

Iron Duff Township Is The Home Of A Remark- able Group Of People

Their History, Characteristics
And Peculiarities Told By
Former Citizen

(By W. C. Medford.)

Iron Duff township embraces that long, narrow strip of hilly territory which lies generally speaking, between Jonathan's Creek township on the west and Pigeon River on the east, being separated from Crabtree by the river. Iron Duff was originally a part of Crabtree township, having been formed from it in 1879. Look at a map of Haywood county and you will see that this township occupies a central location; the geographical center, it is believed by some, is in the neighborhood of Antioch church. Because of this an effort, was made some fifty years ago to get the court house located at a point in the upper or northern end of Iron Duff.

The township gets its name from Aaron McDuff, the first permanent settler; but now we only have the "Duff" part left to perpetuate the name of this quaint old Scotchman... and that is often erroneously written with a small "d." This all came about because of the fact that when application was made for a post office there, asking that the name be Aaron McDuff, the authorities at Washington had the name put in the directory as "Iron Duff" for some reason or other, and it has never been changed.

It is said that McDuff made himself a log canoe on the banks of Pigeon river somewhere about Clyde; then after launching his canoe put all his belongings in it and pushed down the river. He stopped his canoe and got out some where between the Downs branch and the George Fincher place. He built himself a cabin about two miles westward near the eastern slope of Coleman mountain on what is now Mrs. Ella Davis's farm. Here he lived for awhile, later removing and settling on the Downs branch, what is now known as the Bud Downs place.

Closely following McDuff came Toby Davis and Jacob Kyle. Davis, who lived near where E. D. Medford now lives, was one of the first recruiting officers of Haywood county militia for the Civil War. Old citizens of the community used to like to tell how Uncle Toby sold off the greater part of his land and bought himself a suit of clothes, high hat and a new gun to add dignity to his office of "Colonel." Then there was Daniel Dotson, a bound boy of Jacob Kyle's. Dotson later becoming a large land owner because of this connection.

Later came Andrew Ferguson, John D. Howell, Riley Medford, Jas. McElroy, Jake Dotson, Riley Ferguson, Jas. Crawford, Frank Davis, Samuel Chambers and Jas. Murray, most of whom have grandchildren or great grandchildren living in the township.

Enough for the history.

The main purpose of this story is to tell of the characteristics of the Iron Duff people, the unique and distinctive place which the township occupies in the county—if not in the whole state, and to mention some of their peculiarities.

INDEPENDENCE

Iron Duff is wholly a farming and stock-raising community; there are approximately sixty farms, few of them very small and none very large.

The tenant farmers of the township can be counted on the fingers of one hand. They have had only one or two persons to go up as county wards, and have had fewer persons on relief per capita than any other township of the county. The citizens generally look after their own needy if need arises.

They pay as they go more than any place I know of. All this, together with a spirit of co-operation, has made them as independent a community as you will find.

A very note-worthy thing (which the Editor of this paper mentions editorially) is the fact that the township has its 1936 taxes paid up 100 per cent.

HONESTLY AND NEIGHBORLI- NESS

Recently a farmer of the community sold his neighbor a cow. Al-

though the cow was perfectly well and hearty at the time of the sale, she took sick and died in about ten days. On hearing of his neighbor's misfortune the farm took him another cow—

"Here's you another cow," he said, "and I won't have a cent in pay."

When asked why he did this remarkable thing, the man replied that he had other cows, while his neighbor had lost the only cow he had.

Some say there has been two judgments taken vs. Iron Duff citizens within the last 25 years, some say one... but two or one, as the case may be, is a remarkably clean record. Deeds in trust and mortgages are seldom given, since the people are noted for their pay-as-you-go disposition.

LAW-ABIDING

The township, of course, has not been without its criminals—nor its crime, some of it of a very serious nature.

But most of this crime dates back decades ago, and for the last 30 or 35 years the community has been remarkably free from crime, excepting two or three comparatively short periods.

One capital case is on record. But so far as can be ascertained there has never been a homicide committed in Iron Duff township.

HOSPITALITY

J. S. Davis, S. T. Bryson, Alec. Massey, Jim Murray, Lebo Medford, Jim Dotson, my father and others used to say that they never turned a traveler asking food and shelter away from their door... if they could possibly keep him.

While this record has probably not been maintained, in toto, by their children and grandchildren during the intervening years, the community is nevertheless, noted for its hospitality.

