbling spring.

Rocky Side was located over a large deposit of limestone rock. For that matter all of the Big Ridge, as it was called, is covered with limestone. There were springs at different spots and little caves here and there in the side of the ridge. Because of this situation the highway had a bad spot in it where a spring ran under the road. The road gradually sinks at this point causing a sunken and sometimes dangerous condition to exist. Every couple of years the county road crew has to come out and cover it over with a fresh layer of asphalt to smooth out the road again. The pavement in that one spot must be several feet thick by now.

Before Interstate 75 was built down the east side of the Tennessee River, many travelers came down Highway 27 on their way to Florida during the summer months. More than one speeding motorist has nearly wrecked when he crested the hill above Rocky Side and hit that sunken part of the road.

Dan and Fred, two of Johnson's sons, used to tell frequently of wrecks that happened at that spot. Several of these wrecks involved inebriated individuals who could not regain control of their cars when they hit the bumpy spot in the road.

Dan related the story about one wreck that happened there early one morning about 2:00 A.M. The whole family was sleeping when they were awakened by one terrible bang. Everyone jumped up and started downstairs and then out the front of the store to the highway. This had happened so many times that they were familiar with the sound of a car going off the road. They all ran across the road and looked off the bank. There, all the way down the bank and barely in the waters of the Sale Creek, was a car loaded with drunken travelers. They had hit the sunken part of the road and it had thrown them to one side. Unable to correct the steering because of their drunken and sleepy state, the driver could not avoid visiting the banks of the Sale Creek that morning.

The car was resting in weeds and brush that grow alongside the creek bank. Groanings and moanings were coming out of the dark hulk which was resting about twenty feet below the level of the highway.

Fred was just a very small boy at the time, and he was taking in the whole scene while standing with his parents along the highway while they waited for an ambulance to arrive. Finally, he could hold it back no longer. "You all better get out of there. There's big snakes down there," he said.

Dan said that car doors and windows immediately

began flying open, and the injured and drunken people inside were instantly cured of their infirmities as they squirted out of that car and fought their way to the highway twenty feet above. Dan said that it took about five seconds for all six of these walking wounded to fight their way through the brush and saw-briars and get up the bank. The next thing he knew there were twelve people looking down in the creek at the car where there had been only six just a few seconds before.

Back in the early part of the century when cars were scarce and there was very little traffic on the road, children liked to play tricks on passing motorists. Addison Downey had two daughters, Margaret and Ruth Evelyn, who liked to do this. Their approach showed a lot of originality on their part, too.

Anyone who has lived in a small rural town during the days before there was an entertainment industry can appreciate how children had to make their own entertainment. In other words if there was not much to do on Sunday afternoons, then boys and girls had to get their heads together and think of something.

Margaret and Ruth Evelyn decided one day that they would get some fun out of some of the people passing by their house. They got into their mother's old things and found a discarded pocketbook, one that had leather straps on it. Next, they got a piece of string and tied it to the purse straps. Then they went out alongside the road and waited for the first car to come by.

They carefully laid the purse out in the middle of the road and then covered the string with gravels and dirt so that it was invisible to a motorist but the purse was quite visible. Then they waited.

Eventually a car came putt-putting along the old road. The driver saw the purse lying in the road and stopped the car for a closer look. Then the driver got out of the car and walked around to pick up the purse. Just as his hand was almost on the purse, the two girls yanked it into the weeds and took off running and squealing. The surprised motorist could do nothing more than get back into his car and putt-putt on his way knowing that he had been hoodwinked by two little girls.

The next story was told on a bunch of Sale Creek brothers. There were four of five of these boys in a large family. When they got old enough to own their own car, one of them bought a large station wagon, and they all used to ride around and go places together in it. They were probably one of the closest knit group of brothers I have ever known.

One day they were out for a ride when one of them decided to get some fun out of his brother who was driving. He climbed out the back window and started pulling himself along the luggage rack rails toward the front end of the car. He presented a comical sight as he hung on for dear life on the little rails that ran along the top of the vehicle.

The brother who was driving the station wagon did not know that there was one on the roof until his brother pushed himself forward and made a face at the driver through the front windshield, just a few inches from his face.

Not expecting to see someone's inverted face appear just six inches from his own, the driver yelled and slammed on the brakes of the car. The brother on top could not hold onto the rails when the brakes were applied so quickly. His body was shot forward when the car slid out from under him as it braked violently. He bounced once on the hood before becoming airborne off the front of the car. Landing in the

road, he bounced several more times before he came to a stop. There were at least two of the brothers in the car who did not think the incident was funny at the time, especially knowing that the one impersonating Superman could easily have been killed. However, time has a way of making even scary things become comical, and after twenty years it now appears more humorous than anything else.

Train wrecks seem to bring out the best in everybody, especially in a small, sleepy town like Sale Creek. Back when there was very little going on in the little town, when the "Mayberry Effect" was in full bloom, a train wreck was a marvelous thing for getting everyone out of the house, mainly because it was the best form of excitement in the world. Not only were there train cars lying everywhere and tracks torn up, but there was usually some type of perishable goods in the cars that the railroad gave away to people who helped clean up the mess.

Sometime during the 1920's there was a humdinger derailment in Coulterville. Of course, everyone turned out to see this fascination. They stood on both sides of the tracks, climbed on the cars, got in the trainmen's way - you name it and they did it.

There was a large tank car filled with oil that had turned over during the accident. It was so heavy that the crane was not able to lift it with a full load. Because the rails were pushed apart and the railroad was unable to get another empty tank car in close into which to pump the oil, it was announced that the railroad would give the oil away to anyone bringing containers. The crowd scattered like quail to go get whatever kind of jug and drum they possessed so that they could fill it up with free oil.

Soon there was a parade of wagons, trucks, cars, and people carrying all sorts of vessels as they got into line to get their oil. For a long time after that there was plenty of lubricating oil in barns and garages in Sale Creek for those lucky individuals who happened along that day.

Dr. Ed Johnson told about an interesting experience that befell his father, Virgil Johnson, one day as he rode home on his horse. Virgil lived in Graysville but had been to Sale Creek one day on business. As he rode home he noticed that there had been a train derailment, and one of the cars had broken open and spilled fresh oranges all over the ground.

Fresh oranges were treats in those days. Many families only bought oranges for Christmas because they were so scarce and expensive. Virgil noticed that there was a crowd gathering even as he rode up on his horse. He jumped off his horse and began filling his pockets as quickly as he could. He realized right away that his pockets were just not going to be large enough to do the trick.

Virgil was lucky enough to be wearing overalls that day, so he unfastened his galluses and took the pants off. Then he tied a knot in the end of both legs. Using this as a large bag, he scooped up a large supply of the oranges until he could not get any more into the improvised sack. At that time he fastened the two galluses together and hung them on the saddlehorn of the saddle and rode home in his underwear. Strange but true.

Probably the most help that I ever saw around a train wreck occurred one morning when a south bound freight train derailed just north of the trestle in Sale Creek. My father and my uncle took me along with them to see what was going on, and I will never forget the sight.

One of the derailed cars had been loaded with fruit. It

beer in bottles. When the boxcar slid off the high bank at that spot, it had thrown beer all over the place. I have never seen so many people helping clean up a mess in my life. The woods were teeming with good Samaritans who were cramming beer bottles into their hip pockets and in their shirts. I do not know how much of the beer that they got to keep, but I am sure that the people were well paid for their efforts.

One of the quickest ways to wake up a small rural town in the '50's and '60's was to have an ambulance go through. If one happened to come speeding up Leggett Road, every human being along the way poured out onto the side of the road to see what was happening.

I will never forget the first time that an ambulance with an electronic siren passed through Sale Creek. It was during the summer of the early 1960's, and several of my friends, my two brothers, and I were playing ball in my parents's yard. All of a sudden, we heard woop, woop, woop coming down the highway in the distance. It got louder and louder and then faded in the distance again. None of us had ever heard the sound before and did not have any idea as to what it was.

I remember at the time that our church was having a series of sermons on the end times, the rapture, and the second coming of Christ. As we stood talking about the sound on the highway, we became concerned that this sound could have been the archangel's trumpet calling people home. That's when we really got scared! None of us wanted to be left on earth alone without our parents, and supper was not even ready yet. I remember going in the house to make sure that Mama and my three grandparents were still there because if Gabriel had actually blown his horn, I knew that these four folks would have gone with him. Then, too, I wanted to see the holes in the roof where they had been yanked through. They were all four in the dining room, so several little boys breathed easier knowing that we still had some time left on this old earth.

Another time one of the residents of the community was working on his house when he had the misfortune of falling off the roof. An ambulance was called, and soon the Angel of Mercy came screaming up Leggett Road. Everyone at our house was inside when we heard it coming. It was actually coming up our road. This was exciting! All of my brothers and sisters lunged for the front door and ran out on the porch to witness the speeding vehicle with the flashing lights.

That thing shot by our house like ninety. Willie Gothard lived next door to us, and her two boys, Bill and Jim, were running through a weed patch trying to get to the road so that they could watch the excitement before it got out of sight. The ambulance was way up the road by the time the two boys got to the road. Then we heard the ambulance turn off its siren at the curve by the Slabtown Bridge. Whatever the trouble was, it was real close.

Bill just could not stand it. He had to find out what was in the wind, so he took off up the road to investigate. I remember looking up the road, and all I could see all the way to the bend at Slabtown Bridge was the backsides of fifty people as they stood staring up the road at this uncommon occurrence.

In just a few minutes the Angel of Mercy cranked up again and came tearing back down the road. We got a real good look at it this time but were not able to see who was inside. Believe me, it was not for lack of trying. Fifty pairs of peepers peered into the rear compartment as the ambulance shot by.

Directly Bill came puffing back down the road and told us that someone had fallen off a house.

"Was he hurt?" Jim yelled from Willie's side porch.

Bill was so out of breath that he had to rest and catch his wind before he yelled back, "Well, I don't reckon they would call an ambulance for him if he wasn't!"

Ah, life in a small town. I love it!

Chapter 17: Beware The Clothesline, Donnie!

Donnie Hodge is one of the funniest men that I know. I can say that through first hand experience. It seems that humor either follows him around or he creates it.

One of my first experiences with Donnie was when we were in junior high school together. Both of us liked to squirrel hunt. One Thanksgiving morning Donnie called to ask if I wanted to go hunting with him. He said that he had a tree dog and that we should be able to get several squirrels. I told him that I would meet him as soon as I got



Donnie A. Hodge

my boots and gun and could walk up to the Slabtown Bridge.

We met about a half hour later at the bridge and started walking up the old mountain road that follows the south side of Rock Creek, up past some of the old Welsh coal mines.

All this time we were closely watching the trees for signs of squirrels as Donnie's dog nosed around for a scent. We finally eased our way into a hollow with high hills on either side. Suddenly Donnie's dog treed one on top of one of the hills. Donnie immediately took off as hard as he could go.

Now, Donnie weighed around 200 pounds at this time, and getting his hulk up that ridge on the run was quite an undertaking. He finally reached the top only to find no dog and no squirrel. I was still waiting on the road at the foot of the hill.

For several long anxious minutes we both listened intently. Then we heard the dog on the top of the hill on the other side of the hollow. Immediately could be heard the thrashing and crashing of Donnie sliding down the side of the hill. Across the road he ran, right in front of me, puffing and chugging. I took off with him to try to intercept the squirrel. We hurriedly scaled the steep hill, pulling ourselves up with the aid of saplings and roots. By the time we got to the top we were both winded and breathing hard.

