

Days Of Old Sumner County

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Sumner County Historical Society

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1813: James Winchester's Year as a POW

By Jan Shuxteau, Editor

Though Sumner County's pioneer statesman James Winchester, builder of Cragfont, is most famously remembered as one of the founders of the city of Memphis and as a brigadier general in the War of 1812, he also deserves to be remembered as a maligned hero who restored his good name and worked diligently on behalf of the soldiers under his command during the lonely year he spent as a British prisoner of war.

In his 1979 book, *James Winchester, Tennessee Pioneer*, the late historian Walter Durham provides a portrait of this strong man, including his incarceration.

When the War of 1812 began, Winchester, then 60, was appointed brigadier general. Assigned to the recruiting service, he nevertheless yearned for a field assignment, an ambition that led to ongoing antagonism with Gen. William Henry Harrison (later president), who was furious when the army he considered his command was given over by the Secretary of War to Winchester.

The controversy over command led to conflicting loyalty in the troops and ultimately to Winchester's

(See POW, Page 6)



Dr. William N. Lackey (right) and driver Sid Rather (left) make the first car trip from Gallatin to Nashville in 1903.

Country Doc Is Pioneer Motorist

By Ken Thomson, SCHS President, and Jan Shuxteau, Editor

Respected country doctor William Nicholas Lackey had an adventurous spirit and joie de vivre that sometimes burst forth, delighting friends to whom he was simply "Dr. Bill." He was the first person in Gallatin to ride in a car, the first to travel by car from Gallatin to Nashville and the first to own a motorcycle.

On Aug. 29, 1902, Lackey made the car trip from Gallatin to Nashville. The car, an Oldsmobile, was being driven from a dealership in Louisville to its new owner in Nashville. When the car came through Gallatin in the afternoon, Lackey, then 26, was allowed to get aboard. The trip on to Nashville took three-and-a half hours and required 56 stops for mechanical repairs and to avoid frightened horses. Lackey described it in a 1938 story in the *Nashville Banner*.

"I [was] seated on the left of the serious but alert driver, who had in some providential way survived long enough to succeed in driving from Louisville, Ky., to Gallatin, a distance of 159 miles. [The car] had been bought by Leland Hume, at that time president of the Cumberland Telephone Company. The driver, Sid Rather, was an employee of the telephone company.

"[Rather's] throat was protected by a collar that might well have been used as a windshield if windshields had been known in those days. My long and very curly hair was surmounted with the latest in derby hats.

(See PIONEER, Page 9)

Grasslands: A Dream of Racing Glory

By Jan Shuxteau, Editor

For a brief, glorious time, the eyes of the world's racing elite focused on Sumner as its farms and fields were transformed into "Grasslands," a premier venue for foxhunts and steeplechase.

On Oct. 3, 1929, wealthy hunt enthusiasts Joseph B. Thomas, John Branham, Rogers Caldwell, Mason Houghland, Julius Fleischmann and Arnold Hangar acquired or controlled rights to 28 square miles between Hendersonville and Gallatin where they founded the Southern Grasslands Hunt and Racing Foundation, an exclusive club. The five were charmed by the property, which they likened to a piece of English countryside, "ideal" for their grand plans to establish a private hunting preserve and race track patterned after Aintree, home of the English Grand National Steeplechase.

"Lovers of hunts and racing [also] applauded the location for its history of breeding thoroughbreds," noted the late historian Walter Durham in his 2010 book, *Grasslands*. "The sites of many successful 19th century breeding operations were in the area. They were on Ed Gardner's Avondale farm, Balie Peyton's Station Camp Creek farm, James Franklin's Kennesaw, Charles Reed's Fairview and the several stables owned by Redmond Barry, Thomas Barry, Orville Shelby, James and Hardy M. Cryer, George Elliott, Hubbard Saunders, G.W. Parker and Josephus Conn Guild."

Grasslands was conceived in the bursting optimism of the roaring '20s. Never mind the Wall Street Crash of '29, three weeks after the club's start. When the deal was done, nobody had yet heard of the Great Depression. Nor could they foresee how poorly timed was their extravagant vision of a lordly English hunt club.

Building Speeds Ahead

"The organizers moved quickly," reported Durham. "They scheduled hunting for three or four days each week to begin in January 1930...By the first week of February, 20 well-conditioned hunters from North Carolina and Virginia were resting in their stables, and 85 foxhounds were in the kennels. Additional horses and hounds arrived within a few weeks."

Thomas and Hangar hired 200 men to transform the area into what reporters called a "sportsman's paradise." Contractors converted Avondale into a clubhouse called Race Horse Tavern, which opened to members on Feb. 10, 1930.

