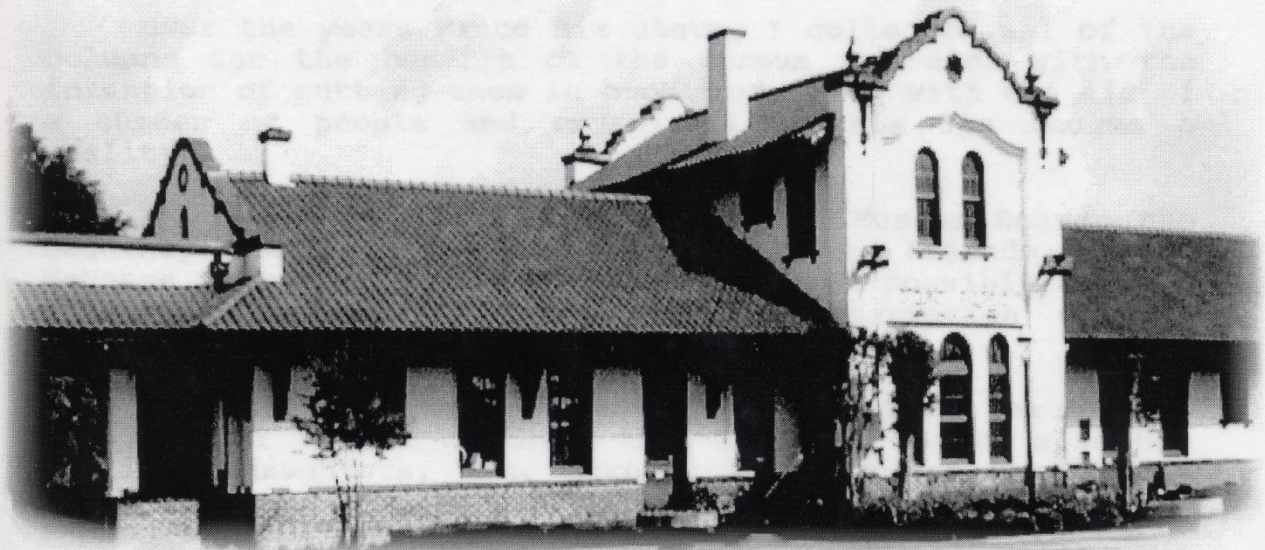


# Remembering...



With Ratliff

By T. J. Ratliff

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## FOREWORD;

As a long time friend of Professor T. J. Ratliff and as a person interested in the preservation of the history of DeQuincy in my association with the DeQuincy Railroad Museum, I have always wanted to see the personal recollections of this fascinating man saved for future generations.

He began writing a column of remembrances and local history in January 1970 for the DeQuincy News and the DeQuincy Journal. For nearly three years until his death in December 1972, his column was one of the most read features of these two local newspapers. (The two papers were consolidated into the DeQuincy News, in 1972.)

Over the years since his death, I collected all of the columns for the benefit of the museum and also with the intention of putting them in book form. Now with the aid of a number of people and organizations this has become a reality.

I would like to thank the Railroad Museum Board, the DeQuincy Federated Service League and the Friends of the McNeese Library for helping make this book possible through financial support and through the preservation of the articles.

I especially wish to thank Kathie Bordelon of the McNeese Archives for all of the help that she gave me and also Mr. Ratliff's daughters, Mrs. Dorothy Ricketts and Mrs. Doris Blackwell, and the DeQuincy News for their permission to reproduce the articles.

Lauretta Fluitt  
DeQuincy, La.  
March 5, 1992

For those wishing to read Mr. Ratliff's Master's Thesis, see  
<http://library.mcneese.edu/depts/archive/FTBooks/ratliff.htm>





**MR. T. J. RATLIFF**  
**From**  
**DeQuincy High School**  
**Pine Stump Annual**  
**1956**



## OBITUARY

### T. J. RATLIFF, TEACHER AND HISTORIAN, DIES

A man who had taught three generations of DeQuincy Students and who became known as “DeQuincy’s historian” died at 10 p. m. Sunday in Willie-Knighton Hospital in Shreveport.

T. J. Ratliff, 71, who had taught here 35 years, had undergone surgery in Schumpert Hospital in Shreveport on Oct. 12.

Funeral services are scheduled for 3:30 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 6, at the United Methodist Church with the Rev. Byrd Terry officiating. Burial will be in Meridian Cemetery in Meridian, Tex., under the direction of Snider Funeral Home.

Mr. Ratliff was born on March 5, 1901 in Valley View, Tex. His family moved to Ada Indian Territory, now Ada, Okla., in 1904 and moved back to Texas in 1907. He attended school in Decatur through tenth grade, as much as the school offered, and completed two years of high school and two years of college work at Decatur Baptist College. He attended Texas Christian University the summer of 1921 and began his teaching career at Sagerton that fall.

He graduated from Abilene Christian College the summer of 1924 and received his master’s from the University of Texas in 1933.

His long career as teacher and principal in Calcasieu Parish began in August 1925 when he and Mrs. Ratliff, the former Catherine Grimes of Meridian whom he married on Christmas Day, 1924 in Hamilton Tex., went to Hayes where he served as principal of the elementary school. He remained at Hayes until 1928 when he went to Starks as principal. During his first year there, Starks school was made an approved high school.

In 1933 the Ratliffs moved to DeQuincy where he was high school classroom teacher until his retirement in 1969. During that time he taught mostly history and Spanish. He also served as assistant principal at DeQuincy High School during the principalship of M. M. Walker.

He served a total of 48 years in the teaching profession, 44 of which were in Calcasieu Parish and 35 of those in DeQuincy.

His love of history was transmitted to the majority of his students and many of them became history majors in college because of the love of that subject gained under Mr. Ratliff’s teaching.