As we finally arrived in the same location from which the barking had come, we realized that the dog had hushed again. We listened. We waited. For fifteen minutes we peered through the trees trying to catch a glimpse of Donnie's dog. Suddenly we heard it. The dog had treed again on the opposite hill in almost the exact spot where he treed the first time. I thought Donnie was going to burst. His head fell and a menacing look crossed his face as the hollow rang with his outcries of what he would do to that dog if he ever

could catch up to it.

After Donnie graduated from high school, he took up the carpenter's trade - a trade at which he is very good. One winter day while Donnie was working in Trenton, Georgia on a job, the weather turned cold, the clouds moved in, and it began to snow - hard! Someone from Sale Creek called the contractor and asked to speak to Donnie to tell him that he had better leave work and come home early because the roads were getting bad. The foreman on the job went to Donnie and said, "Hodge, if you intend to make it home, you better get started right now. The roads are getting bad up there." Donnie replied that he needed the work and would stay. Finally at 4:00 P.M. Donnie began his trip home to Sale Creek. By the time he reached the state line, the roads were slippery and icy. Because of these conditions he did not reach home until 7:00 P.M. that night.

On the way home Donnie had a lot of time to think, and it dawned on him that his old pulpwood truck was sitting in the back yard with water in the radiator instead of anti-freeze. This concerned him very much. He just had to get home and drain that radiator before it froze and burst. This thought ran through his mind for three hours.

After three hours on the road, Donnie finally made it to the friendly confines of Sale Creek. As soon as he rolled into his driveway, he jumped out of the truck and raced for the front door. Now, the front porch light was turned off so the front yard and the front of the house were very dark. Therefore, Donnie did not see his old tree dog lying on the porch right in his approach to the front door. Nor did he see the open septic tank hole that was located just off the edge of the porch. Donnie jumped up on the porch in a dead run and stepped on the dog. It yelped and ran off dragging one leg and its tail. Donnie, meanwhile, after tripping on the dog, fell on the concrete porch and skinned both his elbows and his knees. As he hit the porch, he rolled over on his back to rub his smarting knees, and that is when he fell off the porch and landed six feet deep in the freshly dug septic tank hole, banging both shins on rocks in the bottom of the hole.

The gravity of the situation with the truck in the back yard was still bearing on Donnie's mind as he crawled out of the hole and ran to the door again. He reached for the door knob. Locked! He kicked it with his foot, and the door flew open. Hurriedly he found his flashlight and ran out the damaged door, off the other end of the porch, and made his turn around the house to where his truck was parked. He saw the black shape of his truck in the back yard just as his neck and chin encountered the clothes line that was strung across the back yard. Donnie's speed of advance and the tautness of the clothesline caused him to do a backflip right there beside his house.

Still undaunted by two skinned elbows, two skinned knees, two banged up shins, and a sore neck and chin, he got back on his feet and finally reached his truck. He opened the valve of the radiator and started letting the water pour out on the ground. Then he remembered that there was a gallon of antifreeze in the kitchen just inside the back door. He ran to the back door and reached for the

knob. Sandra, his wife, had earlier heard the commotion in the front of the house and had gone to the front to investigate, but not before she locked the back door. When Donnie reached for the knob, he found it locked, too. A swift kick, another broken door, and Donnie was back out in the night with the antifreeze.

In less than five minutes after arrival home, Donnie had managed to make his dog afraid of him forever, scare his wife to death and make her mad at him, break two doors, skin up both elbows, both knees, bark both shins, fall in a septic tank hole, get clotheslined and nearly break his neck, and the truck motor still froze and burst. He later said that he never threw a tantrum like that again - it was too costly!

Misfortune of a comical nature seemed to always follow Donnie around. Nothing illustrates this better than the next incident. At one time Donnie was subject to imbibe in alcoholic spirits - to drink a little beer now and then. On one such occasion he got just a mite tipsy and ended up embarrassing himself.

In the late 1960's there was a night club in Chattanooga known as the Go-Go Club, and Donnie frequented it on occasion. He and a couple of his friends decided to stop at the club for a few minutes and take in the sights which included watching girls dancing in cages, a popular thing at that time. It was decorated at least partially with wall mirrors which gave the impression of more people being in the club than were really there. It was into this setting that Donnie and his friends stepped that night.

Donnie made his way to an empty table at the center of the club and began to watch the activities. It did not take him long to realize that there was a table full of people on the left side of the room who were having an awful good time laughing, talking, and drinking. In his tipsy state he did not realize that the group that was having so much fun was seated at the table immediately to his right and that he was seeing their reflection in the mirror to his left. He was sitting almost at the corner of the room, but the mirror made it appear that he was actually in the center. He turned and continued watching the show and talking with his friends; however, every now and then he turned his head back to watch the group to his left. They were really having a good time!

"I'm going to see what's going on over there at that table and see if we can join in," Donnie said to his compatriots. He stood up and got his balance. Then he took several steps in the direction of the table. His confidence was up now as he took a couple more steps.

It was a total surprise to Donnie when he walked into that wall mirror. The shock of hitting it was almost as bad as the lick that he took on his head. In either case walking into it caused him to fall backwards into the floor.

Now, the sight of a full grown, two hundred and fifty pound man walking dead-on into a mirror and falling flat on his keister in the middle of the floor is enough to bring down any house, and the roar of laughter instantly filled the room. Donnie, who was lying on the floor, was not in the mood to laugh right now, especially at himself. He very quietly and unobtrusively crawled back across the room and got into his chair where he spent a quiet evening with his buddies.

When the Sale Creek Volunteer Fire Department was first formed, there was not a fire hall in which to keep the trucks; therefore, they were kept in Howard Lee's abandoned chicken house. Finally, the necessary funds were

acquired so that the department could build a four-bay fire hall. Shortly after it was built, it was decided that a man should start spending the night at the hall in order to keep an eye on the trucks at night and to man the phones and dispatch.

Donnie was a member of the fire department at that time and was more than willing to give one night a month at the hall. One night he came into the office area, put his sheets and blankets down, and got ready for the night. As usual there was a large crowd that hung around until midnight. Donnie finally got them out, locked the doors, and went to bed.

Along about 2 A.M. he woke for some strange reason and was unable to get back to sleep. Finally, he got up and stepped out the side door of the building and stood looking up at the stars. Next, he scanned along the highway and watched a car pass. It was then that he noticed the shape of a man standing right beside him. Donnie knew that no one that was up to any good would walk silently up to him in the pitch dark at two o'clock in the morning and not make a sound. Donnie had both hands in his pockets because it was cold that night. Very nonchalantly he eased his hands out of his pockets, spun to his left, and hit the mysterious form as hard as he could, a move that he quickly regretted. Insulation bats and other building materials for the new building went flying in all directions as Donnie drove his fist into the neatly stacked pile. No human form was present and never had been. Donnie's peripheral vision had played tricks on him, and he nearly broke his hand as the result.

Because there were no fire hydrants on the water system at that time, the fire department had to use large capacity tank trucks to haul water for the engine companies. There were two 3,000 gallon and one 2,000 gallon trucks in the fleet. The first big tanker was affectionately called Big Bertha. Shortly thereafter the second 3,000 gallon truck was obtained. It was a Mack and was known as Big Mack. The 2,000 gallon truck was also a Mack so it became known as Quarter Pounder.

Donnie was crew chief on Big Bertha and was responsible for seeing that maintenance was up to date and that all the men in her crew knew how to operate the equipment. One night after a meeting Donnie announced that anyone taking Bertha out should be careful of the bay door. He warned that it had a tendency to come back down a ways when it was thrown up quickly as always happened when there was a fire. Nothing more was said.

That night about 12:00 o'clock a call came in - house on fire. The large siren that was used to alert the firemen of an emergency was activated and its moaning wails were heard for miles. Shortly thereafter, the dispatcher heard the sound of cars and trucks converging on the parking lot. Bay doors began going up, and large truck engines started roaring. The dispatcher heard Donnie's truck crank up after the bay door had been raised. Then the behemoth, its motor racing, jumped forward. The raking, scratching, crashing sound that followed told the whole story.

After the big truck left the hall, the dispatcher found pieces of broken emergency lights in the floor. Two hours later a red faced Donnie Hodge parked Big Bertha back in the bay from whence he had taken her shortly before. Her locks were shorn. His only comment was, "Here I told everybody else to be careful about that door, and I'm the one that ripped the lights off the truck myself!"

Chapter 18: I'll Be Fixin' Grover's Wagon



"Fixin' Grover's Wagon" was an expression used in Sale Creek to mean that someone needed to have Ott work on something, or to others it simply meant fooling around at the blacksmith shop. Walter Shipley and Ott Davis are shown in Ott's shop sometime around 1930. The shop was located on the west side of the highway just south of Happy Sam Gentry's house.

If there was one place where there was always excitement in Sale Creek, it was around Ott Davis's blacksmith shop. Ott had one of those personalities that entertained people and made them want to come around his business. Ott was also a very hard working man, large, a typical blacksmith.

As country people say, Ott was his own man. It was impossible to hurry him in a job. Ell-Dee Orchard Company had many wagons and teams of horses and mules. Ott took care of all of them for the Lists and Downeys. Even though

they brought him so much business, the owners knew never to go into his shop and demand that he do something in a rush. "Why, if you told Ott that you needed something done right now, he'd throw it in the corner and forget about it," Bill List said. "But if you said, 'Ott, if you can fix this sometime when you're not real busy,' why, Ott would grab up whatever it was and fix it with you standing right there."

Ott had a quick wit and an equally quick tongue as illustrated by the next incident. William H. List always took his family to Miami, Florida during the winter months while

he was alive. Mr. List was quite wealthy and had several prominent friends in Miami. One of these friends once decided to visit the Lists in Sale Creek so they drove their automobile up from Florida for a visit. Now, this was no ordinary automobile. This was one big limousine type automobile complete with personal chauffeur.

Most country towns did not have welcome signs at that time. Neither did they have road signs. And when you asked for directions, the conversation usually went something like this.

"How do you get to the Slabtown Bridge?"

Now, this is the country resident giving instructions. "Well, let me see. You go up this road you're on right now until you come to the, say Mary, is it the second or third road on the left? Yep, it's the third. And then you hang a sharp left. And you go up that road until you come to the first road to the left. And if you go down that road, then you'll pass the depot and then Grover Eldridge's peach shed. Well, that ain't the road. You can't get to Slabtown Bridge that way because that's Railroad Street. You just keep a goin' across that railroad track and past the store on the right side of the road. That's Dolph Lane's store, been thar for years. And you just follow that road, oh, about a half a mile and you can't miss it. Why, what are you doin' goin' up there anyway? Say, you're not from around here are you?"

Well, when this limousine rolled into Sale Creek on that afternoon many years ago with all these city folk on board and driven by that uniformed chauffeur, where do you guess that they stopped for directions? Right in front of Ott's shop.

Ott was right in the middle of fighting a stubborn mule and trying to put a shoe on its hoof. He had the mule's leg between his knees and was bent over trying to drive the nail while the mule kept wiggling its hoof and leg.

"Might I ask the directions to Sale Creek, my good man," the city fellow asked very politely.

Ott looked up from his work, sweat pouring off of him, grime covering him from head to toe from his dirty line of work, and he answered the fellow, "Well, mister, you're standing knee deep in it." Bill List said that this city resident got such a laugh out of Ott's quick reply that he told all of his friends in Miami about "standing knee deep in Sale Creek, Tennessee."

Arthur (Ott) Davis was the son of a Methodist minister and played out the part of the typical "preacher's son" when he was a little boy. All of his life Ott loved to play practical jokes on people, and one of his favorite targets was his father.