"By late winter, Grasslands had purchased and received tens of thousands of wooden fence posts and rails...Before put in place, posts and

rails were dipped in crude oil which 'gave them a nice yellow color...' said Durham. Miles of existing stone walls were repaired, hedges planted, stables (including one for 300 horses), kennels and chicken coops built, stables were painted white with red and black trim or made into smokehouses, and existing farmhouses were refurbished for members' rental.

"The work crew was forever busy," said Durham. "[They] built a prominent stone tower, which is now a landmark, the only surviving structure built by Grasslands...At the same time, work was underway on three racecourses...laid out in a concentric pattern. The inner of the three was a one-mile oval dirt track. Surrounding it was a grass course of a mile-and-a-quarter in length. Outside of these was a steeplechase course two miles in length."

Foxhunts began about March 1, 1930, with rare red foxes brought in. Guests rode to hounds three or four times a week from late September through the first week of April.



Joseph Thomas and Charles Carver lead hounds to the hunt at Grasslands.

Interest in the new Grasslands was piqued by accolades from the press, which was captivated by its "Englishness." The *New York Sun* reported the "transforming of a section of Tennessee bluegrass country into a bit of Old England," and both the *Louisville Times* and *Chicago Courier Journal* (run by Anglophile publisher Robert Bingham) provided what Durham called "generous space to promote hunting and racing at Grasslands."

The Inaugural Racing Event

Grasslands' inaugural steeplechase—held May 19, 1930, the Monday after the Kentucky Derby—was meant to spur club membership, faltering as the depression took hold, and boost Grasslands reputation abroad so that it would be considered

(See GRASSLANDS, Page 3)

GRASSLANDS, Continued from Page 2

for international races. The foundation invited a hundred special guests to stay at Foxland Hall, Brentwood House and the Race Horse Tavern, attend the race and the society events before and after the race.

"On race day, guests, members and several of 'Nashville's own smart set' dressed for the occasion. The chic, eye-catching costumes of the women and the men's 'swank riding togs or sports clothes belying their origin in Mother England' kept photographers busy," said Durham. "Adding to the excitement of the day was the winner's trophy, a plate of silver offered by a member of the advisory committee, the Duke of Beaufort. The duke had been expected to attend, but other commitments kept him in England at his country estate Badminton. The presence of two Russian emigres Princess Laura Rospiglioi and Prince George, son of the Grand Duke Alexander, pretender to the Russian throne, created quite a buzz."

Nine horses, all with gentlemen riders (no professionals allowed) paraded to the starting post. The turf was muddy from recent rain, and two horses fell at fences. Three horses sped side by side until one, Red Gold, suddenly sprinted out to win by 75 yards.



Bryan Hilliard rode Red Gold to victory

Grasslands' International Steeplechase

Grassland's first strong bid for worldwide fame was its International Steeplechase held Dec. 6, 1930. Founders held their breaths hoping this make-or-break event would succeed. "Racing fever took hold in Nashville, and locals saw Grasslands as an economic engine well fueled by out-of-state funds," said Durham.

Steeplechasers, generally speaking, were amateurs who rode to win trophies, not money, so Grasslands' November announcement that King Alfonso XIII of Spain had donated a large gold cup for the winner made sports' headlines nationwide. To sweeten the deal even more, Grasslands added a \$5,000 prize.



The King's Cup is admired at Fairview Ball.

The event was repeatedly reported as "an American Aintree," Durham said, "The true international nature of the race was promoted relentlessly. The course with broad based English brush jumps, the trophy given by the King of Spain, competing horses bred in England, Ireland, France and the United States, riders from England and America supported the claim it was no parochial affair."

In addition, airplanes were allowed to bring in guests, landing and taking off on Grassland's property or making water landings on the nearby Cumberland River.

Racing fans from across the country and Britain arrived, many staying for a week of leisurely meals (including tea time and late night dinners) parties, rides, visits to the stables and kennels. Everyone wore proper attire, with scarlet and yellow hunting coats providing brilliant color. The social highlight of race weekend was the Bal Poudre, a masked ball with orchestra, for 400 guests at beautifully decorated Fairview mansion in Gallatin. The women wore evening gowns of the antebellum period and white wigs, and the men were in "full dress, scarlet if qualified."

Race Day was raw and rainy, but special guests started with a sumptuous breakfast at Foxland Hall then joined the 10 thousand other spectators who lined the racecourse. After a fall at the 25th fence, a horse named Alligator got up and crossed the finish line first to give its owner the King's cup and \$5,000 prize.

Excitement over the event boosted optimism that Grasslands could withstand the Great Depression. However, the fact that membership was not increasing caused the founders deep concern—and their fears were justified.

See the rest of the story of Grasslands in the January issue of this newsletter!