Mr. Ratliff was a 43-year Mason; honorary Rotarian of the DeQuincy Rotary Club; served 25 years as Church School Superintendent of the Methodist Church; member of the official board of the church 38 years; Church School Sunday School teacher over 45 years.

Professional organizations to which he belonged included Calcasieu Teachers Assn., Louisiana Teachers Assn., National Education Assn. He was a life-time member of the Parent-Teachers Assn.

An honor bestowed on Mr. Ratliff was naming the annual scholarship given to a DeQuincy High School graduate by the DeQuincy Student Loan Foundation the T. J. Ratliff Scholarship.

For more than three years, Mr. Ratliff wrote a “Reading and Remembering” column for the News which was well received by News readers throughout the nation. His articles called to mind many facts or incidents long forgotten by many; they made first-time reading for some of the younger generation.

Prior to his retirement in 1969, the high school faculty honored Mr. Ratliff at open house and a reception in the home economics department at the school. Approximately 500 students, former pupils and guests attended the courtesy.

Survivors include his wife; two daughters, Mrs. Dorothy Ricketts of Lakewood, Calif., and Mrs. Doris Blackwell, Shreveport; six brothers, Dennis, Hugh and William Ratliff, all of Haskell, Tex., L. D. Ratliff, Spur, Tex., David Ratliff, Stanford, Tex., O. B. Ratliff, Lubbock, Tex., three sisters, Mrs. Paul Pearson, Orange, Mrs. Lynn Pace, Jr., Haskell, and Mrs. Cody West, Goree, Tex.; eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Honorary pallbearers will be DeQuincy Rotarians, Masons, members of his Sunday School class and school faculties.

More than once in recent years some student at DeQuincy High School has asked this writer, "Don't you ever come to our home football games?"

The answer has been, "I don't suppose that I have missed more than three home games in thirty-five years."

The only one that I can recall having missed was on Dec. 18, 1942 when the DeQuincy Tigers, coached by Mat Walker, played Bossier City for the Class A State Championship at DeQuincy. DeQuincy lost.

I had to make an emergency trip to West Texas that week and did not return in time for the game.

I have never sat in the stands and watched much more than the last quarter of any home game. The first part of the games I have been on duty either selling or taking up tickets. I suppose I have sold tickets to the third and fourth generations of Tiger fans.

My first knowledge of DeQuincy football games was about 1928 or 1929. My family and I had come up from Starks on a Saturday afternoon to shop and have some dental work done.

I was standing in the office of the late Dr. J.B. Robinson on the second floor of the Service Drug Store building and looked out of the window in time to see the Merryville team go by on a "stump" truck on the way to the former Orieonian baseball park on the southwestern edge of town.

They were suited out, but whether they had ridden all the way from Merryville on the truck I do not know.

In 1934 I came to DeQuincy to teach in DeQuincy High School and in addition to classroom teaching I was assigned the job of collecting admissions at football games.

Supt. C.W. Hanchey of the Calcasieu Parish School system was the principal and Otto Roluf was the coach and there was only one coach.

Those were the times when everything was "low budget" and all high school athletic programs were distinctly so. A team was lucky to have a "practice" ball and a "game" ball, but either football or basketball, and woe to the student who was caught handling the "game" ball outside the game.

Armstrong Gum and Candy Company of Martell, Tenn., had a plan for providing practice balls of all kinds that was widely used. Any teacher could write the company and they would send the teacher a shipment of candy bars that invoiced for a little over fourteen dollars.

The students of the school sold the candy at five cents per bar and when the candy was all sold the teacher or coach would remit the amount of the invoice to the company and receive back a football or basketball. The student who sold the most candy received a prize of some kind, usually a fountain pen, though I knew one boy who chose a pair of "silk" hose for his mother.

The Armstrong company did such a large business that one struggling sporting goods salesman wondered out loud, "Is the Armstrong Company in the candy business or the sporting goods business?"

For uniforms the players sometimes furnished part of their own and local merchants or team supporters helped supply the rest.

In some towns the boy's jersey carried advertising matter for the store furnishing the uniform.

In those days, Grand Avenue went all the way back through the present Elementary-Junior High campus and where the present athletic field is and play was on "Jones' Pasture". Through the courtesy of the late J.H. (Hardy) Jones, the football team used the pasture as a practice field. No goal posts.

As was mentioned, games were played at the site of the Orianian Baseball Park. The stands and the plank fence around the park were torn down when the Missouri Pacific Lines discontinued sponsoring the baseball team and the grounds had been made into a pasture with a barbed wire fence around it.

All games were played in the afternoon, usually on Saturday, but sometimes on Friday. The present field was build in the late 1930's under a W.P.A. grant with generous help from the Police Jury, especially from the president of the Jury, the late W.E. Holbrook.

At game time the members of the American Legion and the Volunteer Firemen stationed themselves around the fence to keep the "non-payers" out. This writer was stationed at the gate with a carpenter's nail apron and small change to collect fifteen cents from each student and twenty-five cents from each adult. The ladies of the P.T.A. were there with a tub filled with iced soft drinks for sale. Since there were no seats the spectators lined themselves up along the sidelines and moved up and down the field as the ball moved.

The supporters of the visiting team were on the other side doing the same thing.

About halftime Mr. Hanchey would come down to the gate and ask, "Do you suppose you have as much as twenty dollars?" A quick count followed. It cost a minimum of about twenty dollars to play a game. The visiting team was paid ten dollars, the referees five dollars and the umpire two dollars and fifty cents, and it was hoped that there would be enough money to buy lime to line off the field. It did not always turn out that way. Today, the cost can run around five hundred dollars for a night game.

It was during these years that the three Walker brothers came to Calcasieu Parish to coach in the high schools. The first was M.M. (Mat) Walker who installed football at Sulphur High School. He was followed by his brother, B.S. Walker, who was coach at Vinton. John, the youngest of the trio, joined his brothers later.