In those days of the early 1900's baptismal services were held in the creeks around Sale Creek. On one particular day when Preacher Davis was getting dressed to go to the creek to baptize, Ott very gently slipped a deck of poker cards into his father's neatly folded handkerchief knowing that when the preacher reached in his pocket to pull it out to place over the noses of his parishioners, the cards would fall out. Then he beat it over to the scene of the baptizing so that he could be in front of the crowd to watch the proceedings. More than one parishioner gasped and stunned looks crossed their faces when Reverend Davis said, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." Playing cards fell out of the handkerchief and languidly floated in the water beside an equally stunned Preacher Davis.

Possibly by the time that this incident happened the

people of the church had figured out that Ott was the culprit sought in this prank because he had pulled some others on his father before. Foot washings used to be regular services in the country churches. Now, a foot washing was a service in which people cleaned up, put on their best clothes, went to the church, and washed each other's feet, an act of humility and obedience which imitated Jesus' washing of the disciples feet in the New Testament.

On one occasion when the church was scheduled to have a foot washing in the evening, Ott slipped into his father's room and got his good pair of Sunday socks out of the drawer. His brother who was an accomplice in the prank held the sock open while Ott stuck his hand up the stove pipe and got soot and dropped it into the sock. Preacher Davis innocently put the socks on just after he had washed his feet in preparation for the service that night.

Everything went well until it came time for one of the local parishioners to wash the feet of the preacher. When Ott's father pulled down his sock, a soot covered shin and foot were displayed that were badly in need of washing.

Ott did not leave off here either. His father was a hard pumping, pulpit pounding preacher. Many times during the course of his sermon, he would work up a sweat in the pulpit on Sunday morning as he drove home his message. At those times he would reach into his back pocket and pull out his handkerchief and make several passes across his face with it to dry the perspiration. On one particular Sunday morning when Preacher Davis was homing in on sin and hell fire, he reached for his handkerchief to wipe his face, little knowing that Ott had been into the stove pipe again. When Mr. Davis wiped the sweat off his face, the congregation looked in astonishment and bewilderment as black smears appeared across the preacher's face creating an Al Jolson effect in the pulpit. There was little reason for the Reverend Davis to continue his sermon because the congregation was unable to keep a straight serious look on their faces as they looked at the darkened face of the preacher.

I guess that Ott received retribution for some of his boyish pranks when he got to be a grown man. Later in his adult life when he became a Christian, he enjoyed inviting the traveling Methodist preachers over to his house for Sunday meals and had been known on occasions to provide a bed for them to stay the night. On one such night when the preacher was to spend the night, Ott told his two sons that the preacher would be staying with them that night and that a special bed had been made up for him.

Later that night while the grown ups were talking and discussing the events of that Lord's day, the two young Davises decided to take over the preacher's bed for themselves. They proceeded to crawl into the bed and go fast asleep. When the preacher was ready to retire for the night, he noticed that one bed was already occupied. He assumed that the other bed was his own, so he put on his night clothes and got into the empty bed.

All went well until the next morning when Ott came into the room to get the boys up out of the bed that he assumed them to be in. In order not to disturb the preacher in the other bed (which actually contained the two mischievous boys) Ott quietly told the lumps in the boys' bed to get up and prepare for breakfast. Now the preacher was a sound sleeper and paid no heed to Ott's wake up call.

In a few minutes Ott was back in the room, standing

beside the "boys' bed", in an agitated state. He told them this time in a louder voice, "I told you once to get out of that bed, and I don't intend to tell you again." Bewilderment prevailed in the head of the half awake preacher who had his head covered up in the dimly lit room.

Ott unbuckled his belt, and with one powerful jerk pulled it out of the belt loops, wound up with his strong blacksmith arms, and proceeded to warp the living daylight out of the lumps that he thought were his two boys. They were not. The lumps belonged to the preacher, and before his muffled cries of pain could stop the beating, Ott had added more permanent lumps to the preacher's backside and legs.

Ott knew immediately that the shrieks of terror and surprise coming out from under the covers did not belong to two small boys, so he quickly sheathed his weapon and began doing penance to the preacher. The two boys were ecstatic that they had pulled off such a prank on their father who they had always revered as the Master Prankster; however, they held their splitting sides from exploding in laughter until they were out of sight of Ott. It was just too dangerous at the time.

After the death of Mr. Davis' first wife, he remarried Mary Blake who had several children of her own. Mr. Davis loved these children just like his own, and they loved him. Being constantly around him in his pranks, this same fun-loving nature rubbed off on them, too. During the late 1920's when cars were getting plentiful and there was a need for filling stations in Sale Creek, two garages opened for business with gas pumps sitting out in front of them. These were the type with large glass containers on the top of the pump. The container was graduated telling gallons and half gallons. Customers filled up the glass container with the number of gallons of gas that they wished to purchase. Then they put the hose in their tank and let the gas run out of the container into their vehicle. There were no automatic metering devices at that time.

Now, one of the stations in Sale Creek was located almost directly across the highway from Ott's shop, and the process of pumping gas had not gone unnoticed to him. Therefore, he stood a large rain barrel up on makeshift legs, stuck an old hand pump from a water well down in the barrel, attached a piece of hose, and hung a sign on the contraption which read "Gas". At just about the time that he finished doing this, his step-daughter, Alta Blake, came down the road riding the family horse. She immediately saw what her father had done and saw him standing beside the attention getter. She drove her old horse up to the barrel and yelled whoa. Then turning to her father she said loudly, "Fill 'er up, Papa."

Ott's kids only got worse as they got a little older. I guess their mischief was just pay back for some of Ott's capers, and you cannot expect anything different from them when they had such a wonderful teacher.

The Davis family had a neighbor who lived close next door to them. Her clothesline was between her house and the Davis home, in full view of both houses. One day two of Ott's children noticed her getting ready to do her wash.

Now, clothes washing in those days was an involved process. First you got out the big black wash pot and the wash tubs, then you filled them with water, then you heated the water by building a fire under the big wash pot. Next, you dumped the clothes in the wash pot with the detergent and let them soak, then you sloshed them around with a big



Ott Davis is shown as he is remembered best, the eternal prankster. He was trying to give his wife, Mary, a switching while Elaine (Blake) Smith, Carl Blake, and Alta Blake observed the proceedings.

paddle. Clothes that had heavy soil or stains had to be rubbed on the rub board. Next, the clothes were dipped in the tubs to rinse the soap out of them. Finally, they were hung on the lines to dry.

One additional step was necessary for dresses and shirts - starching. A separate tub was set up for the starch. Water was heated and then starch was poured in until there was a thick battery liquid. The clothes were then dipped in the starch and hung out on the line to dry. After they dried, the housewife dampened them with water out of a small sprinkler thus activating the starch. Then she ironed them very nicely. The finished product was a thing of beauty and was very stiff.

On this one particular day Ott's neighbor had spent all day doing her wash. She had finished the rinse and hung her clothes on the line. She was preparing to wash her starch clothes and had mixed up her starch when she realized that she was out of wash powders. Living not far from one of the grocery stores in Sale Creek, she set out walking to get the soap powders.

Everything was left out in her yard - the clothes on the line, the wash pot, fire, the tub of starch. Nobody worried in those days about a stranger going in and stealing or messing up their houses. They usually did not even lock up their houses at night if they even had a lock on the door. On this day, though, the neighbor lady might have been glad if a stranger had come by because he would probably have not caused near the uproar that the two Davis boys caused.

None of the proceedings around the wash pot had escaped the eyes of Bill and Rooster. As soon as the lady was out of sight, they ran over to her clothesline and began taking the wet clothes down and dipping them into the starch. Then they carefully rehung the wash on the line. They were back on their own property for thirty minutes before the lady got back home. When she came back to her washing pots, the boys quickly went into their house and peeped out through the window in the bedroom to watch the fun they had caused.

She immediately set about finishing her washing procedure, dipped the starch clothes, and hung them out to dry. Then she walked over to the dry clothes on the line and felt of them to test them for dryness before she took th

down. Her heart nearly stopped when she touched a pair of silk bloomer drawers and they were - rough, rough as a corn cob. She felt the socks, long johns, boxer shorts. All of the clothes were afflicted in the same way. Her dismay quickly turned to anger and her temperature and resolve rose to boiling as she stomped around checking all of the clothes. Then she walked resolutely to the barn and got a four foot length of coarse grass rope as a weapon. She knew who was to blame. It was those two Davis boys, and she was prepared to settle the matter.

One of the strange things about life back then was that when children needed spanking, neighbors were not questioned if they administered the whipping. This was the case today.

When the two Davis boys saw the lady check her clothes and fly into a rage, they got a real belly laugh out of the situation. When she got around the house out of sight, they

figured that the matter was closed, so they went into the back of the house to start playing. Everything went real smoothly for just about three minutes.

Bam! Bam! Bam! Someone was pounding on the front screen door. Unsuspecting that it was the lady from next door, the two little boys ran to answer the door and ran smack into a hornet's nest in the form of the neighbor armed with the rope. She quickly reached into the doorway, grabbed both of them, and pulled them outside. She then took the piece of rope and frailed the living daylights out of the boys right there on their own front porch. For what seemed like an eternity to the two boys, she raised a cloud of dust and yelps from them. When she had finished, the boys' rear ends were red and sore, the clothes were still stiff, but the lady was vindicated. What had started out as a lark and joke to the two boys had backfired right in their faces.

Chapter 19: Humor In A Church Pew

Probably the reason that so many funny things take place in church is that you are not supposed to talk or laugh during service. This has got to be the reason, I just know. If anyone thinks that there is no humor in church, then they have not been inside of one. Of course, by their very nature churches have to maintain an air of solemnity and divine purpose because they are engaged in the most important of all human endeavors, the saving of souls from eternal torment. However, it is this very atmosphere that sets the stage for humor in a church.

Every year when I was growing up my church had its Christmas program two weeks before Christmas so that the talents of the Bryan College students could be utilized in the choir. The choir provided background musical numbers while the children of the church recited their poems and re-enacted the manger scene. On this particular night the choir was on the stage while the children were saying their parts.

There was a big boy sitting on the end of the first row of the choir. His name was Walter Culbertson, and he must have weighed at least 250 to 275 pounds. As I came to the pulpit to recite my two verse poem, Walter was sitting to my right. Now I knew my poem and recited the first verse of it perfectly. All of a sudden there was the sound of a heavy, dead weight hitting the floor, a loud plunk in the choir loft. Walter's chair had collapsed under his weight, and he fell out on the floor and very nearly fell out of the choir loft. One moment Walter had been visible to the audience and the next he disappeared behind the skirt around the stage. The congregation held its breath while it waited for Walter to emerge from the floor. Now, Walter had large feet with boat type shoes. All that was visible of Walter was one shoe with a foot in it sticking up above the skirt and it was wiggling as he tried desperately to extricate the hold that the leg of the broken chair had on his pants leg. Movements and ughs and oomphs were heard emanating from behind the skirt as Walter fought the broken chair. Finally his foot was freed as we heard it hit the floor. Then Walter began to rise to his feet. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief. At that point Walter picked up the dilapidated chair and the audience got one good look at the twisted wreck. It was then that everyone in the church got rid of their pent up burden as they burst at the seams. Except me. I stared at Walter and the chair as I remembered that I still had the rest of the poem to finish. As the laughter died down, I resumed my poem and recited perfectly until the last line when I broke down and laughed. Again the entire congregation had another hearty round of laughter.