In this archives photo, neighbors are shown at the wreckage of the Allison house where nine perished in 1925

Tragedy in Sumner County: The Liberty Cyclone

By Paula Shannon, Portland

A storm known as the Liberty Cyclone struck Sumner County on March 18, 1925, killing 27 Sumner Countians, totally destroying 29 houses and leaving 34 families homeless.

March 18, 1925, began as a normal Wednesday, sunny and warm for the season. By afternoon, storm clouds were gathering. Farmers were still in the fields or milking their cows at 4 p.m. Housewives were preparing supper, and school age children were doing homework. At 5:30 p.m., a tornado touched down at the Keytown community near Buck Lodge, nine miles north of Gallatin.

In 1925, there were no TV warnings or sirens to alert people to impending doom. The Key family was struck first, killing Matilda Key, 75, and Maude Key. Maude's husband, Luke, and their four children were injured.

Next, the storm hurled a tree on top of Jim Brizendine's house, but the family was not injured. Then the storm went through Graball and Sulphura and toward the Hughes' family property. Ella Hughes was at home alone as the storm

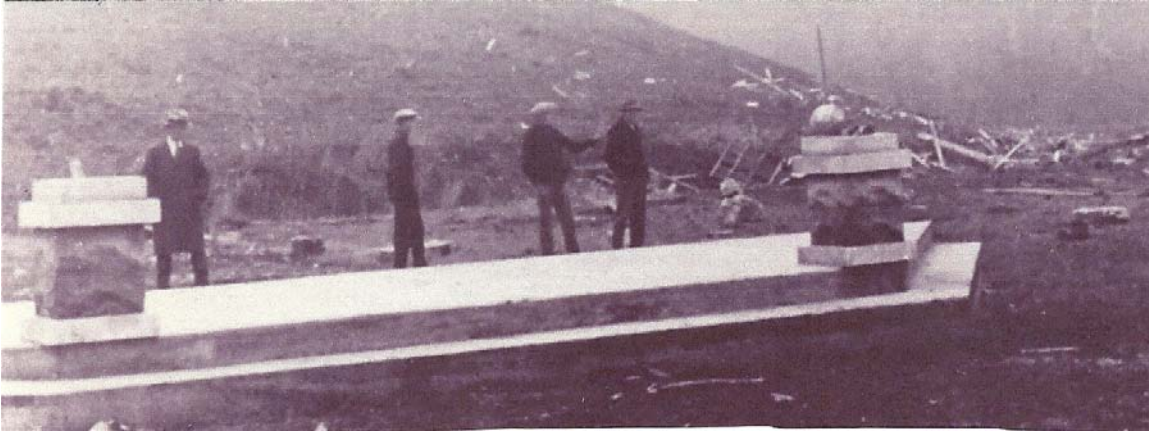
approached, and she ran half a mile to her neighbors, the Allisons.

That was a tragic mistake; the tornado skipped the Hughs' house, but it destroyed the Allisons' home, killing everyone inside. Jim Allison, his wife Nola, and all six of their children died.

(See TRADEGY, Page 5)



The wreckage of the Holmes' house



All that remained of Liberty Presbyterian Church after the tornado is pictured in this archives photo.

(TRAGEDY, Continued from Page 4)

Next it hit the home of Charles Holmes. He and two of his daughters were injured, and his wife was killed. Charles, himself, died of his injuries three days later.

Liberty Presbyterian Church USA was next in the tornado's path. An eyewitness, Will O'Mear, said he saw the church picked up into the air, explode, and fall back to the ground "like a bunch of match sticks." All that was left of the church was its concrete walk and steps.

My dad, Robert Shannon, who was very young at the time, told me there were dead chickens with their feathers plucked off hanging from the trees and a wheat field laid bare with wheat "stalks" stuck in tree trunks like knives.

The tornado lost some strength going through Trammels Creek (Macon County) then regained it and hit Holland, Ky., killing another four people.

An emergency hospital was set up in Gallatin at the former residence of Silas Love on Railroad Ave. Dr. Homer Reece was the doctor in charge, and he was assisted by Mrs. J.H. Ewing and Cornelia Roys. All of the other doctors in town also helped the injured, and the local Red Cross and members of the County Health Nursing Committee gave aid.

It was estimated that \$45,000 was needed for storm relief. The chairmen/women of each of the

17 county districts were appointed to raise money for the relief fund. The National Red Cross contributed \$20,000, the state \$15,000, Sumner County \$5,000, and private donations another \$5,000.

While the F4 tornado on March 18 was devastating to Sumner County, there were other tornados that day in Tennessee and other states that overshadowed Sumner's losses. A storm that came to be known as the Tri-State Tornado left a 234 mile path of destruction in Missouri, Illinois and Indiana, resulting in 1,000 dead, 3,000 injured and thousands homeless. Property damage was enormous.