PECULIARITIES

And now we come to what might be called peculiar characteristics of the Iron Duff people:

First. A tendency to stick together... there is seldom a division down there, no matter what the proposition is.

Second. Averseness to insurance in all forms. If there is a single life insurance policy in force there we have not been able to ascertain who the holder is. And I doubt if there is any one carrying fire insurance.

Third. The people of Iron Duff are slow to break with the customs of their fathers. Attend a church service there today and on entering you will see the ladies sitting to your right and the men to your left, almost as exclusively so as they did 30 years ago.

PROGRESSIVENESS

But with all their conservatism as concerns speculation, insurance, etc., the people of Iron Duff are generally progressive. This is especially true as regards new and progressive methods in farming, i. e. once they are convinced the method is of practicable value. From the county agent's office we learn that no community has co-operated better with the farm programs during the last few years.

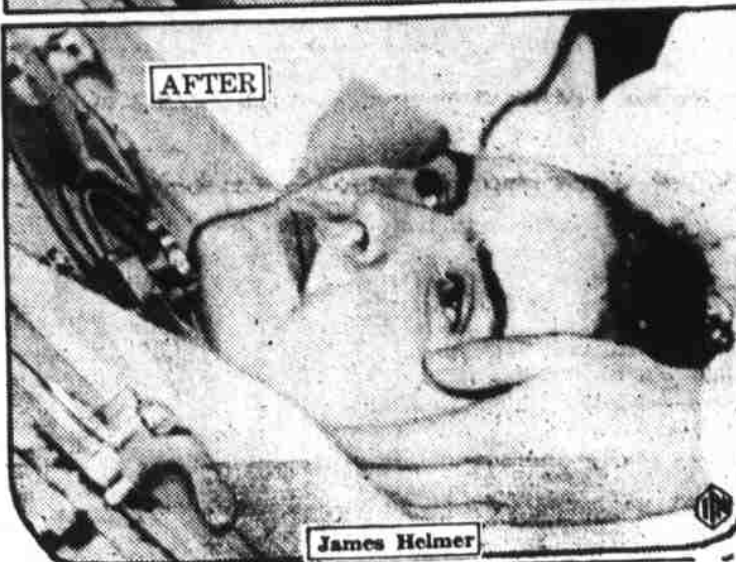
This township has the distinction of having one of the area demonstration projects, there being only eleven such in the state. This is in co-operation with the federal government (T. V. A.) and state extension service, and is called the Iron Duff Watershed. It is also the only township to have had conducted a township farm tour. All the farmers of the township are co-operating in this except four or five.

CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY

Although comparatively small in area and population, Iron Duff, nevertheless, has contributed quite a number of professional men, county officials, legislators, etc., as follows:

One state senator.
Three representatives.
Two sheriffs.
Three county commissioners.
One county auditor.
Two county road supervisors.
Five doctors of medicine.
One dentist.
Two druggists.
One preacher.
Also many public school teachers and good farmers.

Youth Wins Race With Death



Stricken with infantile paralysis while at work at Stevens Point, Wis., James Helmer, 23, undergraduate football manager at Marquette university, was rushed by special train to Chicago where he arrived just in time to have his life saved by the "iron lung" which artificially stimulated his respiration. The above graphic pictures show Helmer, top, just before he was put in the "iron lung", his face contorted with pain, and, below, his revived expression as he gained a new lease on life.

Roosevelts Plan Series Of Christ- mas Festivities

Christmas festivities at the White House this year will come in two—two family dinners, two parties for

young people and two Christmas trees.

One of the dinners will be at the luncheon hour, when grandchildren of the President and Mrs. Roosevelt will attend. The other will be Christmas night for the grown-ups. There will be a children's party December 27. Little Sara Roosevelt, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Roosevelt, will share honors with her cousin,

young "Bill" Roosevelt, son of Elliott Roosevelt by his first marriage.

On December 30 the President and First Lady will entertain about 400 young people at a dance for their youngest son, John, and his fiancée, Anne Clark, of Boston.

Mr. and Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., also will be present although they will spend Christmas day with the latter's parents, Mr. and Mrs.

Eugene du Pont, near Wilmington, Del.

On the night before Christmas Mr. Roosevelt will read Dickens' "Christmas Carol" in accordance with the family custom. Stockings will be opened in the President's bedroom Christmas morning.

Blessed is the telephone girl, who never expects the subscribers to be polite.

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