Little Ty Coppinger was great with one-liners when he was a little boy. I remember one Sunday morning when I arrived for opening exercises before Sunday School. I walked into the back of the church and there on the end of the last pew sat Little Ty. When he saw me come in, he moved down one place. My two brothers, Roger and Byron, came in next. Ty moved down, I moved down, Byron and Roger sat down. Van and Randy Martin arrived next. We all scooted down two places, and they sat down. Robert Stultz came in next, and we all moved down again. Next came Stevie Waller.

Again Ty moved down, past the pew divider to the second half of the pew. At this point he was twelve feet from the end of the pew from which he had started. He leaned over to me and said, "If many more people come in and sit down on this pew, I'm going to be having Sunday School in Bakewell."

After people have gone to church for several years, they know just about all of the songs in the hymnals. At that point when the preacher or song leader announces a hymn number, you just look it up, stand up, and start singing. You do not even need the book. A mess of turnip greens would be just as good in your hands as the hymn book. Everyone just stands, looks around and smiles at their fellow church-goers, and sings for all their worth. This was the case one morning as I sat on the back pew next to Ty when the songleader announced a particular selection. All of us boys on the pew stood up and got ready to sing. I felt a punch from Ty. He was pointing at the number across the page from the song we were going to sing. It was entitled "O, For a Thousand Tongues." He whispered softly, "Mama and Aunt Kathryn."

I have never been able to find out who the child was that committed the next offense, but I have sworn statements that it did happen. Before the days of the Sunday School wings, classroom annexes, children's church, and multipurpose buildings, all children went into the church service with their parents - infants, toddlers, school age - you name it and they had to go in with the big folks. Now children had to be constantly worked with to keep them from getting fidgety, and believe me, it was a parent's prayer fulfilled if a troublesome child went to sleep during church. Many small children would be set down on the floor where they played with their parents' shoelaces, a rattle, or some other object, and they would goo-goo, ga-ga very softly.

On one particular occasion a parent set a little boy down in the floor to allow him to play while the mother listened to the remarks of the preacher. Now, this baby had just learned to crawl, and he was quick on his knees. He had evidently looked around from his low vantage point on the floor of the sanctuary and had seen many sets of men and ladies' legs dangling from the pews in front of his. He immediately darted for the closest pair of them which just happened to be those of a lady. His quickness allowed him to elude the snatching efforts of his mother. This child was not only a crawler, he was a biter, and he proceeded to bite the lady on the back of the leg. Now, you can imagine the surprise - and pain - of having a teething infant bite you on the back of the leg right during the middle of church service. There was a disturbance in the crowd as the lady uttered a muffled, "Oo-wouch", and jumped in her seat. By this time the child had been retrieved by a crawling parent, and three people hurriedly left the sanctuary. Shortly thereafter the three re-entered the church. The parent was rubbing her hand, the lady was rubbing the back of her leg, and the child was rubbing the seat of his pants.

Someone does not always have to say something in church to set off a round of tittering around the

congregation. Just let a bunch of little boys sit down on a church pew together, and someone always starts giggling, then another, and then another. I do not know how many times that I sat down with my brothers, Byron and Roger, Van and Randy Martin, Little Ty Coppinger, and Steve Waller, and we always got to laughing. Nevada Coppinger was playing the organ at that time for the church. When she saw Ty laughing, she gave him a sour look that would have curdled milk. That sometimes straightened him up for a few minutes. Mama or Daddy would look down the pew at me and my brothers and shake their finger or whisper some threat as to what we would get when we all got home that morning if we did not stop giggling. Van and Randy usually got in front of their parents or behind them so that they could not get after them without disrupting church. Steve could not be still and refrain from foolishness no matter who was sitting with him.

With this setting in mind, imagine this same bunch of boys sitting together and honestly trying to behave one Sunday night at church. Now, there were a lot of Bryan College students who were coming to church at that time. On this particular night a group of young ladies walked down to the front of the church and sat down on the second pew. One of the girls had not buttoned up the top four buttons on the back of her blouse, and it was hanging open pretty good. As a matter of fact, there was a pew full of little boys that were getting their eyes full of petty coat straps and other lingerie.

You can imagine that the girl had not even gotten in her seat before we all noticed this strange occurrence. Immediately we all went to punching each other, pointing, and giggling. The old pews in the church at that time were prone to shake when a group of people started laughing. I am sure that more than one church goer that night saw that entire bench shaking as everyone of those boys bowed his head and heaved with laughter.

Finally, after one standing hymn and two sitting hymns, one of the older ladies of the church reached up during a prayer and buttoned the girl's blouse, and the bench full of boys returned to their normal routine.

I will never forget the story that my grandparents and parents used to tell about a certain Sale Creek man who was given to backsliding on a regular basis and about one of his experiences at the Sale Creek Methodist Church.

Altar calls have always been an important part of the service for any evangelical church. After a soul searching sermon had been delivered, oftentimes, the pastor issued an altar call for people to come forward who were in need of salvation, for rededication of their lives, or for congregational prayer for physical, spiritual, or personal needs.

Jack was a member of the congregation and had a peculiar quirk about him that compelled him to go forward every few weeks to rededicate his life to Christ. Every time that the minister preached a hard driving sermon on salvation, he would be so overcome with guilt that he went forward for rededication. This had gone on for several years, and although no one openly laughed at him or doubted his sincerity, the patience of the local parishioners had begun to grow a little worn.

On one particular night during the 1930's following an especially touching sermon, the invitation was given. While the piano was playing the hymn of invitation and the congregation was singing earnestly and praying for the

salvation of lost souls, Jack once again felt the spiritual need to go forward for cleansing and rededication of his life. He earnestly stepped into the aisle and began his familiar journey to the altar.

Mrs. Addie Newman, Aunt Ad, was a pious elderly lady who attended the church and had watched Jack go forward so many times in the past. She always sat at the end of the pew next to the aisle. As Jack passed her on his trip down front, she leaned over a little and said loud enough for him and a good part of the congregation to hear, "When you get right with God this time, Jack, we ought to just kill you so that you stay that way!"

Many stories have also been carried down through the years about funny happenings that took place around baptizings. Baptistries were unknown years ago. There were no indoor baptizings. Everyone was baptized in the Sale Creek, at the old mill dam, or in one of the sloughs coming in from the river - anywhere that the water got gradually deeper.

No names have been given as to the principal characters involved in the following comedies; however, all of these stories have been told as the truth.

One Coulterville man, after receiving Christ as Saviour at the Coulterville Baptist Church, wanted to be baptized immediately. The preacher arranged for the baptismal service, and all of the small congregation of the church went to the creek to attend his immersion. When the preacher pronounced, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost", immersed him, and raised him up out of the water, the man immediately took off swimming down the creek and disappeared out of sight. No one to this day knows why he did that.

Another fellow had a similar experience and wished to be baptized. Now, this fellow had a real problem with swearing before he came to the Lord, and he was trying desperately to live right. People had talked to John several times about going to church and accepting Jesus as his savior. One of the Sale Creek residents thought that the death of one of the man's children would be an opening for her to impress on John the need for him to get right with God.

Fannie Gothard responded to the call for women to come to the man's residence to help out with the funeral of the child. She went into the house and prepared the home for the funeral. At that time most funerals were held at the homes very quickly after a death. Bodies lay in state there until the funeral and were then hauled to the community graveyards for internment.

Mrs. Fannie worked in the home for a long time, cleaning, straightening, cooking, preparing the body for burial. At last she emerged from the front doorway for a breath of fresh air. There on the ground in front of her was John - sitting on his knees, bent over, groaning, and banging his head on the bare ground in his grief for his child. Fannie, in an attempt to cheer up the man, said, "Now, look here, John. You're going to have to get a hold of yourself and prepare to meet this poor child in Heaven."

With all of the events of the day, the people coming in and out, the death of the child, and so on, John was not thinking clearly as he said in his mumbled voice, "Nwell, Aw'll try, Mith Fanny, if'n I live."

Later in his life John finally did make a profession of faith and went forward to the altar to meet the preacher. The preacher took John into a back room to talk with him

and show him scripture verses that explained the way of salvation. Looking at John squarely in the eyes, he asked, "John, did you know that Jesus died for your sins?"

"No, Preather, Ah didn't even know that he had been sick," John is reported to have said.

A week or so later one of the parishioners saw John on the road and paused to talk with him. "John, are you still living close to the Lord?" she asked piously.

"No, Ah'm still living down along the highway close to Ab Morgan," he replied.

As soon as the weather warmed up enough for the church to hold a baptismal service, the preacher of the church decided that it was time for John to be baptized. The congregation assembled on the banks of the old mill dam area one Sunday afternoon to witness John's immersion. The preacher after baptizing another parishioner, walked out of the deep water to receive this man who had this swearing problem. Holding him by the hand, the preacher led him out into deep water. As they got into water waist deep - and, of course, unable to maneuver quickly - a large water snake swam right beside the pair. The new convert's eyes got as big as stove lids as he blurted out loud enough for the preacher and all the assembled parishioners to hear, "Ha-yell far, preather, what a thsnake!"

I guess that one of the most bizarre things to happen at a baptismal service concerned a lady who was quite plump and rotund. Again, no names are known but the truth of the story has been attested to by several individuals who swore that it actually happened.

It seems that the congregation of one of the small churches in Sale Creek had gathered on the bank of the creek one sunny Sunday afternoon to baptize this sister of the faith. The service took place many years ago when ladies wore long dresses and full petticoats. This lady went to be baptized in full dress and with her blouse buttoned all the way up to her chin. Several other people were in line ahead of her, and she waited patiently for her turn to be immersed in the waters of the creek.

Finally, the preacher escorted the last person out of the water and took the Christian sister's hand to lead her out into deep enough water to baptize her. The preacher should have known that there was going to be trouble when the thick layers of dress and petticoats filled with air and rode to the top of the water like a large balloon. By the time that the duo reached the spot where the preacher intended to baptize her, the balloon was floating high in the water, almost to her chin. She quickly fought the skirt down under water with her hands and held it there so that the ceremony could continue. Church protocol at the time was such that outright laughter at an enormously funny situation was frowned upon so everyone on the bank was painfully swallowing the most terrible urge to burst out in laughter. Many were looking curiously at their feet or were turned backwards to tend to matters of great importance behind them as Sister fought her buoyant skirts.

Back in the middle of the creek the preacher was about to baptize the good sister. He took out his handkerchief and placed it over her nose to prevent her strangling. Just as he started to dunk her under the water, she instinctively placed both hands on her face. Immediately the balloon under the water rose to the top and her whole body levitated to the surface along with a loud FWOOSH-ing sound as the trapped air finally broke water like a surfacing submarine.

Now, I do not know exactly what happened on the creek

bank at that time, but I do know that the tears on everyone's faces were not tears of joy over the good sister being baptized. The painful looks on the faces as the people tried desperately to suppress unholy mirth made it seem as though a funeral were taking place instead of a baptism.

There was still a drama going on in the water as the preacher was still trying to submerge the sister's head under water. With her whole body floating because of the residual air which was caught in her clothes, he was afraid that if he pushed her head completely under she might do a complete somersault and possibly expose undergarments to the congregation. He was likewise afraid to use his other hand and push her under at the midriff at the same time that he pushed her head under. This would have been very inappropriate and crude to touch a woman's body, especially with it wet. There was just no way for him to get a handle on matters. He tried again, but he could not get her whole body under water at the same time. I am sure that no matter whether he got all of her under or not, God surely understood the situation and the amount of effort that was expended trying. I understand that enough of her was finally baptized to meet the approval of the pastor and the congregation.