Not many are left in Sumner County who heard first hand accounts of March 18, 1925, but those who did have not forgotten.

Sumner Suffered in the Storm

*Sixty-six families were affected and 52 were given assistance.

*Twenty-seven residents died.

*Twenty-two were injured.

*Thirty-four families were left homeless.

*Twenty-nine houses were totally destroyed.

*Property damage was more than \$100,000.

Author's Note: Information for this story came from multiple sources, including John Creasy, who also writes for this newsletter.

(POW, Continued from Page 1)

capture and the defeat of his army at the River Raisin on Jan. 22, 1813. Harrison had failed to send promised reinforcements until too late then publicly blamed defeat on Winchester, whom he hated and thought dead.

Very much alive, Winchester had been captured by the British and marched across the Canadian border to Fort Malden. Although a prisoner [of war], Winchester worked tirelessly to prepare an accounting of the detachment of soldiers after their surrender at the River Raisin, said Durham. "On Feb. 11, he [Winchester] sent to the Sec. of War a summary of his unit. He accounted for 880 officers and men."

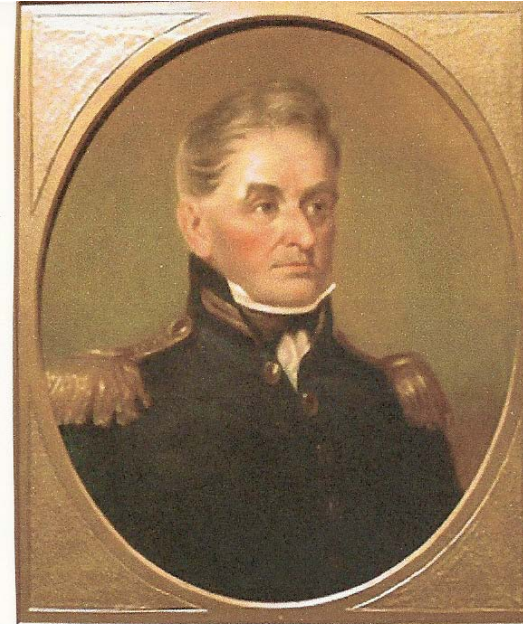
He later learned that the victorious British Col. Henry Proctor had reneged on his guarantee of safety for 65 wounded American prisoners and allowed his Indian allies to massacre them. Horrified, Winchester wrote of Proctor from prison. "The English language does not afford epithets sufficiently powerful or descriptive...I found it in vain to appeal to a man whose trade is rapine, and whose bread is murder."

Meanwhile, Harrison continued to disparage Winchester, particularly in Kentucky, which had been home to most of Winchester's fallen troops at River Raisin. "However, by late March 1813, the Frankfort *Argus*, the *Kentucky Gazette*, and the *Lexington Reporter* had become convinced that Winchester had been made the scapegoat for the whole affair," reported Durham.

From his Canadian prison, Winchester was still "busy with presentations to his captors in favor of paroling the American officers and men captured at the River Raisin. British response was such that by March 10 [1813] most had been paroled and permitted to return to the United States," noted Durham. "The general's son Marcus was among these, but the general himself was held by the British in what turned out to be an unseemly long confinement."

Winchester, who continued to petition for his own release, was moved to Beauport, outside of Quebec City, where American prisoners and their families were captive. In the summer and fall of 1813, "he successfully interceded to reduce the population of a prison ship where crowded conditions threatened the health and well-being of the Americans on it. When officers on parole in Beauport could not find quarters in private homes because of extravagant lodging costs, he negotiated relief with British authorities. He unfailingly took up the cases of individual officers and enlisted men who sought parole or exchange because of personal hardship at home. When prisoners 'languished' unduly long in close

confinement while awaiting trial for prison rules infractions, he successfully pushed the British to expedite their hearings," said Durham.



Portrait of Brig. Gen. James Winchester

Winchester found himself in the uncomfortable position of standing up for British rules of conduct, warning American officers paroled to town to stop gambling, stop visiting "persons of bad fame" and to maintain "a more dignified deportment." As the most senior American officer, Winchester assembled his subordinate officers each Friday morning to receive parole pay. "[He], remonstrated with a prison ship master, probed recurring rumors about removal or exchange, arranged care for sick prisoners and demanded explanations about abusive treatment of prisoners..." said Durham.

In March 1814, Winchester acted as an intermediary between America and Britain about prison policy. At the same time, he again asked for his own release. "Long and tedious captivity produces impatience for deliverance," he said. Six weeks later, his petition was answered and he was set free.