The Walkers had played football under Coach H.E. Walden (later Colonel) at Louisiana College at Pineville. Col. Walden's "boys" were in demand as high school coaches because they were well drilled in the fundamentals of football and they had been taught to play hard, but live and play clean.

Another point in their favor was that it was said they did not have to have a fortune to field a team. Someone said that one of the Colonel's boys could take twenty-two boys, a piece of cleared land and a football and turn out a good team.

This last was important during the Great Depression. Mat Walker, father of the present head coach, Rolly Walker, left coaching for a time to work for the Matheson Alkali Company, in addition to coaching he was a chemistry teacher, but after a short time he returned to coaching as coach at DeQuincy about 1936.

He was made principal at DeQuincy in 1942, but continued his coaching until his illness in 1944 forced him to stop.

He died late in May of 1945. The rest is known to all but the very youngest Tiger fans.

## **DEQUINCY – EARLY TIMES** This Is The Way It Used To BE

It was 1928, the last full year of the “Coolidge Prosperity,” before the crash that ushered in the “Hoover Depression.”

The last T model had been made in 1926, there was not a 1927 Ford, and in the words of a popular song, “Henry Made A Lady Out Of Lizzie,” by bringing out the A model in 1928.

Rudolph Richard would even lend you the money to make the “down payment” on one if you had a good credit rating.

The Abdallas were telling their customers that the 1929 Chevrolet would be a six. Ford was to answer with “Is it cylinders or performance that you want?”

Younger people may not know that the famous A model was made for only four years. By 1931 Calvin Langton Sr., a Richard salesman, was to tell this writer, “The 1932 Ford will be a V8.”

During the early twenties’ there appeared in DeQuincy from Pensacola, Fla. A man with an idea, W.B. Logan, by profession a chemical engineer, had the idea of blasting out the old pine stumps left over from the lumber industry and extracting pine oil, turpentine, rosin and other products from them.

He brought with him some young men who shared his dream. Such men as Harry L. Smith and R.L. Douglas, who helped design the original Acme plant, and others who were to join him later were the Hanberry brothers, William and Mertz, F.E. Hall, E.G. Vinson and George Lemerise. Still later were to come Willis and Arthur Satcher, H.N. Warren, Ralph Carrol and E.J. Vorman.

It would be impossible to name all of the men who for almost forty years contributed to the economic, social, political and religious life of DeQuincy.

Some of them are still with us, still active after nearly a half century. It should not be forgotten that in its early years, “the plant” was almost a man’s world. The only woman employed was Mrs. Grady Grimes, Mr. Smith’s secretary.

This writer believes that some graduate student of history or economics could find ample material for a Master’s Thesis or perhaps a Doctoral Dissertation in the story of the operation that gave DeQuincy the nickname of “Stump City” and caused the high school yearbook to be named “The Pine Stump.”

On the south side of town the New Orleans, Texas and Mexico Railway (alias The Frisco, alias The Gulf Coast Lines, alias the “MOP”) had its Division Offices and Shops. It was said that on their trains, in the shops and in the offices could be found men and women workers from almost every railroad in the United States and Mexico. To name a very few there were Mr. Chitwood from the Santa Fe, Mr. Tuck from the Katy, Mr. Rembert from the Orient, Mr. Henry Kroger Sr., Mr. Charles Wilrich and Mr. Irwin from the National Railways of Mexico. There were dozens of others equally worthy of mention.

Supt. Kendall of the Missouri Pacific was an ardent baseball fan and sponsored a semi-pro team, the Orleanians, made up of “MOP” employees who, according to the late T.S. Cooley, one time principal of the DeQuincy schools and no mean baseball player himself, beat the New York Giants in a preseason game.

A delegation from the DeQuincy Chamber of Commerce, accompanied by Mayor Phares, Judge Bryce, Rudolph Richard, Mr. Delouche, Dr. Robinson, The Orleanean Band, and many others, came to Starks over the newly graveled Evangeline Highway (now Highway 12) and made speeches inviting us (the writer was the new principal at Starks High School) to come to DeQuincy and shop at any time without fear of getting stuck on the road if it rained.

Someone remarked that if the State could be persuaded to gravel the road from Starks to the Sabine and if someone could be persuaded to put in a ferry, we could then have a short cut to Beaumont and Orange. It all came to pass and for 50 cents the ferryman would ferry a car across the river with no extra charge in the same car returned the same day.

Lunita was a thriving Lutch-Moore sawmill town with Mr. Lewis as superintendent. There was the mill, of course, a large company store which sold "the best of everything," a hotel, a school up through the fifth grade with those above being transferred to Starks.

The Lutch-Moore Company had a tramline known as the Sabine, Red River and Gulf Railway which ran from Nibbets Bluff to Fal, La. Dr. C.E. Price was the doctor for the company, but he did outside practice. As far as the writer knows, there was not church at Lunita at that time. (Apologies to the memories of any devoted Men of God who, unknown to the writer, brought the Good News to Lunita.)

Down at Starks the school was in the process of being accepted by the State Department of Education as an approved High School and the first senior class was all excited over class rings and the prospect of diplomas in the spring of 1929.

D.D. Blue was carrying on his gum turpentine operation and the firm of Ristom Pridgen was about to come to Starks to start their logging operations.

At Cupples, one mile or so west of Starks, big George Kingrey was operating a logging front for the Long-Bell Lumber Company. Cupples also had a store, managed by Mr. Sessions with Charles Carlson as bookkeeper.

The hotel was managed by Mr. and Mrs. Burleson. Dr. A.A. Kidd was the doctor, he also did outside practice. Mr. Jines was the woods foreman and Mike McDonald "pulled the throttle" on the train hauling the logs to the mill at DeRidder.

Times were good and a young fellow could get a job if he really wanted to work, maybe not just the job he wanted, but still a job and who could blame him if he hummed to himself the words of the popular song:

"I'm going to build a little hut,  
In Loveland for me and my gal.  
For two or three or more,  
In Loveland for me and my gal."