Elderly people tend to have a little more trouble staying awake in church than younger ones, or so it seemed when I was growing up in the Sale Creek Presbyterian Church. For many years Addison Downey was an elder in the church and one of the most faithful members. If the door was open, Addison and Burleigh were there. Uncle Addison, however, had a tendency to doze off occasionally and sleep through a service. One night he dozed off during Dr. Irving Jensen's message, dozed through the prayer, and would have dozed through the closing hymn had it not been for Nevada Coppinger.

Nevada always sat on the right side of the church close to the organ so that she could quietly slip up to the organ during the prayer after the message. Then the congregation sang a closing hymn before the benediction. On this night after the first prayer, Nevada got up out of her seat and started over to the left side of the church toward Uncle Addison. A quizzical look came over Dr. Jensen's face as he watched Nevada. She caught this look out of the corner of her eye and said, "I'm just going over here to knock this wasp off Uncle Addison's head before he gets stung."

Small children bring about humorous things in church simply because they do not know how to act and therefore have no inhibitions about their actions. Marvin Smith had gone to the Sale Creek Church of Christ all of his life as far as I know when this incident took place.

Marvin's youngest child, L.C., had a son named Tony. When Tony was crawling well, Marvin took him to church one morning and decided to hold him in his lap during the service. This was nothing out of the ordinary because that is the way that all families did then. During the service Tony started squirming and wanting down on the floor. This squirming kept on until Marvin finally relented and put Tony down so that he could play at his feet.

Now, I do not know how it came about that Tony got loose in the aisle of the church, but he did. When he saw his freedom, he took off crawling toward the front of the church, right toward the pulpit. People along the aisle became aware of a crawling infant coming down the aisle going goo-goo, ga-ga. They also became aware of a larger human form crawling right behind him trying to catch the

child before he got to the front. When Marvin saw Tony loose in the aisle, he tried to recapture him as unobtrusively as he could. Dropping on all fours, he crawled quickly and quietly behind him in an effort to corral this run away young'in. He managed to catch up with his grandchild just as Tony reached the front row. Marvin's snaring grasp grabbed Tony's foot, and, still on his hands and knees crawling in retreat up the aisle, he began pulling Tony backwards by his foot. Tony was still digging trying to get away from his grandfather. He might have been digging in a forward direction, but he was progressing in a backward direction as Marvin finally crawled back into his own pew, practically unnoticed he thought.

In the preacher's experiences he had seen many people come to the altar, but I am sure that he had never seen two individuals come or go the way that Marvin and Tony did that Sunday morning.

My Grandmother Shipley was a Baptist and a Republican, and I really do not know what order she would rank the two. She loved to go to church and she loved to vote. And she always voted Republican no matter what.

I can remember her coming home from church many times when I was in high school. She either rode home with Bill Beck or Gene and Martha Jo Colburn because they went to the same church and gave her a ride home. My family always went to the Presbyterian Church.

Until Grandma died, she was always very spry and able to get around well. When she got out of the car on Sunday morning, she almost trotted around the house to the back door. Invariably the question was asked of her, "Well, Grandma, how was church?"

"Law, child, we shouted that house down. Me and Ann (her sister) shouted all over that church," she told me.

Grandma was not given to vices except two. She liked to dip snuff now and then, and she liked to fix homemade cough medicine and drink it for the colic she called it. She did not abide out and out drinking, cursing, laziness, short skirts, shorts, bobbed hair, ladies pants, public swimming, swimming attire, baseball, basketball, football, television, telephones, rock and roll music, jazz, country music, loud cars, motorcycles, movies, Democrats, Yankees, foreigners, Catholics, and Presbyterians. Other than that she had a very open mind about just about everything else.

I remember her making cough medicine one time when she had a bad cough. She asked her son, Arnold, to bring her some whiskey from Chattanooga because no one around our house would stop at a liquor store to get any. (I can proudly say that there was never any alcoholic beverages brought into the Coulter household while I was growing up except for that which Grandma had.) The next morning she went into the kitchen around mid morning and started mixing it up. I had come through the back of the house and saw the whole proceeding although she did not realize that I

was watching.

First, she poured a couple of spoonful of honey in a glass. Then she took some rock candy and dropped it into the honey. Next, she measured in some lemon juice. At this point she reached for the whiskey bottle. Slowly and carefully she measured out several spoonful of whiskey and poured it into the concoction. Then, she poured one final spoonful of whiskey. I saw her look out of the corner of her eye toward both ends of the room. When she was sure that no one was looking, she drank the whiskey down straight and then wiped her mouth and said, "Ahhhh."

She occasionally called me aside in her room and told me, "Now, Honey, I want you to go down to Dolph's store and get me some thread, a pack of needles, and a can of Bruton Snuff, but don't tell your mammy about it." She always slipped an extra fifty cents or maybe a dollar in my hand to guarantee my silence on the matter, and it always worked. I dutifully trotted off down to Dolph's store and bought the merchandise and brought it home to her.

The Bruton's lasted for maybe a couple of weeks. The needles and thread lasted her for a couple of years. However, in a couple of weeks I had to make another run down to Dolph's to get more thread, more needles, and more snuff. She had a supply of thread and needles that any seamstress would covet. I used the snuff cans to store fish hooks and other small items.

When Reverend Sammy Putnam was the pastor of the Sale Creek First Baptist Church, he took a group of the young people, including Jim and Tina Aslinger who remembered this incident, from the church to see The Passion Play at Gatlinburg, Tennessee. This play re-enacts the life of Jesus Christ.

On the day that the group went on this trip, the weather was less than beautiful with thunderstorms threatening. The play was presented on an outside stage, and during the early part of the performance, lightning could be seen in the far distance.

One of the actors on the stage portrayed one of the blind men that Jesus miraculously healed. This actor was really into his part as he kept his eyes closed until the time when the Lord touched his eyes to make him see. Just at the time when Jesus touched his eyes and told him to receive his sight, he jumped up and shouted, "I can see!" At that point there was a total power failure in the area. Every stage light, security light, street light, house light - all of them went out. The audience was in total and absolute darkness. The actor, however, still had his eyes closed as he shouted the second time, "I can see!"

The crowd was completely silent. The actor opened his eyes and became aware of the lighting situation just as some wag in the audience said out loud, "Well, if you can see, you're the only one who can!"

Chapter 20: What's In A Name, Anyway?

You just have to live around a small country town in order to appreciate how much different life is there than it is in a city. One of the biggest differences is in names.

Evidently nearly everybody had some kind of a nick name years ago. Around the CCC camp alone, it seemed that every worker received a handle that was given to him by his co-workers in addition to the one that was on his bunk badge.

One of the men at the camp was known as Tall Daddy (Oscar) Williams. Now, anyone can figure this one out. Oscar was tall as is his son, George. Oftentimes, physical attributes were the reason for these nicknames. At least that explains Skinny Beavers' name. Possibly Chigger Parson got his name from a bad case of chiggers. Who's to know?

The Shipley families have turned out some really good nicknames. It seemed that Orson, Jesse, William, and Benjamin were extremely favored names in this clan. Every other generation had at least one Benjamin Shipley in it. During the Civil War there were three Shipley brothers - Jesse, Davey, and Benjamin. Jesse went by Jack Shipley to distinguish himself from other Jesses. Jesse always referred to Davey as The Pullet. Elsie Iles remembers many times when her grandfather would say, "Well, I guess I better go see what The Pullet is doing." She never did find out why Davey was called The Pullet.

This Ben Shipley's father's name was Orson. Ben had a son named William Orson and William Orson had a son named Benjamin. Davey had a son named Benjamin. Both Benjamins lived next door to each other later in life and both had sons named Frank. Figure that one out! Anyway, Civil War Benjamin was known as Cooley Ben Shipley. You remember that he was the one that outran the Confederates and hid in the hollow log.

Cooley Ben's grandson, Benjamin Wells, was one of four Ben Shipleys in Sale Creek at the same time. One lived on Black Oak Ridge, I am told, and was known as Kentucky Ben. Two others lived in Coulterville. One of them was red headed and was known as Red Ben. The other was black headed and was known as Black Ben or Pud Ben. Red Ben had a son named Frank. Pud Ben also had a son named Frank. Red Ben's son was red headed so he called him Red Frank. Pud Ben's son was called Pud Frank.

To confound everything, the fourth Ben Shipley had the same initials as Red Ben. Red Ben was Benjamin Wells and the last Ben was known as Benjamin Walter Shipley. These two men could not even keep straight using their initials B.W. Therefore, the fourth Ben Shipley called himself Walter, just to prevent confusion.

If a person clanders around in the Shipley Cemetery in Pitty Pat Hollow, he will need a program to keep all of the Benjamins, Orsons, Jesses, Johns, and Williams separate. I have to figure them out anew each time I go up there.

John was another favorite name of the Shipleys. One of the best known was Penny John Shipley or John Penny Shipley. Again, no one knows where he got the nickname, but he was always known as John Penny. Everyone just knew that the speaker was talking about John Shipley.

Lyin' John Shipley was another well known John around

Sale Creek. I think that just about everyone can figure this one out. Now, anyone would think that this John told big lies. This would not be entirely true. John did tell some whoppers, but (and this is the difference in him and a true liar) he had a good reason.

Lyin' John Shipley was one of those individuals that could tell some wonderful stories. Often as he walked down a road in Sale Creek, people sitting on their front porches would call out to him and say, "Hey, Lyin' John, come in and tell us a big tale."

Invariably, John would come back with something like, "I can't. I've got to go help Sam cut down six trees." And he would be on his way to the store to buy snuff! Someone asked him one time why he told such whoppers, and he replied, "Oh, I just told that to make them feel good."

Clifton Shipley probably raised more tomatoes and better tomatoes than anyone else in Sale Creek. Clifton's name was Kick. Kick Shipley. Hardly ever did I hear anyone refer to him by any other name, but no one that I spoke with knows from whence the name came. He was just called Kick. His wife, Margie, told me that she did not even know where it came from, but since everyone knew him so well by that name, she had his tombstone inscribed - Clifton (Kick) Shipley.

Zack Martin of Coulterville was known to many people as Hop Martin. Now, there was a reason for this name. Zack was working with a group of loggers one day many years ago when his axe glanced off the log on which he was working and cut into his foot, splitting the bone.

He was taken to the doctor who put a pin into the bone to hold it together. Then he sewed up the wound. Zack got over the injury just fine, but he walked with a limp for the rest of his life, hence the name Hop.

Coulter Martin's son, Ray, was known as Panic Martin. Right till the day that he died, this man was called Panic. Ray was in grammar school in 1912 when the S.S. Titanic sank in the North Atlantic. One day while the class was discussing this terrible tragedy, the young Martin boy referred to the ship as the TiPanic. Everyone got a horse laugh out of this slip of the tongue, and they began ribbing him by calling him TiPanic Martin. Eventually it was shortened to Panic Martin, a name that stuck with him until he died.

Luther G. Coulter has had a nick name since he was two years old. He liked to play around where the farm hands were working on the farm. One day there was a death in the pig sty and one of the workers looked up at him and said, "Who's going to be your father's little pig now." To which he replied in a child's voice, "I'll be Daddy's little pig." Ever since that day sitting on that fence post, L.G. Coulter has been known as Pig Coulter. The nick name followed him to France during the war and through forty-one years in the post office. Probably the funniest thing I ever heard in church was one Sunday when Dr. Irving Jensen was discussing how the redeemed souls are God's saints, "like Saint William, Saint Mary, Saint Pig."

