

'We All Would Walk' The 12 Miles To Town

By ERNEST A. ROPER
(Of Monticello, Ga.)

I write this not just to try to win the prize, but because it thrills my heart and memory to think back to the time I was a small boy, when I took my first trip to the little town of Franklin.

It is amazing to me to think about it then and now. Well, the first trip I took was from the head of Burningtown, 12 miles. We all would walk, that is all that didn't have ox wagons or horses and buggies. The road then was all dirt and there was a place we called the "camp ground", just beyond the Double Branches and, the old road came, winding about, by what we called the "watering ground", just below Mr. Jim Moore's, on the Little Tennessee River; then on up Ten Yard Branch; then up the hill, by old man Frank Ray's, on Iotla Street.

Major Rankin had a place just below the street, about where Mr. Dean Sisk's house was. He sowed it in wheat, and that was the first place wild onions started.

In those days, the old hitching ground was right about where the fire trucks' building is now, and Mr. Potts had a shop about where the Baptist church is, and old man Sisk had a shoe shop right about where the dry cleaners is and John Thomas' store was in an old weather board building about where Porter's filling station is, or just a little to the lower right corner; and Mr. Teefintyler had a store about where the 5 & 10 Cent Store is. Right close to it was a dug well and a plank building, and the dirt road came on to the street, between the court house and where the 10c store is now. Green Trotter had a store, too, and George Dairymple's Store was about between the Macon County Supply Company and Burrell Motor Company.

Ham Jarrett, E. Lish Franks, Brag Higdon, Sam Rogers, Dr. Lyle, John Thomas, Lee Barnard and E. K. Cunningham and Lawyer Frank Ray, Sr., would get together just about past the middle of the little town, just below the courthouse. They sure would have a time. My pa

said when old man Wilburn Welch would come around, the fun started. You could hear him laugh all over town. Then they would gather and some of the crowd would go and hunt a banjo and give it to my uncle, Lopzo Roper, and shucks! picking the banjo — what a time they would have!

I remember the roads when they had loose gravel and also I remember when water stood in the streets. The first auto garage was right at the lower or about the right corner of the Bryant Funeral home.

I saw a lot sell just about where the Franklin Seed Store is for \$1 a foot, about 50 foot front by 90 deep. The lot and house were Mr. Johnston's.

There were a lot of families in town who had little gardens back of their houses. They raised vegetables to eat and they lived neat and happy and friendly. When we came to town they would talk to us and ask how all the people on Burningtown were. Some were reared on Burningtown, so here it is again to my memory.

To our town of Franklin, I hope many a long year and many blessings and joyous days. May God bless you all is my prayer.

Letter Of 1863 From Dr. Lyle Tells Of War

The Civil War situation in North Carolina in 1863 and the slowness of communication at that time are indicated by a letter from Macon's representative in the Legislature.

The letter, dated July 5, 1863, was from Dr. J. M. Lyle to his wife, Mrs. Laura S. Lyle. It refers to one he had just received from her — that took eight days to go from Franklin to Raleigh!

The letter, (reprinted from "The Family of Weimar Siler, 1755 — 1831", by Leona Bryson Porter, follows:

Yours of the 27th came to hand today and I am indeed gratified that you wrote when you did or I probably should not have gotten your letter. It is agreed that we shall adjourn on Tuesday next at one-half after 12. If so I may be at home almost as soon as this letter can reach you but I do not think we can leave quite so soon, so if I should not be at home on Saturday night you need not be uneasy for unless I get away from here at noon Tuesday I could not be home before Monday or Wednesday night. We have yet the Militia bill to act upon and it will cost a great deal of sacrifice of feeling to get any bill at all, the opinions are so different.

We have stirring news here today. The Yankee Calvary took Kennansville last night a little way below Goldsborough, some 70

or 80 miles below here and it is thought they will be here soon. I think they will not venture out so far but Col. Mallet I am told is enrolling and organizing all men able to bear arms to defend this place should they come here. You need not be alarmed for they would hardly harm a member of the Legislature.

We have a dispatch that Ewell

and Longstreet fought the whole of Hooker's army a few days ago, a hard battle but not decisive and the battle is thought to be imminent there. General Taylor in the west is said to have taken 1800 prisoners besides several million dollars worth of spoil. Our victories crowd fast upon each other but still peace does not come. We can but be patient and put

our trust in God until we are sufficiently humbled in his sight. Then and not till then will we have peace.