By May 1814, he had arrived in Washington and was demanding that a court of inquiry be set to investigate his conduct at River Raisin.

From Washington, Winchester travelled home to Cragfont to be engulfed in the warm welcome of his wife and children.

Winchester eventually published a vindication of his acts at River Raisin and charged Harrison with failing to honor his promise to rendezvous his troops on the fateful day of the battle.

Genetic Testing for Genealogical Use: It Worked for Me

By Randy Tatum, Sumner County Archives

DNA? What good does a DNA test do when the ancestors you want to know about have been dead for 200 years or more? Just what does a DNA test tell you?

These are questions that many people ask. In my case, I confirmed research that I had personally done, but could not prove with a “paper trail.” In my research I had a “paper trail” that provided proof of ancestry back to my ggg-grandfather. I had information that strongly suggested who my 4th and 5th great grandfathers were, but there was no absolute documentation available to prove a father and son connection between the 3rd and 4th great grandfathers. I needed something more to make the connection.

Sometime in the 1990’s I learned about a researcher in Indiana who had researched his ancestors and suspected that my 5th great grandfather was a brother to his 5th great grandfather. We corresponded off and on for several years, and sometime in the early 2000’s he did a yDNA test. He kept telling me I needed to do the same to try to confirm both of our research. I finally decided to do the test in 2013, and our results matched, proofing kinship.

Our 5th great grandfathers had another brother, and about two years after my test a descendant of the third brother took a yDNA test, and those results also verified kinship.

In my case, the DNA test I chose to take was the yDNA that traces the paternal line. There are other tests being offered that give different results, depending on your needs. The mtDNA test traces the maternal line, and a test referred to as the autosomal DNA (atDNA) in which a person receives half of their DNA from their father and half from their mother. Each test has its advantages, depending on your objectives.

There are three companies offering DNA testing for genealogical purposes; AncestryDNA, Family Tree DNA(FTDNA) and 23and Me.

AncestryDNA is the newest company and only offers the atDNA test.

Family Tree DNA started around 2000 for genealogical testing and offers the yDNA test, mtDNA test and atDNA test(Family Finder). It is the only company that was established just for genealogical testing.

23andMe began with most people wanting to know something about their health and not their genealogy. They offer the atDNA test.

All of these companies charge for the tests they offer, and at certain times of the year they reduce those costs.

For more detail about DNA testing, each of these companies has information on their Web sites about genetic inheritance, as well as links to other sites with additional information. Also, Sumner County Archives has added a book that can be of help in understanding DNA testing.

In summary, the field of genetics is changing day by day. Because more and more people are choosing to be tested, revisiting previous test results you have taken can reveal new matches with possible cousins that may help you expand your traditional research. As more people are tested, it means the possibility of frequently having new matches to contact and compare with. Your results can be compared to others for possible matches if you choose, or you can filter and limit your results as you desire.

Do You Know How to Get Back Issues?

Copies of every issue of this newsletter are available to members on the Sumner County Historical Society Web site: www.sctnhs.org .

Members must type in for their user name: **memberschs**, then input the password. If you do not have a password, e-mail Mark Bastian at mhbastian@msn.com. He will respond with your password.

Tell Friends: Here’s How to Join SCHS

If someone you know wishes to join the Sumner County Historical Society for 2016, ask them to send a check--\$25 for families, \$20 for individuals, \$10 for students—to: SCHS, P.O. Box 1871, Gallatin, TN 37066. They should include their mailing address and e-mail in order to receive this quarterly newsletter and invitations to SCHS events. New members are always welcome. Also, please consider providing a membership as a gift to a friend—Christmas will be here before you know it!

Renovation Underway on Portland's Temple Theater

By Albert Dittes

The front facade is done with new doors and windows. Shiny new bricks with the names of \$100 donors are in place on the sidewalk, and a marquee will adorn the front facing South Russell Street by winter.

Renovation continues on the Temple Theater in Portland, where entertainment first began in May, 1937 under owners Charles H. Green and Walter S. Moore. The theater closed in 1947.



The façade of Temple Theater in Portland

A Nov. 19, 1937, ad in *The Upper Sumner Press* promoted the movie: "High, Wide and Handsome" starring Irene Dunne and Randolph Scott with music and lyrics by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein. The paper reported Constance Bennett and Cary Grant appearing in "Topper," the Three Mesquiteers in "Range Defenders" and Dick Merrill and Jack Lambier in "Atlantic Flight."

For a Wednesday night benefit show on Dec. 15, 1937, the theater charged 10 and 25 cents for tickets to "Between Two Women" and netted the Big Brothers \$42.75. The theatre donated expenses, and the Girl Scouts sold more than \$30 worth of tickets.