At one time there were two Dave Gothards in Sale Creek. George Gothard had a brother named Dave. There

was another Dave Gothard who was short of stature and very stocky. Therefore, he was known as Dinky Dave, just to keep them separate.

Jim Webb and Ray Marshall were big buddies during the 1950's and early 1960's until Jim died. Ray referred to the duo as The Brains and The Body. Of course, Ray was The Brains and Jim, accordingly, was The Body. I do not know how many times I have heard Ray come into the post office and ask, after he had checked his own mailbox, "Pig, is there any mail in there for The Body?"

Raymond Aslinger was a carpenter as long as I could remember him. When the Sale Creek Volunteer Fire Department came into being during the early 1970's, Raymond and his boys, Glenn, Tim, and Doyle, all joined the department. This group of men did a large part of the carpentry work in the building of the first two fire halls.

In the early days of the fire department, the men used citizen band radios for dispatching trucks and men to the scenes of wrecks and fires. Everyone had a handle (radio name) in those days. After thinking it over for a while, Raymond came up with one that suited him perfectly because of the line of work that he was in, Hammer. It stuck for the rest of his life.

For many years there were two Archie Pooles in Sale Creek. James Archie Poole lived on Black Oak Ridge. Archie Terrell Poole lived on May Road. In cases like this, many people informally referred to James Archie as Black Oak Ridge Archie and Archie T. was known as either Archie T. or "the other Archie."

There were two Crawley men in Sale Creek named Jim. Not only that, they lived hardly a stone's throw from each other. To keep them separate, the one that ran Crawley's Store was informally called "Store Jim."

Likewise, there was a problem with the name Bill Gothard. There was, and is, a pair of Bill Gothards living in Sale Creek at the same time. William E. Gothard III is a very large man and is known as Wiggle or Big Bill. William M. Gothard ran Gothard's Exxon service station for many years and now runs an auto parts store and small engine

repair shop. He is sometimes called Station Bill, just to prevent confusion.

Now, I would rather not go into any names of a derogatory nature, such as Nasty, Greasy, Dirty, and the like. Others have been called Rat, Horse, Mule, Fatty, Stinky, and other names of less than complimentary nature, so I will forego these, also.

I really do not know how this custom carries over into other parts of the country, but in this area many years ago, it was customary for the son of a couple to bear the mother or grandmother's name as his middle name. This explains a lot of people's names on tombstones. Frank Jones McDonald's grandmother was Kitty Jones. In my own family my great-great grandfather James Parks Coulter's mother was Rebecca Parks. James passed this name on to his son John Parks Coulter who went by the name Parks. Coulter Martin's mother was a Coulter. Benjamin Wells Shipley's great grandmother was named Kathryn Wells. This list could go on and on in everyone's family once people get to checking real close.

Another thing that is found around small southern towns especially is the custom of calling older people Aunt, Uncle, Granny, and Grandpa - even when these people are not even remotely related. This is a sign of respect for these elderly people. Addie Newman and John Scott Newman were always known around Sale Creek as Aunt Ad and Uncle John Scott Newman. This was partly out of respect for their age and partly out of respect for their lifestyle. Lillie Clements was always called Aunt Lill by everyone that I knew. The list goes on and on. As a child I always thought that Bill and Thelma Ray and Roy and Blanche Shipley were my aunts and uncles because we were always told to call them Uncle Bill, Aunt Thelma, Uncle Roy, and Aunt Blanche. That is what you did, no questions asked.

And lastly, every mule was known as Ol' - Ol' Jim, Ol' Red, Ol' George. You could not own a mule if you did not name it Ol' something or other. Well, that's just good ol' rural Southern American nomenclature for you.

Chapter 21: Heroes Wearing Overalls

"When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." - Proverbs 16:7

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father in heaven." - Matt. 5:16

All of these old stories of humorous things happening to people are a great enjoyment to us today and are remembered fondly. They allow all of us to look at ourselves and laugh, not at one another but with one another.

There are other stories of a more serious nature - stories of compassion, love, concern for others, and tragedy that are equally important. In this era of "me first" and "do what feels good to you because you are worth it," it is important to try to point out some of the things that are really important in life, those things being living a clean life, being an example to young people, and doing what is right for the group and not just for the individual.

Every young person has heroes, people that he or she looks up to or attempts to be like. When I was a boy, those heroes could have been Mickey Mantle, Willie Mays, Roy Rogers, or any of a thousand other celebrities who were in the national limelight at the time. Today the heroes of our youth seem to be rock stars or sports figures who command salaries in the millions of dollars each year. The wealth and popularity of heroes both past and present seem to be what many young people see as being the measure of success and the mark of a hero.

As people get older, though, they soon discover that their knights in shining armor sometimes are wearing rusty suits and dirty white hats. It was a disappointment to me as a boy when some of the people that I idolized as heroes began advertising alcohol on television or else were convicted of crimes or were exposed as being unfaithful family men or women. Therefore, my idea of heroes changed as I became an adult. I also found out that I did not have to leave the community of Sale Creek to find individuals that had all the qualifications of a hero. These individuals were all Godly people who did not wear their virtue on their sleeves. They wore it in their shoes and made it a part of their daily walk. They were the same in church as they were on the job, at their house, or out in the community.

As I contemplated individuals that met this criterion, I came up with seven who I felt best fit the description. None of these people were heroes as many might consider heroes. None of them ever fought in a war. None of them ever held elected office. None of them ever tried to make a name for themselves. None of them ever tried to be great for the sake of being great. None of them ever had much mention made of their name, and none of them wanted their name mentioned in a prideful way.

These individuals are Will Fleming, Ernest Jones, Charlie Adams, T.E. (Ed) Downey, Logan Alexander, Jack Kenney, and Gertie List. In all my conversations with people who knew these individuals, I never heard one critical comment of the way that they lived, not one derogatory remark about their business dealings, and not one mark on their moral integrity. These people stood out as role models then, and they stand out even more so today. This in itself is enough to make them heroes.

Will Fleming was one of the most beloved men that I



William and Maggie Fleming

can remember in Sale Creek. Everyone knew this saintly old gentleman. Many of the older people of the community today have warm memories of this man from his days as the janitor at Sale Creek School. In that capacity he proved to people what compassion, love, and duty were all about. He always had a greeting for those he met, no matter how old

or young. He did many deeds for the children and teachers of the school - deeds that he really did not have to do. He did it simply because he cared and because he loved people.

Nevada Coppinger probably loved Mr. Fleming better than anyone else. She worked around him for many years in the school and saw many of the acts of kindness which he lavished on the school. Her recollections of him are still vivid in her mind.

When Nevada was teaching elementary school, it was a duty of the classroom teacher to weigh and measure the children in her class twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring just before school let out for summer. This measuring process was quite an undertaking for the teacher who already had plenty of other duties to take care of. Mr. Fleming took it upon himself to take care of these responsibilities. When he found out when the teacher needed to take these measurements, he went to the basement and got the scales and hauled them up to each teacher's room, set them up, adjusted them, and weighed each child. Then he measured their height and recorded it. All of this procedure might take parts of two or three days because Mr. Fleming did not shirk his other janitorial duties. He fulfilled all of them in addition to taking on these extra tasks which made the jobs of the teachers easier.

Margie Hodge described how Mr. Fleming patiently sliced apples for the children when she was a little girl and how much she appreciated the time that he took to take care of her childhood problems. She said that he never seemed impatient with the children and that their childhood problems were never too small for Will Fleming to be concerned with. "I could never live anywhere else but Sale Creek because as I go down each road, I can see faces and hear voices of these old people like Will Fleming that I loved so much when I was growing up," she said.

Margie said that most of the children walked to school when she was a student at Sale Creek. Many times in wet weather the children arrived at school with their shoes and feet wet and cold. Mr. Fleming either stopped the children before they got to their rooms or else came around to each room and gathered the wet shoes of the children and took them to the basement where he dried them beside the large furnace. In a matter of an hour or so, Mr. Fleming came back with his arms full of dry shoes so that the children would have warm dry feet while they tried to learn.

One of the most poignant stories that I heard about Mr. Fleming concerned a child that accidentally lost control of his bowels while at recess one day. The poor child was embarrassed terribly when he was led up to his teacher. The teacher was at a total loss as to what to do with the child and finally told him to go over and sit on the curb until recess was over so that the parents could be notified to come and get him.

Nevada was standing close by watching her own group of children at play. Coming over to the child, she took him by the hand and said, "Come on, Honey, let's go see Mr. Fleming."

She led him down into the basement of the school where Mr. Fleming was taking care of the boiler. As soon as she explained the situation to him, he began scurrying around to take care of the student's predicament. Of course, the basement was toasty warm, so Mr. Fleming and Nevada tooked the soiled clothes off the child. Mr. Fleming drew a tub of warm, soapy water and helped wash the child off. Then he and Nevada got another tub of hot water to wash

the clothes in.

Needless to say, Will Fleming knew children well and was prepared for just this type of emergency. Over the years he had gathered clothes of all different sizes and had them stockpiled in the basement for children who got theirs wet or to give to needy children. It was into this stockpile that he went many years ago to get a clean, dry outfit for this child. With Nevada's help he was able to get the child dressed and back into his class almost by the time recess was over. Later when the child's clothes were dry in the basement, he allowed the little boy to change back to his own clean clothes. I am sure that little boy never forgot Nevada Coppinger or Will Fleming as long as he lived.

Mr. Fleming once took one of his grandsons along on an errand that taught the young boy an important lesson about life. A member of the community had died, Mrs. Coulter Martin, and several men of the community went to the graveyard to dig her grave. At that time it was a measure of how well a person was liked and respected in the community by the number of people who turned out to dig the grave. Gordon Fleming related how Mr. Fleming was helping out that morning along with Charley Gann. As the grave appeared almost finished, someone said that the roots in the grave needed to be trimmed off before the men got out of the hole. One of the fellows commented that with the drapes and all around the grave, no one would know about any roots sticking out. Charley Gann blurted out, "I'll know," and he jumped into the grave with a mattock and axe. When he got finished, Gordon recalled, the sides of the grave were shaved clean and square. Gordon said that his grandfather taught him the duty of a citizen to help out in times of grief, and Charley Gann taught him a lesson that no matter whether a job is seen or not, it needs to be done right. Gordon learned, too, that good men like Will Fleming have good men like Charley Gann for their friends.

Earl Moore related a story about Ernest Jones that pretty well sums up all that needs to be said about this gentleman. Ernest was always a church man, had been a Christian all his life and was one of the most faithful men that ever attended the Methodist Church. Beginning on August 26, 1923 and continuing until the late 1950's Ernest was the secretary and treasurer of the Sale Creek Methodist Church, an office and responsibility that Ernest took very seriously, even though on the first Sunday he was in office the total collection for the morning service was only forty-eight cents. You see, in Ernest Jones's eyes it was just as important to be a good steward with a few pennies in a small country church as it is to be a good steward with a lot of money in a large church.

Ernest was also a fine barber. Many people with whom I spoke in collecting stories for this book related how Ernest gave them their first hair cut. There were no electric shears in those days, and Mr. Jones used hand clippers instead. Mr. Jones's haircuts cost five cents in those days of the early 1930's. Later he went up to ten and then to fifteen cents for one of his specials.

Mr. Jones never committed a crime or misdemeanor in his life except once. He did not realize that cutting hair without a barber's license was illegal. Someone in the community finally called the authorities in Chattanooga and reported him for running a barber shop without a business license. He was therefore summoned to court to answer these charges.