Tell Lilly I would answer her letter but feel so dull that I can hardly keep my eyes open. Kiss the children for me. Take good care of yourself until I come.



This is typical of the logging-sawmilling days here long ago. The photo, loaned by Mrs. Fred Wood, was made between Fishawk Mountain and the Gold Mine settlement.

Mining Of Corundum Began Here In 1870

By MRS. FRED WOOD

The first corundum mining was begun in Macon County in the year of 1870, when "Uncle" Hiram Crisp found the first corundum at what later became known as "Corundum Hill", a place up in the hills in the Cullasaja community, between Franklin and

FIRST PHONES

One of the first telephone lines in Macon County connected Corundum Hill, where the Bidwell families lived when they first moved here, with the home of Dr. S. H. Lyle. It was built by the Bidwells so that the physician could be summoned without delay, in case a member of the family became ill.

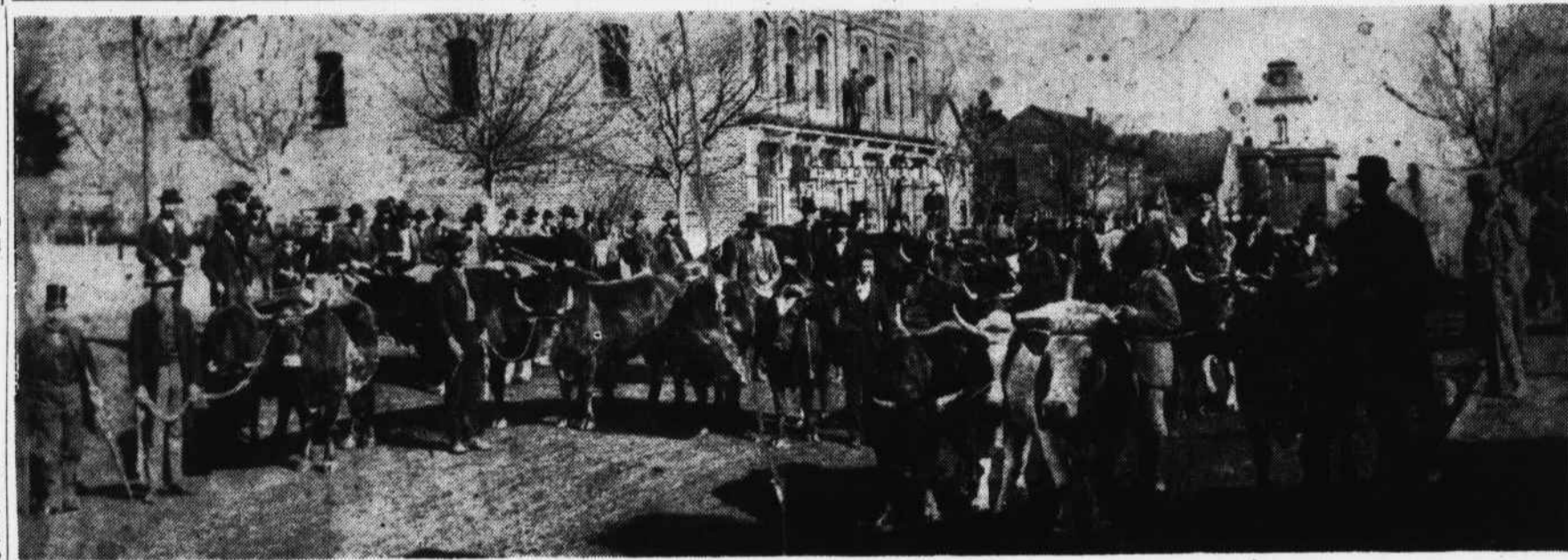
Another early private line connected Franklin with the outside world. It extended from Dillsboro to Franklin. The phone at this end was in the store of Green Trotter.

Two Franklin Schools Destroyed By Fire

The public school at Franklin has twice been destroyed by fire. A brick building put up in 1910 was burned nine years later. And a building erected in 1923 went up in flames in 1954.