"Uncle Abner and his cast of radio performers gave a delightful performance on the stage of the temple Theatre Friday night," the paper reported. "By popular request, they will make a return engagement for the show Dec. 31 and will give a midnight show New Year's Eve."

It Will Be a Proud Venue

The glory days of Temple Theater are over, but the building inside is still impressive, with an awesome cavernous auditorium.

With renovation underway, steel girders now lie on the floor waiting to reinforce a balcony that will seat 48. The main auditorium will seat 186. A huge stage will feature not only a screen for movies, but a fully-equipped sound system for music and theatrical plays along with a grand piano. High school clubs will be able to do plays and book readings there. Next door, to the left, will be the Green Room, available to rent for wedding receptions and meetings of 80 to 100 people. It will also contain the ticket counter, concession stand, costume changing rooms and a kitchen.

Portland County Commissioner Billy Geminden and his wife Denise were instrumental in securing a \$10,000 grant from the Memorial Foundation and a \$25,000 facade grant from the State of Tennessee for materials for the theater project. All labor is by volunteers.

And Have the Volunteers Ever Worked!

"Donations came from a sweetheart dinner and bricks," said Jim Donoho, Portland Preservation Foundation treasurer. "I am so impressed with the way the community has rallied behind us. When we got to a certain point, people not only gave money but also labor for electrical work, heating units, just to help get it done."

Donoho, two of his employees and Billy Geminden, did all stripping and gutting. A local contractor will install the balcony at no charge.

Donoho added that volunteers connected the water main from underneath the road to the sprinkler system for free. One volunteer with a tractor-trailer rig went to Wisconsin and brought back some theater seats that a different volunteer found for sale on E-bay. Still another volunteer went to Crossville to buy discontinued tile to surface 6,000 square feet, and it just cost \$380.

Donoho said, "It has taken us three years to get to this point, and we are finally getting a little bit done. The Gallatin theater project took 15 years. Most take 10 years to open up once started."

Everyone is invited to the 19th annual Gallatin Candlelight Cemetery Tour, benefiting Sumner County Museum, Saturday, Oct. 3, from 4 to 8 p.m.

MOTORIST, Continued from Page 1

We made the 28 miles to Nashville in three-and-a-half hours flat and created nearly as much excitement on reaching the city as would have been created at a later day if Col. Lindbergh had suddenly dropped down on the Public Square in the Spirit of St. Louis.”

A few years earlier while in college, Lackey had ridden in an electric car and reported that his preference for cars over horses began then. He said, “I never loved horses, although I felt a great sympathy for them as they stamped flies during the summer and suffered the cold of the winter. During those dreary night calls when I had to harness the mare by the light of a smoky lantern and wade through the mud around the stable...I dreamed that some day the horseless carriage would liberate me from the care of a horse and with a mere turn of a crank start me on my way.”

The First Motorcycle Owner

His dream of horseless transportation also led Lackey to become the first motorcycle owner in Gallatin. “On a never-to-be-forgotten day a young man from Nashville came popping and clattering into my hometown on the first motorcycle I had ever seen. I was greatly thrilled at this sight and was the head of the impromptu reception committee, and...was permitted to ride this noisy and rough steed up the street and back. I narrowly escaped death at the hands of an irate farmer whose horses objected to the new smell of gasoline and the noise. The steeds promptly departed...shedding several children of associated sizes, mixed with butter, eggs and a few milk cans.” said Lackey.

Years later, he told friends that the cycle owner had shown him how to start the bike but not how to brake. He took off from the garage owned by J. Kirby White and flew down Scottsville Pike, wondering then how he was going to stop. White saw the dilemma and phoned all the tollgate keepers and told them to raise their poles. He rode until he ran out of gas.

Shortly after this first ride, Lackey bought a cycle and rode it on house calls when roads were dry. “I wildly clattered and banged along the highways at the risk of life and limb,” he reported. People called him in emergencies because he could get to them faster than their family doctor, who came later by horse. These doctors often advised him in fatherly tones to go back to the more professional looking horse and buggy. Farmers, whose horses shied at his loud approach, were less fatherly and more threatening to him.

“But instead of returning to the more conventional and more dignified horse, I bought myself a new motorcycle that was very much more comfortable to ride and kept up my wild career of speeding

around the countryside,” he said. “I was hated by all men who had scary horses...I was a hero only to small boys and the people to whom I made a quick trip to relieve pain.”

In 1906 (or thereabouts) Lackey bought his first automobile, a third-hand Locomobile, one-cylinder, 10-horsepower, tiller guide, curved dashboard gasoline automobile. “It had seen better days and had had hard service, but I was very proud of it though the condition of the back tires prevented me from using it until I could raise the price of two new tires, which at the time were \$21 each...” Lackey reported.

