

Recalls Tar-Grinding Wagon Days Here



Bonny Crest is born. This picture shows the crowd at the auction sale of lots, about 1908, in what is now Bonny Crest, in South Franklin. It probably was Franklin's first sub-division. (Photo loaned by Miss Lassie Kelly).

Tells Memories Of 88 Years

By R. HENRY HOLDEN
(Aged 88)

Fond memories paint the scenes of other years.

Green be their memory still. Yet when I hark back to the old school house on the hill, It's almost mixed with joy and tears.

There hangs the swing upon the maple tree,

Where you and I once swang, when we were young.

But where we met I'll ne'er forget.

Like the beauty of springtime flowers, carries its fragrance yet.

MEMORIES . . .

Out of the birth-place into the plane of residence on the north bank of the Nantahala River, ten miles northeast of its source;

Such men as they were have there, for the term of seven years, laughter mixed with the tears of childhood days . . . and isolated silence . . .

School, in two or three miles; length, two or three months of the year . . .

In passing by, who took hold of my almost helpless hand? First, Col. William Roane; then 'Squire Kimsey and 'Squire Siler; last but not least, Major Jim Bryson, first class leader of Maiden's Chapel Church, and his son, the Sunday school superintendent. Father and son walked four or five miles each Sunday to church . . .

There also were Uncle George Crawford and his son, Emerson. They did their share in building this county . . .

Inspired Macon County; they laid the foundation for today's fine business men who can stand and

not be afraid to show their cards, at face value.

I am impressed to speak, in broken words, about Dr. C. D. Smith, at the very mention of whose name we should all take off hats in reverent thanks to an all-wise Providence for the gift of such life. The scholarly and venerable Dr. Smith spent his life in untiring service to his county and church.

When I was a boy, between 12 and 14 years of age, I was at a funeral. Dr. Smith and Rev. Kirkpatrick conducted the service. Dr. Smith's first words were: "I have lost a friend". Those words, somehow, have rung in my memory all these years.

I wonder if the town of Franklin would feel a lasting pride in erecting a permanent marker to the memory of Dr. Smith and his near loved ones.

A long time ago . . . Four or five stores along Franklin's dirt street . . . Goods hauled from Cornelia, or further south,

over mud roads, by mule and ox team . . . Later, of course, by the Tallulah Falls Railroad . . .

No bus accommodations. Big man's luck, carriage or surrey; poor, just pick up a stick and hump right along . . .

Cut the meadow with scythe — arm power; \$1 per day. Furnish scythe, \$2 at most . . .

Carry mail on back from Roan's Mill, crossing Nantahala Mountain. Chunky Gal, to Hayesville. Stay overnight; come back next day . . . \$2 per trip, I think.

A long time ago . . .

Is it possible that Franklin had a population of 1310 in 1870? And if so, why should it have dropped to 281 by 1890, twenty years later?

Franklin is named not for the great Benjamin Franklin, but for Jesse Franklin, one of the surveyors who laid out the town.

The old Jesse Siler house, now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. R. S. Jones and Mr. Jones' mother, Mrs. Geo. A. Jones is the oldest home in Franklin.

By ARTHUR HICKS
(Of Aquone)

Back in the tar-grinding wagon days, travel was very slow. Tar wagons

were mostly pulled by oxen.

People moved for miles on the ox wagon.

Dar Colman moved to Little Rock, Arkansas, by an oxen team. He didn't even unload his wagon till he came back. He didn't like to stay, and he moved back to Nantahala. Without ever unloading. Jeat Jests went with Dar Colman.

To understand this, we used a heavy coat of tar on the wheels to keep them from screeching.

Back in those days my father and mother made our clothes. My mother made the cloth by a hand loom. We children dug walnut roots to color the thread; it made a dark brown color.

Our money crops were our sheep, hogs, and cattle. I have seen as many as three hundred being driven to market.

Most of us lived in log houses in the mountains. Lumber was hard to get sawed. There weren't any band mills, or circle mills, here then. They had some mills, which were run by water, with an up-and-down saw. The blade would come up slow and chug down real fast. The saw would cut about eight or ten inches at a stroke.

Men wore their beards long or burnsides or goat whiskers (as they usually called it back then.) Some men wore mustaches, too. Women wore their hair long; they wore long dresses and bonnets.

The men built houses (back then they called it house raising.) For a house raising, the women got dinner, and had the table spread with all kinds of good food. The women would quilt all day and tell tales of bygone days. The men would build a house in one day. All the neighbors would come and help a man build his house.

Contrary to general opinion, Macon County never was a part of Buncombe. The area now embraced by Macon, and parts of Jackson and Swain, was acquired by treaty from the Cherokee Indians in 1817-19, according to Dr. C. D. Smith's Brief History of Macon County.



This was transportation de luxe in the early days of the old Ford. And the late C. C. Cunningham was really sold on the new gadget known as the automobile, because, when he went away to get this machine, he bought not one, but two cars. (Photo loaned by Wade Cunningham.)

St. John's Was County's First Episcopal Church

The first Episcopal church in Macon County was not in Franklin, but in the country — St. John's, on Cartoogechaye.

From Columbus, Ohio, Mrs. T. J. Johnston sends The Press the following information:

"In 1876, my father, the Rev. John A. Deal, came by covered wagon to Western North Carolina and established the Episcopal church in Macon County, after serving two years in Murphy.

"In 1880 he built the first Episcopal church, known as 'St. John's', on Cartoogechaye.

"In his early ministry, he held services in Franklin in a tannery, which stood where Lee Barnard now has a store. Later on, he preached in the Presbyterian church, kindly loaned by the minister.

"I remember Franklin when I was a little girl, and what a treat it was to be allowed to go with my father and mother to buy the things we needed for the household. I look back now and picture in my mind the peace and contentment of the homes, and the simple beauty, too, of the surroundings, and almost wish I could turn back the years."

Figures

Don't Lie? . . . Then Try Explaining This

Those questions are raised by Miss Ida Padelford, reference librarian at Pack Memorial Library, Asheville.

The Press wrote Pack Library, requesting information about Franklin's growth, as shown by census reports.

Miss Padelford, to whom the request was referred, could find census figures for Franklin from only three decennial censuses:

1870	1310
1890	281
1900	335.

The 1870 census gave 1310 for "Franklin No. 1".

What was "Franklin No. 1"? Miss Padelford would appreciate hearing from anyone who can throw light on the mystery.

Jackson-Macon Line Surveyed By Brown

The dividing line between Jackson and Macon Counties was surveyed by Milton Montgomery Brown, according to Mrs. F. E. Mashburn, the surveyor's granddaughter. She recalls her mother's telling her about it, but is not sure of the date. Presumably, it would have been about 1851, the year Jackson County was formed from Macon and Haywood. It might, though, have been in 1881, when part of Jackson was annexed to Macon.



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