When the day of his trial arrived, Mr. Jones went to court dutifully. What he did not know was that he had been preceded by one or more Sale Creek citizens, thought to be Ed Downey or Grover C. Jones, who knew Mr. Jones and who felt that the judge needed to know a little about the man that was being tried that morning.

When the judge called the court to order, he asked Ernest to step forward. Ernest did so.

"Mr. Jones, you are charged with operating a barber shop without the proper licenses, an offense which is against the law. How do you plead?" the judge asked.

There was no hesitation on Ernest Jones's part as he answered, "I'm guilty, Your Honor." The criminal justice system could run a lot smoother if there were more Ernest Joneses around.

The judge continued his questioning in a manner that led several of the people in the court room to believe later that the judge was trying to bring out something about the type of man that Ernest was. "Mr. Jones, how much do you charge for your hair cuts?"

Now, at that time hair cuts were regularly from sixty to seventy-five cents.

"I charge ten cents, Your Honor," Ernest replied.

"And what do you do with all this money that you take in on these haircuts, Mr. Jones?" the judge inquired.

"Your Honor, I put every bit of it in the church collection plate," Ernest replied.

"Well, then, Mr. Jones, here is what I want you to do," the judge continued. "I want you to go back up there to Sale Creek and keep on giving haircuts for ten cents and keep on putting it in the collection plate. Case dismissed."

Ernest knew that he had unintentionally done wrong, and yet he had been man enough to stand up and admit his guilt without a blink of the eye. It was this very honesty and integrity that caused Ernest to be honored in that court room that day. Nothing more needs to be said about Ernest Jones's character.

Charley Adams was just a common man who lived in the Hodgetown community of Sale Creek. However, Mr. Adams is remembered as being one of the most faithful members of the Sale Creek Baptist Church while he was alive. He attended every service unless sickness or emergency kept him away. His soft spoken demeanor and modest ways made him a silent hero. He simply went about his business, did his work, and went on his way.

Waymon "Tot" White remembered Mr. Adams well. "He used to let me ring that old bell in the belfry at the Baptist Church. I wouldn't have gone to church at all back then if Mr. Adams hadn't let me ring that bell."

Mr. Adams took the time to supervise and care about young people around the church. In return, twenty-seven years after his death, Mr. Adams is still remembered fondly by these very young people that he allowed to hold the doors and ring the bell at the church. When they remember Charley Adams today, these people remember the good that this man did in life and realize that the good deeds that came from this fine old gentleman were the result of him being totally committed to God and striving to be like Him.

Ed Downey was a farmer and fruit grower in Sale Creek for many years. His father was a country doctor who had come here from Alabama during the height of the mining activity in the 1890's and served as the company doctor.

Mr. Downey was a devoted family man and leader in his church, community organizations, and business affiliations.



Ed and Nellie Downey

His business and personal dealings were always of the highest integrity and his concern for his fellow man was paramount.

At the time that Mr. Downey was at the height of his success, the peach business was king in Sale Creek. Mr. Downey was in partnership with William H. List in the Ell-Dee Orchard Company as well as being the owner of a large group of orchards by himself. Times were very hard for everyone in those days of the 1920's and 1930's and nearly everyone in Sale Creek depended on the peach business during the seasonal months for their living.

Mr. Downey had been successful in turning a meager living into a prosperous business. At that time he was one of the richest men in northern Hamilton County. In addition to being on the board of directors at Dayton Bank & Trust Company, he also took an active interest in the school at Sale Creek. For many years he was a faithful member and elder in the Sale Creek Presbyterian Church.

None of the above mentioned facts made Ed Downey a hero, however. The things that made him a hero were his devotion to his Lord, his family, and his fellow man, and I am sure that there are scores of people still living today who could bear witness to that fact.

Mr. Downey was attentive to the conditions of people around him. On one occasion as he drove his Model T Ford

up Back Valley Road, he noticed that one Mr. Goodson had very little wood in his wood pile. Upon inquiring into the circumstances around this man's home, he discovered that the man of the house had been sick and unable to work. His family was struggling. The children were all small and not able to cut wood or do many of the chores around the house at that time.

As soon as Mr. Downey reached his barn that morning where some of his hired hands were waiting to go to work, he called one of his most trusted men aside and told him, "I want you to cut a load of firewood and haul it up to Mr. Goodson's house and unload it. But don't say where it came from." The laborer cut the wood off Mr. Downey's land, spent most of the day splitting it, loaded it into the wagon, and delivered it to the man's house. I am sure that the man of the house knew who sent the wood because he recognized Ed Downey's hired hand, wagon, and team of mules. The hired hand followed his instructions, unloaded the wood, stacked it, and left without a word. Even Mr. Downey's wife did not know about this deed for over 40 years. Virgil Blake said that he has hauled wood all over Sale Creek, Hodgetown, and Graysville because Ed Downey felt that someone needed a helping hand.

This was one of his favorite methods of operation. Groceries, clothes, firewood, and truckloads of coal just appeared to people in need. Early one morning he took a trip around Patterson Curve and across the old bridge by the Patterson Spring. As he drove through the ridge roads he came to a small store that was operated by Charley Aslinger. Stopping for a few moments, he approached Mr. Aslinger and said, "Charley, I want to leave this money with you, and if a young child comes in here that needs shoes, I want you to give them a pair, but don't let on as to where they came from." And with that he left the store. Some child received a pair of shoes that were paid for by a man who never knew who got them. Nor did he care because he knew that someone had been helped that needed help.

My father's father was killed in an accident at the water tower pumphouse in Coulterville in February of 1921. My grandmother was Mr. Downey's sister and she had five children and was expecting a sixth at the time of the accident. At that time she was living across the road from the depot. Ed and one of my grandmother's other brothers, Addison, being very concerned about how the family would be able to live, moved them into a house that was located halfway between their two houses so that they could help her out.

Ed sent hired hands down to plow the garden, and then Addison sent men down to plant the garden. Both of them looked in on the family and brought what they could to help out. As the children got older, Ed provided work for them. He never gave money frivolously. The children had to work for it, but they always had tasks to do.

My father recalled to me that Ed and Addison Downey were the father figures in his life in the absence of his own father, and they had a great impact on him as he grew to be a man. I once asked him if he ever noticed Ed taking a special interest in helping him. He answered that Ed always made sure that there was work for him to do to earn money for the family. At the beginning of spring plowing when all the temporary plowmen were released, Ed always kept my father around to help the regular men on the farm. He did not pay the young boy as much as he did the older help, but he gave him gainful employment so that he could at least buy clothes

for school and church and put a little food on the Coulter table.

Having the financial resources to ride through the bad peach seasons when the crop was killed by late frosts or when the bottom fell out of the peach prices, Ed Downey did not forget the people in the community who were not blessed in the same way. On several occasions he loaned money to individual farmers so that they could make it through the year. In return the farmer promised to repay the loan the next year when his next crop came in. In this way several farmers got back on their feet after being devastated by bad crops. Ed Downey never let it be known that he had done this. Most people just knew that a farmer had rebounded from a bad year and did not give one thought as to how it came about.

Ed was always interested in the community and in the politics of the area; however, even though he was a faithful member of the Democratic Party all of his life, he never talked politics to his associates or other people around him. My father recalled one day when Mr. Downey was speaking with a business associate about the associate's outspoken political views. He warned the man that the strong feelings he had and his outspoken manner of talking about candidates and issues might be offensive to people he dealt with. He felt that as a Christian it was best to keep quiet in public and vote one's conscience in the polling booth. The remarkable thing about the whole matter was that Mr. Downey felt as strongly in favor of the issues and the candidates as the man to whom he was talking.

Reverend Samuel Logan Alexander was the pastor at the Sale Creek Church of God for many years. The son of Civil War veteran James T. Alexander, he was born in 1887.

Mr. Alexander held several jobs before he became a preacher. He worked as a miner and then as a sawyer in a



Reverend Samuel Logan Alexander

sawmill. According to his grandson, Rex Alexander, Logan led a rough life before he became a Christian. Of course, the jobs that he had up until that time were very rough and attracted a raucous breed of men, anyway.

"After the Lord got hold of him, though, no one could point the finger of doubt about how he lived from then on," Rex stated. Logan faithfully led the Church of God through some very trying times during the 1920's and 1930's.

For some reason a group of rowdies did not like the established Church of God and burned their building at least twice. Each time Reverend Alexander led the flock to erect another building for their worship. After losing one church on Reavley Road and another building at the site of the present church, Logan began holding services in the old church building in Slabtown.

While putting cedar shakes (shingles) on the roof of that church in 1936, Reverend Alexander fell off the roof and fractured a rib. The broken rib punctured a lung, and he died of complications two weeks later.

Logan Alexander was a faithful servant of God and of the flock that he nurtured. A persevering and trusting soul, he stands as an example of faithfulness to people even today.

Jack Kenney was a member of the Sale Creek Church of Christ for over forty years, serving as an elder for most of that time. Jack was born and raised in Nashville. He attended Belmont College before transferring to Middle Tennessee State College where he graduated in the first graduating class in 1911.

He received his teaching certificate and took his first teaching job at Sale Creek High School in 1913 where he taught agriculture for eight years. During those years he spent much time in the fields and orchards learning all he could about the problems that were faced by the peach growers. He became an authority on such pests as Phony peach disease. In addition he worked for a chemical spray company, sold baskets to peach growers, sold Ford tractors, and acted as a buyer for a freezing plant in Dayton. Later he became the owner of the B Orchard Company. (The B stood for Brackett peaches.) At the time of his death in 1953 at the age of 66, he was still running the B Orchard which was one of the last surviving peach businesses in Sale Creek.

Mr. Kenney was known as a very cheerful man who always took a pleasant view of matters. He was friendly to his fellow man and was never known to say anything critical or derogatory about anyone. He believed that people should get the benefit of the doubt regardless of the situation.

Mr. Kenney brings to mind the man in Sale Creek who would say absolutely nothing bad about anyone. This fellow was listening to a conversation one day about one of the most irascible fellows that had ever lived in the community. This man thought a while and contemplated his response and then said, "Well, he raises good hogs." That was the type of man that Jack Kenney was. If he could not say something good about someone, he did not say anything.

Gertie List was an inspiration to everyone who knew her. It would take many words to describe her character - patient, caring, humble, faithful, dependable, and the list could continue. Mrs. List was married to William H. List who pioneered the peach and strawberry business in Sale Creek around 1900.

Mr. List died on October 27, 1932, leaving her with two sons attending Virginia Military Institute as well as two daughters at home. Bill and Jim both came home to Sale Creek for their father's funeral. Mrs. List assumed command



Mrs. W. H. (Gertie) List

of her family at that time, a role in which she had never been placed as long as she had known Will List. After Mr. List's funeral she sent both boys back to Virginia immediately to continue their education because she knew that they needed it for their future and because she knew that was what Will List would have wanted them to do. She then began the next forty years of her life alone.

One of the great things about people like Gertie List was the fact that she and her late husband had surrounded themselves with honorable, devoted friends. Mr. List's association with Ed Downey was never more important than at this time. Mr. Downey took over both halves of the partnership of the Ell-Dee Orchard Company and ran it for Mrs. List until Bill finished his degree at VM^I. At that time Bill assumed his father's half of the partnership with Mr. Downey. No better working relationship ever existed between two families than between Downey's and Will List's.

Gertie placed complete confidence in her friend for those three years when Mr. Downey was in control of her business affairs. This was called trust.

Mrs. List's daughter, Alyne, said that her father left a good living for her mother so the family always had plenty, but the lack of a father around the house and the pressure of trying to tend to all the family matters alone were trying on her. She never seemed to let this bother her because she had strong character and an even stronger faith in God.