Besides, perhaps, the Calcasieu Building and Loan would lend him the money to build the "little hut" and some said that if he had a good credit record the association would include the price of a new car in the house mortgage. Or you could go see Mr. Bill (Perkins) at the bank about the "hut."

Who, but a few eastern economists, they were all pessimists anyhow, could foresee, that all this would end within a year or so after Coolidge told America, "I do not choose to run for President of the United States in 1928."

What happened after that is another story.

## DEPRESSION

President Coolidge refused to explain or amplify his statement, "I do not choose to run for President in 1928" and no one to date has been able to give a completely satisfactory reason for his statement. Some of the explanations which have been offered are:

He wanted to test his strength with the leaders of the Republican Party to see if they would start a draft movement in his favor.

He was a "country boy" at heart and wanted to get away from the White House.

The tragic death of his teenage son, Calvin Jr., from an infected blister on his heel removed all the joy of the presidency.

He foresaw the depression and did not want to be in power when it happened. (There is a good story about this which space does not permit giving at this time.)

The Republican Party took him at his word and nominated Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover. It was thought that he could use his engineering training and administrative experience to operate the government as he had in his own highly successful professional career.

The Democrats met in Houston and nominated Gov. Alfred E. Smith of New York, who had "three strikes" on him from the first. They were: He said that prohibition was a failure and should be repealed; he was from New York and mid-western and southern democrats, some with old Populist memories and leanings, just did not like the connotation of "The Sidewalks of New York;" he was a Roman Catholic and American Protestants were just not ready to trust a Catholic as the head of the nation. One preacher of the writer's acquaintance told his congregation in all sincerity that if Gov. Smith were elected that the Pope would move to New York and dictate the policies of the President.

Mr. Hoover carried forty of the forty-eight states, breaking the "solid South" for the first time since Reconstruction. He took office in March of 1929 and in October on Wall Street "the walls came tumbling down" on the Coolidge prosperity to reveal the "Hoover Depression."

Explanations of the causes ran all the way from sun spots to the wrath of God, and some rather complicated economic, social, and political theories. The Socialists said that it was just the old "boom and bust" system operating and that socialism was the only cure. Labor said that Capital had been selfish and had not shared the profits of the business with labor and that the working man could not afford to buy the products of his own labor and surplus goods piled up, leading to shutdowns in production. Others said that it was the widespread speculation in the stock market on the ten percent margin system. (Known to younger Americans as the "down-payment-lay away plan.")

To the writer, the first local evidence that something was wrong was when the larger employers in the Starks-Lunita area began to close down or curtail operations. The Gulf company at the Starks field reduced its force to a skeleton crew of pumpers and gagers. Lutchter-Moore at Lunita, after the mill fire, closed down completely. Mr. Lewis returned to Orange, as did Mr. Smith, the store manager.



Dr. and Mrs. Price moved to Starks where he opened a drug store and did local practice. Mr. and Mrs. Bright, the shipping foreman, moved away. Their daughter Finetta later married the brother of Dr. L.A. Stagg Jr. The store, the hotel, the school and the post office were all closed down and the building wrecked.

The residences were sold, to be moved from company land. Lunita was supposed to be dead without hope of resurrection.

Long-Bell closed down Cupples. Mr. and Mrs. Kingrey retired to their ranch near Gillis. Mr. and Mrs. Jines, with their bevy of auburn-haired daughters and one son, moved away, that is, all but Elsie, who married Robert Burch, just returned from the Navy where he was a machinist.

Dr. Kidd had returned to north Louisiana earlier and Dr. Price took over the Long-Bell practice until his death, to be followed by Dr. W.G. Hart. Dr. Hart died while at Starks and is buried in the Miller Cemetery.

People at Starks had never been able to persuade the electric power company to extend their lines from Starks oil field to Starks until Ristom & Pridgen decided to build an electric planer mill. No sooner was the mill in operation than it was wiped out by fire and never rebuilt, but Starks people now had electricity and were able to dispense with their Delco plants.

At DeQuincy the laid-off employees of Newport, the "MOP" and other employers resorted to all sorts of experiences to feed themselves. Subsistence farming and home gardening became popular. At one time the Police Jury furnished free garden seed to all who wanted it.

Local communities were asked to organized relief associations where neighbor helped neighbor. In DeQuincy the Association was managed by Ralph Vandiver, a retired "MOP" conductor. Mr. Vandiver had his office in the former National Department Store building on the now vacant lot near the picture show. Anyone who had surplus food, clothing or anything that someone could use was asked to bring it to Mr. Vandiver who saw that it reached those who needed it. Later he issued the famous "government flour." It ought to be remembered that Mr. Vandiver was a non-paid volunteer who frequently used his own pickup to haul the goods.

Then there was that group of dedicated DeQuincy women, it is impossible to name them all, so none are named, who each school day made the rounds of the business section soliciting meat, bread, vegetables and cash to be used in supplying food to the hungry pupils. They took the supplies to the third floor of the old Middle Building (burned in 1943) where they prepared whatever they could from the supplies available, generally soup or stew. Any student who chose was welcome, without charge, to come and help himself. Later it was revealed that for many students it was the main meal of the day, without which they could not have remained in school.

It would take a book to tell the full story of the heartbreak and tragedy of these times, which are memories to older citizens and history to their children and grandchildren. In spite of the mournful tones of "Brother, Can You Spare A Dime" most people kept their sense of humor and stories and jokes about the situation were common.

Perhaps in a later column we shall tell in more detail some of the stories of what happened before the Hoover administration and later the Roosevelt administration took steps to deal with the situation.

## DAYS OF DEPRESSION

“WHAT THESE KIDS NEED IS A GOOD DOSE OF DEPRESSION!” Well, let us see what we might be wishing on “These (OUR) Kids.”