“She darted down the street much to my relief and joy, at the then not to be despised speed of 12 miles per hour...In 1905 in Tennessee the speed limit was 20 miles per hour and through most towns 10 miles per hour. This mattered very little to the motors of that age for very few of them could run that fast, even downhill,” he said.

The evolution in comfort and safety of the automobile was a delight to Lackey. “I think that the self-starter, electric lights and the enclosed bodies which took us doctors out of rain, snow and cold were the improvements that I appreciated most...and remember that was before we had windshields. You put on your ear bobs, pulled up your overcoat collar and prayed that the carbide tank wouldn't stop up this time and let your head lamp flicker out so that you would have to crawl home with your smoke oil lamps, splashed with mud and half frozen.”

More about Dr. Bill

In addition to his doctoring, Lackey was well known in Sumner County as an excellent cartoonist, and as a young man even considered making cartooning, not medicine, his career.

Born Sept. 27, 1876, he was the son of Samuel E. Lackey and Susan Kennedy Alexander of Gallatin. His father served four years in the Confederate Army under Gen. John Hunt Morgan.

The young Lackey enjoyed a carefree childhood, growing up on a large farm at the edge of Gallatin on Nashville Pike, which included all of the property from Maple St. to Lock Four Road. He graduated from Gallatin Male Seminary (high school), Vanderbilt University and Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, where he received his medical degree in pediatrics.

He married Benetta Anderson and had two sons, David and Samuel. In his later years, Lackey lived with his surrogate daughter, Lorelle Hix, and her husband, Harold. Lackey died in 1951.

1914 Diary: Callin' on Folks in Simpson's Gap

By Albert Dittes

This is the second part of the diary of Lida Scott, who recorded her 1914 visit to rural Sumner County. Scott, a wealthy northerner, stayed with Herman and Harriet Walen, who ran Chestnut Hill Farm School in Fountain Head. In the excerpt below, Scott describes calling on residents of Simpson's Gap.

"Mr. [Herman] Walen took me in a buggy through Simpson's Gap. On leaving the pike, we approached the gap by a short cut across lots... This road was washed away leaving deep gullies over which we traveled with the buggy balancing on two wheels. We passed through gates, which Mr. Walen closed behind us, and came at last to a field. The farmer had put his fence along the middle of the road and there wasn't room for both buggy and fence, so we drove into the field, through the field corn and broomcorn and back again into the road. These roads would have been labeled 'dangerous' near a town or village, but here was an independent life, each man taking care... You hear of no accidents here, although there are so many weak spots and caveins that it seems scarcely possible to make headway.

"Before entering the gap, we traveled down the steepest long hill I ever saw... from the top, it looked like a flight of stairs. We walked, and Mr. Walen led the mule safely down to the valley. The road became the bed of a stream...

"We reached a little cabin and left these people some reading matter. Here and there along the Dry Fork Creek were log houses, just such homes as the one in which was reared Abraham Lincoln. You could imagine such a man coming from the kindly, hardy, and fine-faced lads.

"We called on a mother alone at home with her two babies. The house was raised on stone pillars, with no protection underneath from the chilling winds of winter. It was unpainted. The hospitable woman invited us inside. We mounted the rude step directly into a room. This room had a bare floor, and bare, board walls. A large fireplace told the story of winter heating. Two double beds covered with quilts and clean pillow cases were in this room.

"In the adjoining room were two large double beds, one single bed, and an old-fashioned, hand-made cradle also a spacious fireplace. There was some attempt to make the home home-like.

"She was a sweet mother, so proud of her babies. The little girl of three, clothed only in one garment, a dress, cunning child. She answers our questions shyly and cognettishly. Then she informed us bashfully 'I dot [got] a silk dress.'

"Silk! In that home? But the mother said she just calls it silk. It was a new dress lying on the bed. 'And where are you going to wear that dress?' We queried.

"'To meetin,'" she said. Going to a protracted meeting, is the big event in their lives.

"'Won't you take off your hat and stay and take supper?'" was the [mother's] cordial invitation. But no, we must move on, as we had a long way to go before dark.

"We came to another log cabin. The old man was bent but greeted Mr. Walen warmly. Everyone seemed so glad to see him. We were invited in. I found a dear sweet-faced old lady, Mrs. Swallow, who announced to my inquiring, 'How are you?' 'I have done well as all. I've been sick abed nearly all winter. Heart trouble.'

"There was a piazza to this house, where her old man sat talking with Mr. Walen. Two large beds were in this room and the usual commodious fireplace. The room was cozy and neat. I was introduced to the daughter, a girl of about 20.

She was sturdy looking, bare footed and had a certain fineness of face. I shall not soon forget her rustic grace as she stood in the door between the rooms and said modestly but without embarrassment. 'Won't you take off your hat and stay all night?'