Alyne characterized her mother as being "a wonderful mother, always patient with us." She also said that her mother was a woman that read her Bible and prayed a lot. Her worn, well-marked Bible still rests on a table in the List home, the pages worn and the leather frayed from constant use. "She always prayed that she would never be a stumbling block to anyone in life," Alyne said. "Faith kept her going after Papa died. And she loved to read her Bible more than anything else. I remember her praying many times, 'Lord, please give me good eye sight so that I can read your Word'."

Mrs. List was faithful in her attendance at the Presbyterian Church. If the doors were open, Mrs. List was

there. She was also an excellent giver to the church. Several times when the church was in need of money or when there was a large project underway, Addison Downey would say, "Well, Gertie, if you give half, I'll match it." Gertie and Addison matched funds several times, but no one else knew from where the money came except the church treasurer or the deacons who took the collection. Both of these people heeded the verse about not letting the left hand know what the right hand was doing.

Each in his or her own way, these seven people could serve as guide posts for anyone today. I could have used several individuals that are alive today as role models; however, I chose this group because they illustrate why there are good people today, that reason being the fact that there were good people years ago. It is the responsibility of men and women today to be good examples so that today's children and tomorrow's adults can look back and say "Thanks for showing me the right way to live."

Conclusion

Crickets singing in the weeds on a hot summer day, katydids and jar flies chirping at night, the sound of a hoot owl or a screech owl, the soulful sound of a mourning dove on a dewy August morning, the honking of a gaggle of geese migrating south on a clear November night, the sound of a steam locomotive blowing its whistle, a sawmill running in the clear morning air, bull frogs croaking at dusk, the clickety-clack of a mail train as it passes the switch and throws off a bag of mail, a dog barking in the distance when everyone is in bed, the sound of Rock Creek bubbling over rocks, a fish jumping in the water on a still morning, deep voiced coon hounds in pursuit of their quarry, the feel of being under half a dozen warm quilts on a cold winter night, the ooze of mud between the toes as you walk in the shallows of the lake, a rooster crowing in the dusky morning light, whippoorwills and Bob Whites calling to one another, the smell of leaf smoke in the fall, the smell of freshly plowed soil in the spring, and dogwood blossoms.

These are the sights, smells, sounds, and feel of country living. Many of them like the old steam engine are never seen or heard again. No one can explain to children today what it was like to experience these things as a child. It is something that has to be felt and what a wonderful feeling it was!

Thirty or forty years from now the present generation will probably look back on the present and say something about the old days of the 1990's and will tell their children about how things used to be. It is no matter because nothing can match the home town, stand-alone atmosphere that existed in small-town America up until the late 1960's. As far as nostalgia is concerned, those times will never be surpassed.

Things cannot remain the same in our ever changing world; however, it is a shame that things like concern for others, love for the fellow man, pulling together as a community, and putting others first must be part of that change. Why, if I had known that things were going to turn out like they have, I would have just gone over and sat down on Dolph Lane's porch and stayed there!

Appendix A

The Sale Creek Masonic Hall and Female Institute, through her Trustees, to wit: John R. Richman, D. J. Coulter, J. W. Houser, S. J. McDonald, J. M. S. Patterson, and A. H. Schumyer, do hereby bargain, sell, transfer and convey for the consideration of \$700.00 in hand paid, to the Elders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church at Sale Creek, to wit: D. J. Coulter, A. J. Coulter, and B. J. McDonald and their successors in office forever, our half interest in the following described tract of lands to wit: Beginning on some lines standing near the Valley Road and running North 87° East 25 poles to a stake; thence West 87° North 32 poles to a stake; thence South 87° West 25 poles to a stake; thence East 87° South 32 poles to the beginning, containing about 5 acres more or less, and lying in the 11th civil district of Hamilton County Tennessee. Also the lower corner of the "Sale Creek Masonic Hall and Female Institute" Building on said tract of land. Given under our hand and seal. This 14th day of Feb. 1878. Thomas J. Coulter, Alexander Richman, S. J. McDonald, J. W. Houser, J. M. S. Patterson, A. H. Schumyer.

This deed transferred one-half ownership in the Sale Creek Masonic Male and Female Institute to the Sale Creek Cumberland Presbyterian Church located at present day Coulterville.

Appendix B

In consideration of the fact that the
 through the same house department
 building a first class public road
 the line of road known as the
 Washington road the same being
 the road owned by the owners of the
 15th & 16th districts of said county hereby
 donate and convey to the County of
 a right of way forty feet in width
 thereon for a public highway
 This right of way to be located by
 the County Engineer and said highway to
 be built along the line located by said
 Engineer.

In witness whereof
 This 15th day of July 1895

J. C. Rogers
 J. A. N. Patterson
 J. B. Fiegler
 M. S. St. men

R. M. Beane July
 John Jones July 15

Wm. E. Morgan
 George W. Lockard Aug 26
 E. T. Morgan "

These property owners gave property to the county for a road to be built through Sale Creek.

Appendix C

CASH DEED—Single.

In Consideration of Sixty Dollars in 1907 in hand paid the receipt of which is heroby acknowledged, J. J. Ballou do hereby sell, transfer and convey unto J. E. & C. A. Downey ^{my one fifth interest} the following Real Estate in the new 3^d section of 3^d million County, Tennessee: Beginning on a white oak, thence an eastward direction passing a white oak to Center line, thence with said line a northward direction to a sycamore stump on the bank of said creek, thence up said creek with its meanders to the mouth of Rock Creek, thence up Rock Creek as it meanders to a black gum, McDonald's corner, thence a westward direction with McDonald's line to three spruce pines on the bank of Dale Creek thence a straight stone to the beginning containing 15 acres more or less. Except about 1/4 acres formerly used to farm McDonald

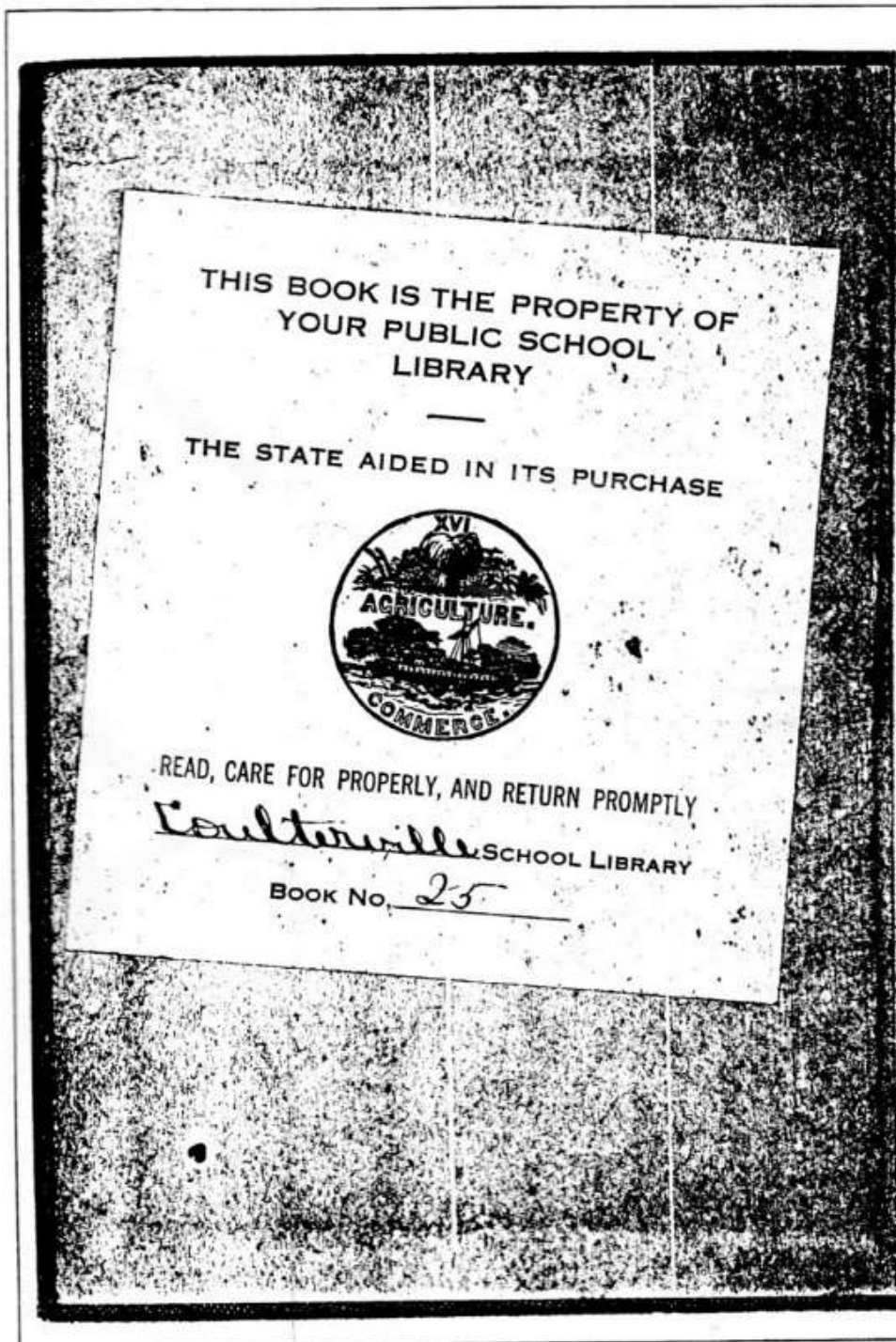
TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the same to the said J. E. & C. A. Downey and he heirs and assigns forever in fee simple. I J. J. Ballou covenant that I am lawfully seized and possessed of said Real Estate, have full power and lawful authority to sell and convey the same, that the title is clear, free and unincumbered.

and J. J. Ballou will forever warrant and defend the same against all lawful claims.

Witness J. J. Ballou hand this day of Dec 1907

Deeds in the past had questionable markers, e.g., stumps, rocks, oak trees.

Appendix D



This label came from the last known book that was a part of the Coulterville School library. The book was *Kingsley's Greek Heroes* by Tetlow, published by Ginn & Company. Marjorie Harris owned the book.

Appendix E

School Directors of the 11th District of Hamilton County
 County Tennessee and their Successors in office for
 a certain Lot or parcel of Land lying and
 being in the 11th Civil District of Hamilton County
 Tenn. Beginning on a Post Oak and Black Oak on
 the Bank of a Branch known as the White Branch
 and running thence N 28° East (13) Chains to a
 White Oak thence N 84° West (9) Nails to a Stone
 thence S 13° East (13) Chains to the beginning
 to have and to hold the same unto the said
 Directors and their Successors forever. This Certificate and
 the aforesaid Deed shall be and are lawfully made
 of said Land and have a full perfect right to convey
 the same and this the same is hereby acknowledged
 the further Certificate with the same created and hereunto
 and assigns unto the aforesaid Directors and their Successors
 to maintain and defend the title to the same against
 the lawful claims of all persons taking the same
 through any means whatsoever.

In the presence of
 J. W. Patterson
 B. Parker Coulter

A. J. Coulter
 L. E. Coulter
 John L. Carter

STATE OF TENNESSEE
 HAMILTON COUNTY
 J. W. Patterson
 B. Parker Coulter
 A. J. Coulter
 L. E. Coulter
 John L. Carter
 March 1, 1879

This deed ceded two acres of land from Adolphus J. Coulter and Luke E. Coulter to the directors of the school at Sale Creek on March 1, 1879.