It was Monday morning, the school bus stopped to unload. A small figure, recognized by the writer as the son of a widow with several children, approached. “Mr. Ratliff, do you know where we can get something to eat? All we have had since Friday was an old turtle we caught in the ditch in front of our house.”

It was late in the afternoon. Several of us were standing around the stove in W.C. Davis’ store just talking. A man, known to all of us as a man who worked when work was available, came in, started to speak, hesitated and burst into tears. His explanation was that his family had not had anything to eat the day before. He had left home that morning to try to find a job, anything, that would enable him to buy some food. He had not found it. He said that he could not again face his children and tell them there was no food. The group in the store made up a collection that enabled him to take home enough food for one day perhaps, but could offer no permanent solution to his problem.

The writer was on the way to the post office and was passing by Dr. and Mrs. Price’s combination drugstore, office and home when the doctor called him in and said something like this, “Something has to be done. I go out into the woods, or up and down the river to see children who are said to be sick and find there is nothing wrong with them except that they are just plain hungry, slowly starving to death. The Red Cross is going to have a representative in Vinton tonight; why don’t you and perhaps Jim Hampton meet with them and see if they have anything to offer about the problem.” Jim and I went. What the Red Cross wanted was to hold a fund raising campaign in Vinton for the relief of drought stricken farmers in Arkansas. The reply of the mayor of Vinton was a classic in invective of refusal.

Men in DeQuincy, who a short time ago had been signing mortgages to “build a little hut for me and my gal”, now found themselves unable to meet the payments on the “little hut.” Payments that would sound ridiculously low by modern standards. The Calcasieu Building and Loan Association and other mortgage holders were forced to foreclose on the houses. Married couples, frequently with children, were forced to move in with the parents of one or the other of the couple, because the parents at least had their house paid for. A phrase for it was coined “doubling up.” The writer knows of a case or two where the only steady income came from an aged mother, who was a Confederate widow and received a small check each month from the state Confederate Pension Fund. Remember, this was before the famous “Relief” was in operation.

Jobs! Let’s see! C.C. Smith, assisted by his teenage sons, Dwyer and Carroll, was operating a Gulf station where the B&B Café is now. Among their competitors was Charles Reid, who ran a Standard station across the street, where the U Haul trailers are kept now. Mr. Chitwood was trying to sell insurance and someone said that Mr. McCullough was selling washing machines, if he could find anyone with enough money to buy one. It was some time before the writer found out that all of these gentlemen were MOP engineers who had been laid off. The Nick Knights, three generations of them, were operating a dairy east of town and facing completion from the “one cow” dairies all over town. The “middle” Mr. Knight was a MOP telegraph operator when the MOP needed him.

Out at the Newport the supervisory force and some of the more essential salaried men were still there, but salaries were cut to a minimum. (Someone mentioned \$50 a month, but I do not vouch for that.) About the only sign of activity was in the boiler room where Mr. E.G. Vinson, with a skeleton crew, kept up enough steam to operate the electric generators and the firefighting equipment. The only stump trucks running were those

hauling fuel wood to the boiler room. They fired with pine knots. Women who had wash to hang out anxiously looked to see which way the Newport smoke was blowing before they hung out their laundry. They sometimes wrung their hands in despair after they had wrung the clothes.

Dr. Price charged \$30 for delivery of a baby, including pre and post natal care, if you could afford it, otherwise whatever the parents could afford or nothing if they could pay nothing. The writer saw Dr. Hart examine a patient and furnish him the medicine, all for 50 cents. Dr. Robinson would make you a set of teeth for about \$50 including the extractions. Other doctors charged about the same, or whatever you could pay.

A mechanic by the name of Norris Phillip Corry and later Elmer Beird would work on your car for an hour and charge perhaps 50 cents or nothing if you had nothing and were in serious need. Other workmen did the same.

The highest salary for high school teachers with a bachelor's degree and the maximum experience was \$124 per month for nine months of the year. There was no extra pay for advanced degrees. Beginning elementary teachers with two years of college work received \$70 per month. There were plenty of applicants. The high school curriculum was cut to the most meager offerings. Cadet Robert Smith of LSU, now General Robert Smith, was to write home to the DeQuincy News asking when DeQuincy High School would wake up and start offering second year algebra. He needed it in his classes at LSU.

Banks: They said you could not sleep at night for the noise of the banks closing their doors. The writer was personally acquainted with two businessmen who committed suicide in despair.

Ministers: They were paid whatever their congregation could and would pay. The DeQuincy Methodist Church paid about \$1,500 per year when the Official Board (I was a member of the board) could raise the money. Other churches paid about the same.

In 1945 some wag wrote on the side of a boxcar in the MOP yards, "Remember the good old days of Hoover when you could buy 10 pounds of beans for 29 cents?"

Some equally waggish co-worker wrote under the above, "Yes, but who in the Hell had 29 cents?"

Perhaps the "kids" and their parents do need to slow down a little and realize that the opposite of a depression can be equally bad. A "dose of depression for the kids!" Not for MY kids. Remember that nearly 5,000 of your kids, at all ages, are scattered all over the world. My kids, too.

## **DAYS OF DEPRESSION AND THE NEW DEAL**

President Hoover was a great engineer and a great humanitarian, but he was also a conservative Republican with serious doubts about the legality and morality of spending public money on direct relief to individuals. Consequently, little was done during his administration about direct aid to the millions of unemployed workers and hard pressed farmers. Americans were assured that "PROSPERITY IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER", but somehow we just could not get to the corner. However, the Republicans renominated him in 1932.

The Democrats nominated Gov. Franklin D. Roosevelt of New York and for Vice-president, Speaker of the House John Nance (Cactus Jack) Garner of Uvalde, Texas. They ran on the platform that the depression could be cured and that the Democrats could and would do something about it. The writer recalls hearing Mr. Roosevelt deliver a speech, by radio, in which he said something like this. "Either the Republicans do not know what to do about the farmer's plight or they will not do it. I promise you that if I am elected I shall appoint a Secretary of Agriculture who will know what to do and will do it." That appointee was Henry A. Wallace, whose efforts to deal with the farm problem were the beginning of the allotment programs and others still in use.