"Nearly everyone asks you this. She looked as though she meant it but did not urge. Although many of them neither read nor write, there is a quiet dignity, grace, courtesy simplicity, delicacy about them that is charming. They are not coarse but gentle, refined, and guileless. However, it is said that it is this very same people... who will not hesitate to show you a gun. They know how to use firearms and feel that when justice does not come to them through the law, they have a right to take the matter into their own hands.

"I had a beautiful visit with this lady, and a lady she is. These people are often afflicted with diseases (sores on their faces and legs are common) a natural consequence of their ignorance of hygiene and diet. If it were not for their out-of-door life, they could not endure their other unhealthful practices, such as snuff, smoking, chewing, whisky drinking, pork eating and soda biscuits.

"As we proceeded on our journey through Buttermilk Hollow... the road was all but impassable, crossing and recrossing the dry fork creek bed, or passing along its length, then

(See DIARY, Page 11)

(DIARY, Continued from Page 10)

plunging into the woods, now so dark that we trusted the mule to find the way.

"We left literature under the mailboxes, or threw it into the gate way, and finally come out all safe at the corner, where 14 rural mail boxes stood side by side on a rail set up for the purpose..."

"Mr. Walen and I repeated the visit to Simpson's Gap taking my camera along. We had some interesting visits in some of the homes... In the Gap we reached a white house in a hill above us. A woman was on the roof arranging her apples to dry. Some children and another woman were in sight. 'Wouldn't you like to have your pictures taken?' We asked.

"How much will it cost?' Was the reply." "It will cost you nothing.' There was a flurry and suppressed excitement, and the two women and children came to the fence to discuss it. They were still suspicious that somehow a charge would be made. They had suffered before at the hands of shanks and were very careful not to be entrapped.

'No, if the picture is good, we will give you one. Get up on the fence, children, and you get over in the sun.'

"Oh, we don't look fit.'

"You look all right. It will make a nice picture just as you are.' So they reluctantly posed..."

"At another house, we offered to take their picture. A typical mountaineer came out to talk it over. 'What is your charge?' He inquired dubiously.

"Nothing at all. If the picture is good, we will give you one.'

"I'm afraid you'll have some charge when you come back.' He was still suspicious that there was a trick somewhere.

"We have no pictures of the little one and would like to have it. But I haven't much money.'

"We don't want your money. We are not here for that..."

"At the next quaint log house were two women who received us cordially as all these people do. We talked about the Bible, quoted our favorite passages. One of them showed us her Bible, with passages marked all through it. She has an invalid husband and an only son, Paul by name. She was burdened about this boy not having opportunity to receive religious instruction. There was no Sunday School in this locality and church privileges only about once a month. Mr. Walen helped her plan a Sunday School for the children in the locality.

"She brought out artificial flowers which she had made during winter evenings and was keeping them carefully protected in imperfect fruit jars. She was very proud of them and also exhibited some of her embroidery. This was done entirely by the sewing machine. She sketched her own pattern and outlined it with machine stitch. Of course it was very crude. But no artist would have unveiled the fossilized dream of his brain with more tenderness than did this woman. She was a refined, sweet-faced little woman and show that in her were great undeveloped possibilities. How pitiful to have so few opportunities to expand. Yet, it is a comfort to know that eternal justice will be meted out to her if she continues to serve God faithfully, and that she will have an eternity in which to develop her talents.

"How would you like to have me take your picture?' I asked.

"Oh, I wish Paul was here," said the mother. This Paul was the idol of her heart, a boy of 12 years in the fifth grade. The mother could read a little, but Paul could read everything. She showed us his American history book, and another book that was to him a treasure and which he would devour—a somewhat imposing volume on "The Battle of Chattanooga."

"Well, as it was sometime before Paul would be seen coming down the steep and rugged trail over the hill from his school we could not wait, so decided to take the two women and the house.

"But would I wait till they fixed up a little? Surely. It was as quick a process as the transformation was complete. I wish they could have been convinced how much sweeter they looked just as they were in their capacious white sun bonnets."

Moonshiner Agrees to Help the School

Lida Scott wanted to help the Walens promote their school. She learned that they needed the support of the richest man in the community, a member of the county court who also happened to be a moonshiner. The Walens reluctantly agreed to take her to his house.

He welcomed them by having his 14-year-old daughter entertain them by spitting tobacco. Seeing his pride in her, Scott suggested that he send the girl to the Chestnut Hill School, telling him what they taught and did there.

"I didn't know that," the moonshiner replied. "I certainly will send her and other families here should do the same. I tell you what I'll do. From now on, I will not sell moonshine to people here unless they send their children to that school!"

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