Plaques List Names Of 91 Dead Of 2 Wars

On each side of the main entrance of the Macon County courthouse here is a large bronze plaque in memory of the men "who made the supreme sacrifice" in World Wars 1 and 2. The one to the right bears the names of 16 who died in World War 1, and on the left, the names of 75 who died in World War 2. The plaques were erected by the people of Macon County, the movement having been sponsored by the American Legion. They were unveiled on Memorial Day, 1950.



This cattle sale, held on Franklin's Main Street, occurred between 1895 and 1900. In right background is courthouse; structure in center is the Johnston Building, on the north side of West

Main. Persons identifiable are R. L. (Bob) Porter (extreme left), William (Bill) Stallcup, Frank Jarrett (center, wearing mustache), and T. M. (Tom) Slagle (right). (Photo loaned by Miss Laura M. Jones).

Highlands. My daddy told me that "Uncle" Hiram sold that land where the mine is to Doctor Lucas and George and Frank Bidwell. They came here from Massachusetts. The opening of the mines gave work to many men here in Macon County. Daddy said men came from other states, too, to work in the mine and at the mill. The Bidwell Company had some houses built for some of the men to live in, so they would be near their work. Some of them walked several miles to work, though; men worked 12 hours a day at that time.

As far as I know, there is only one man living now that worked when the mining first began. It is "Uncle Billie" McCoy, who is 96 years old. He lives at his old home in the Gold Mine community.

The Bidwells had the first rock house that was built in Macon County. They also built a big rock barn to keep their horses in. They worked several teams of horses. Their horses and wagons were their only means of transportation; the only way they had to get their corundum to the railroad. The old rock barn is still standing. It is just below the highway in the Cullasaja Community. The big rock house which was just above the road was seriously damaged by fire and had to be torn down about forty years ago. One of the rock houses was repaired and is still standing. The Bidwells had already left when the house burned. They had sold the mines to another company so there was not any work at the mines for a few years. When the mines were opened again, some 25 or 30 years ago, it was a great help to the men of Macon County. There is not any mining being done there now, nor any buildings left.

Though there hasn't been any real mining done at the Corundum Hill for a few years, several beautiful rubies and garnets have been found there.

Franklin Had 2 Passenger Trains Daily In 1915

Back in 1915, Franklin had one "modern convenience" it cannot claim today.

A tourist folder of 1915 boasted of "double daily (passenger) train service between Atlanta and Franklin, via Cornelia, Ga."

Above are the approximately 100 students at the Franklin School of 1901. The picture, loaned by Mrs. G. W. Grindstaff, was made at the old Academy (now Franklin Terrace, on Harrison Avenue). Though it was called the Franklin High School, the four teachers, Mr. and Mrs. M. D. Billings, Miss Nora Leach, and Miss Leona Bryson (now Mrs. T. W. Porter), taught classes from what would now be the first grade through higher mathematics and Latin.

Mrs. Grindstaff could identify about two-thirds of those in the picture. Readers will be able to identify others.

The eight she could place in the back row include Will Jones (extreme left), Harry Jarrett, Burt Slagle, Oscar Ashe, Horace Harrison, Baxter Ashe, Horace Hurst, and Burton Lyle (small boy at extreme right).

In second row from back: Ella Siler, Lynn Johnston, Grady Jarrett, Erie Potts, Jim Palmer, George Franks, Charlie Franks, Jake Addington, Frank Palmer, Sam Franks, Jack Johnston, Turner Siler, Mr. Billings, and Paul Jones.

Third row: Minnie Ashe, Mattie Franks, Carrie Jarrett, Hattie and Mattie Love (twins), Bessie and Jessie Deal (twins), Maggie Bryson, Mar-

gie Franks, Hester Penland, Olive Patton, Hallie Conley, Mabel Arthur, and Mrs. Billings.

Fourth row: Lena Bryson, Mattie Palmer, Margaret Rogers, Virgie Bryson, Lexie Love, Irene Ashe, Bessie Potts, Ida Cunningham, Miss Leach, and Miss Bryson.

Among the smaller children in front: Joe Palmer, Jack Angel, Fred Horne, Boyce Munday, Harve Shepherd, Harley Lyle, Gilmer Jones, Waterman Deal, Harry Higgins, Charlie Franks, Ben Harrison, Furman Jarrett, Kerr Cunningham, Lewis Angel, Grady Siler, Zeb Angel, Will Shepherd, and Frank Bryson.