About the first step taken by Pres. Roosevelt on March of 1933 was an executive order closing all banks until they could be examined to see which ones would reopen. This included, of course, the Vinton and DeQuincy Branches of the old Calcasieu National Bank. Deposits were frozen and people caught with no cash on hand were hard pressed. All sorts of substitutes for cash were used. The writer recalls that a check written to the V. Clark Filling Station of Starks, when it was cashed and returned in the statement, it had about ten signatures of endorsement because it had passed from hand to hand like cash. In a few days some of the banks over the nation reopened. Some DeQuincy people used a DeRidder Bank, or the First National at Lake Charles, while Starks people generally used a bank at Orange, Texas. The writer still has the large, three checks to the sheet, check book which he used from a bank up in the Bosque Valley of Texas.

As rapidly as possible, Congress passed laws establishing the variously initiated work project systems, the CWA, PWA, WPA, AAA, CCC, NYA and a long list of others. Some of them, notably the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, are still in existence. Most of the roads which were built, paving put down, trees planted, college and school buildings, hospitals, athletic fields, parks, and other things are still in daily use.

The writer's first contact with any of these agencies was when the Field Worker of the CWA approached him and asked him if there was any work around the Starks School which a middle aged Negro woman could do. She was soon set to work helping George Berwick, the school janitor, with the numerous little jobs for which he did not have time and were not being done. Later a sewing room was established in the old auditorium of the school where some unemployed women, using sewing machines borrowed from the Home Economics Department of the school and from W.C. Davis' Store, and cloth, which was being distributed as surplus commodities, made clothing for the students. There may be some mothers and grandmothers in Starks who can remember Miss Merle Whitman, a grammar school teacher, who went to Lake Charles and obtained donations of remnants of lovely material from the dry goods merchants from which the girls, with the help of Miss Whitman, Mrs. Gillie Cole, who was the Home Economics teacher, and others made some beautiful garments for themselves.

For unemployed men there were CWA, PWA, and WPA, at different times. They were building roads, paving streets, laying sidewalks, building schools and etc. In the foyer of one of the original buildings at McNeese State College is a bronze plaque stating that the building was built by a WPA Grant, sponsored by the

Calcasieu Parish Police Jury, of which W.E. Holbrook was president. Out at Ragley one of the older buildings of the present school complex was built in part at least by a WPA Grant. In Ward Five of Calcasieu Parish, gangs of men under the leadership of such men as George Ristom, Charles Van Meter and others, whose names do not come to mind, built roads. These were also sponsored by the Police Jury with Robert Pinder and Levi Hyatt, at different times as Jurors from Ward Five.

In Dequincy Mayor H.C. Pugh and the Town Council started the movement to get some streets paved and some sidewalks built. Most of the older asphalt paving still in use was put down by the WPA. The School Board, with T.E. McNamarra as School Board Member from Ward Six, in cooperation with the Police Jury, W.E. Holbrook Police Juror from Ward Six, sponsored the building of the original athletic field at DeQuincy High School.

Younger men and boys worked in the Civilian Conservation Corps planting trees and building fire lanes through already existing forests. We are now reaping the benefits of their work. Still other young men and women attended college under National Youth Administration scholarships. Space does not permit the mentioning of the names of these young people, but some, whose names are recalled, graduated from college and are now filling valuable and honorable positions in the business and professional life of the community, state and nation.

A great deal has been said and written about the abuses and graft in these programs, about “make work” leaf raking and “boondoggling”, just plain loafing on the job. The writer never worked under any of these programs, but he had a “grand stand seat” at a lot of it locally and these abuses were at a minimum. Where such things existed it is the opinion of this writer they can be largely blamed on the local authorities who did not plan any useful work for the projects.

Suddenly, all of this was to end by an event on a bright Sunday morning at a faraway place millions of Americans never heard of – PEARL HARBOR!

## THEN THE WAR CAME

It was September 1939 and the Nazis had started their attack on Poland and the British had announced that they would help the Poles.

C.W. Hanchey, Principal of the DeQuincy High School, and I were in the office of the old high school building looking at a map and wondering how the British could possibly help the Poles, cut off from direct contact with the sea as they were. I doubt that either of us foresaw a second world war in which air power would be a deciding factor.

The overwhelming sentiment of the American people and the policy of the Roosevelt administration favored neutrality. As the tempo and scope of the war increased a vague feeling of uneasiness began to be felt in America and the president used the phrase “arsenal of Democracy” in reference to America.

There was a growing feeling that perhaps we had better borrow the motto of the Boy Scouts and “Be Prepared.” The National Guard was mobilized and for the first time in peace time Congress passed a draft law. People in this area began to hear talk of building such places as Camp Polk, Camp Claiborne, Camp Beauregard, the shipyards at Orange and Beaumont and the synthetic rubber plant at Lake Charles and other “defense industries.”

The Newport and the “MOP” began to call back men who had been laid off and to employ others. Someone said that there was such a demand for workers to build Camp Claiborne that if you knew the difference between a saw and a hammer you could get a job as a carpenter.

Strange young men in uniform began to appear on the streets and in the churches and DeQuincy boys like Harold Nichols, George Cockerham, Paul Joffrion, and Lucien Johnson and a long list of others began to disappear from DeQuincy and surrounding communities.

## THE FIRST JEEP

One day a strange looking vehicle, which we were to know later as a “jeep,” stopped in front of the high school campus during the noon hour. We all rushed out to see it and to wonder about the tree branches which were tied over it. We older ones who could remember World War I told the younger ones that it was “camouflage.”

About that time Captain Purcell, in civilian life a lawyer, came to town and began to interview land owners in Beauregard and Calcasieu parishes about agreeing for their land to be used by the Army for something called “maneuvers.” Mr. Hanchey, during the summer of 1941, acted as volunteer guide and sponsor for the captain. Most of the land owners agreed for the land to be used.

Then one day there appeared at the school office a tall, blonde young man dressed in Army uniform with a sergeant’s chevrons accompanied by three or four other boys in uniform. He introduced himself as a member of Company E, 109<sup>th</sup> Engineers, 34<sup>th</sup> Division of the Dakota National Guard in training at Camp Claiborne.

He asked if he and his men might bivouac in the school gymnasium while they carried on some preliminary work on some of the bridges and culverts in the area. Permission was readily granted and that was our first introduction to the men of Company E, who within a few weeks were to become like “home folks” to DeQuincy people.



In a short time the entire company commanded by Captain Hicks set up their tents on the school campus in front of the gymnasium and started to work building and repairing roads. They had much heavy equipment; trucks, plows, scrapers, a road grader and mobile air compressor which furnished power for their saws and other tools. The young men spoke of "far away places with strange sounding names," such as Deadwood (familiar to some as the hometown of Wild Bill Hickock and Deadwood Dick), Spearfish, snow and winter sports, strange to our southern sports, strange to our southern ears. They mentioned working in the Homestead Gold Mine and mentioned that their captain was a mining engineer in civilian life. They told us that E Company was the elite of the regiment, and we believed them and since we had no National Guard unit at DeQuincy at that time we adopted them and they us.

## INDIANS

Among them were several Sioux Indians. One of the Sioux was a lieutenant of whom it was whispered that he was one of the hereditary chiefs who knew the whereabouts of some of Custer's battle flags captured at Little Big Horn in 1876. The secret location was supposed to be passed on from father to son and never revealed to anyone except a few chiefs. If the lieutenant really knew about the flags he kept the secret well.

Perhaps the most conspicuous of the Sioux was "Geronimo," real name unknown to the writer, was a veritable giant in size. One of the favorite sports in the camp was to see how many ordinary sized men it would take to pin Geronimo down. It usually took three or four. The writer saw him pick up a plow and put it into a truck by himself, a task that usually took at least two men.

The medical officer who accompanied the company was Captain Owen, M.D., who practiced in Rapid City in civilian life. Captain Owen was of Norwegian ancestry.

While Company E was here DeQuincy people had the pleasure of meeting Capt. Hicks' charming wife, who came down for a visit. While here she had a room at the W.T. Smiths, the parents of H.L. Smith, Superintendant of the Newport plant.

The elder Smiths lived at the corner of McNeese and Third Streets in the house now owned and occupied by the Delaneys. DeQuincy shared Mrs. Hick's grief when her husband died from a heart attack shortly after the company returned to its base at Camp Claiborne.

## **BASKETBALL AND THE RALLY**

Recently the Lake Charles American-Press carried under its "Fifty Years Ago Feature" a brief account of a basketball game between the Westlake and DeQuincy High School boys at Westlake with the DeQuincy team winning 8-6. Some of the present day students of the DeQuincy High School were astonished at the low score. Time did not permit an oral explanation of the probable reason for such low scores, which were not unusual at that time. I did not see that particular game, but the following may be a partial explanation for such low scores.

At that time basketball was not a highly developed scientific game, nor were there elaborate gymnasiums, the carefully designed equipment and well trained coaches as are, more or less, commonplace today.

In 1920 probably the only gymnasium in southwest Louisiana was at Lake Charles High School. Ed Bredehoeft, however, said that he could remember playing at Lake Charles High a little later than 1920 and that Lake Charles High did not have a gymnasium. High school teams played outside on dirt courts which might be sandy, rocky, clay or whatever type of soil existed on the school campus. There was no uniformity. The backboards were made of shiplap or one by twelve inch lumber and might be rough or smooth, painted or not, steady or shaky. The iron goal rings might or might not be the regulation nine feet from the ground. If a team went to play on another court the visitors were expected to accept the conditions as they were without complaint. There was little chance of a player becoming a "Pistol Pete."

The team was made up of high school boys, even the eligibility requirements were not very rigid, who were willing to spend their recess and noon periods and perhaps a little time after school practicing. The uniforms usually consisted of a shirt, a pair of short pants, some socks and rubber soled shoes. Sometimes a player might wear some knee pads. If the school could afford it there were generally two balls, the practice ball and the game ball. The game ball was never used except at matched games with another school.

The Coach, who was also usually the Principal, was likely to be the only man on the faculty. He may or may not have played basket ball himself in his student days. His only equipment was likely to be a rule book, a whistle and the willingness to spend some of his time working with the team. Sometimes there was not much that he could really teach the boys about the finer points of the game.

Most games were played on Friday afternoon after school, or if the distance was too far to travel after the school day, on Saturday. Before the late twenties not many high schools played football, but played basketball from September until Spring. With the long playing season schools stood a good chance of developing a good team by sheer perseverance and hard work. After the larger schools started playing football the smaller schools, due to a longer season and more practice, were usually hard to beat at basketball. One of the smaller schools might very well beat the larger schools for the Parish championship.

In Calcasieu Parish there was only one tournament, the RALLY, which was usually held in the early Spring and moved from school to school from year to year. It was expected that every high school would, sooner or later, be the host school for the Rally. The Rally was usually held on Saturday and the interest was high and the competition was keen. Winning the "Cup" was an important event in the history of a school. Somehow it nearly always managed to rain in the late afternoon on the day of the Rally, just before the final games, both boys and girls, were about to be played. This resulted in a hurried consultation by the Rally Committee and a vote to call the principal of Lake Charles High School, after they built a gymnasium, to

request permission to use their gym for the final games. The Lake Charles Board had one iron clad rule, the parish Rally Committee must employ a policeman to be on duty all during the game. The Rally paid him. If all the arrangements were made and it was decided to move to Lake Charles, players, coaches, officials, principals and spectators all piled into cars and drove to Lake Charles.

Girls also played on dirt court, which was divided laterally into three equal zones. There were six players to a girl's team, two forwards, who made all the goals, two centers, a jumping center and a running center. The jumping center was usually the tallest member of the team, one who could be depended upon to tap the ball to the running center when there was a toll up at center after each goal. The guards were expected to use all legal means to prevent the opposing forwards from scoring. It was a technical foul for a player to cross the line into another zone. The girls' costumes were composed of very full dark colored bloomers, full length stockings, a blouse known as a "middie", because it was supposed to be patterned after the blouses worn by the Midshipmen of the Navy. Some girl teams boasted that they played by boys' rules. The competition among the girls' teams in Calcasieu became so keen that men coaches were coaching girls' teams and on the advice of some of the doctors the School Board passed a regulation prohibiting inter-school games for girls. So far as I know that regulation has never been repealed.

In the late twenties the Board began to employ young men who had played basketball in college and were trained coaches. Some of them were: The Walker Brothers, C.W. Hanchey, C.E. Holly, J.M. Boyet, J.M. Metzger, Pete Mixon, James Kent and Jesse Verret. Dr. Walter Meanwell of the University wrote a book, "The Science of Basketball", which had a wide circulation and influenced the style of play. Gymnasiums were built, DeQuincy in 1937, basketball moved inside and became the highly skilled, high scoring, scientific, generally night game that it is today. Some night games were played outside with a string of lights down the middle of the court. I have a couple of pictures of the Starks teams, boys and girls, for the Year 1931 with Mr. Jesse Verret as Coach of the boys and his wife, the late Mrs. Jacquelyn Kidd Verret, as coach of the girls.

## **CATTLE INDUSTRY STORY**

Since Europeans first came to southwest Louisiana there have been cattle in the area, but not like the cattle exhibited by the 4-H Club and FHA members at the live stock show on the McNeese College campus this past week.

Until about forty years ago most of the cattle locally were small, scrubby and running mostly to legs and horns with few signs of any certain breeding. There were some evidences of Brahman, Shorthorn, and Hereford blood in some animals and some families and dairies owned some fairly good Jerseys, however.

Because of the fever tick there was little market for beef cattle outside of the tick country, since tick infested cattle could not be shipped into "clean" territory. Cattle were raised on open range and sold to local butchers for home consumption.

There is a story to the effect that the big lumber companies sent men out armed with rifles to shoot down surplus range cattle. One "cattlemen" told me that he sold most of his cattle to the railway company, the KCS. When I asked for an explanation, he said that his cattle strayed onto the track and when they were killed, the company paid for them. It was almost useless to import improved breeds unless they came from "ticky" territory and had a certain amount of inherited immunity to tick fever. The one exception seemed to be the Brahmas (*bos indicus*).

## **DIPPING PROGRAM**

About 1930 the USDA and the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Immigration started a program of compulsory dipping of all cattle. Dipping vats were built and range riders were hired to see that all cattle were dipped on a regular schedule of about three weeks.

As each animal came out of the vat a splash of paint was put on the right hip. The color was changed from one dipping day to another and the owners name and the number of head dipped were recorded. If the owners failed to dip the same number of cattle the next time he was liable to receive a call from the range rider asking for an explanation. (This happened to me.)

As soon as an area was declared free of ticks a quarantine fence was built and only cattle that had been freshly dipped could cross the line. There was such a fence at Starks along the KCS track with a cattle guard just across the track on the Vinton road.

## **SWIFT PLANT**

About the same time Swift & Co. built a modern packing plant in Lake Charles and announced they would buy any animal strong enough to walk up in the chute to the top floor of the building, where the killing floor was. With the ticks under control and a ready market it became profitable to raise cattle. At first some people complained about the trouble of dipping and doubted its value, but experience and a little "persuasion" by the authorities caused them to see the light.

At first most of the cattlemen followed the practice of buying well bred beef type bulls such as Hereford, Shorthorn, Angus and the various Brahma crosses. Some of the dairymen, Hardy Jones and Nick Knight dairy, among these, brought in some high quality Jersey bulls also to improve their herds. W.E. Holbrook imported a milking shorthorn from Texas. I recall seeing at the Beauregard Parish Fair about 1935 an interesting exhibit.

In adjoining stalls were a pure bred Devon bull, a common range cow and the calf from the pair. The Improvement in one generation was impressive.

#### 4-H ANIMALS

Under the leadership of County Agriculture agents C.C. Collet, Carrol McCall, and John E. Jackson and assistant agents like Joe Bond and others in Calcasieu Parish and the agents in Beauregard Parish, the local Club leaders and Vocational Ag. teachers in both parishes, 4-H Club and FHA members began to buy, raise and exhibit pure bred calves and other stock at the parish fairs and other stock shows.

A model stock farm was established on the outskirts of Lake Charles by an oil man whose name is recalled as "Cotton" Russell. He built up a fine herd of beef type Shorthorns and employed a full time professional herdsman to care for his cattle. The first grand champion calf of the Southwest Louisiana Livestock Show was a Shorthorn exhibited by the son of the herdsman. The steer was a beautiful animal and the young exhibitor did a fine job, but there was some dissatisfaction among the other exhibitors because they said the young owner had an unfair advantage because of the help of his father.

At DeQuincy, Horace Lynn Jones, James and Orvil Kimball, Leland Wallace, Carl Pharis and several others whose names do not come to mind bought and exhibited calves. All were Herefords except Carl Pharis who had Shorthorns.

#### SWINE PROGRAM

An attempt was made to make DeQuincy a Hampshire swine breeding center. Six registered gilts and a boar were bought from the LSU by John Degreene, George Thompson, the Hoosier brothers, Gilbert, Phillip, and Leslie; the Clark brothers, Joe and Kenneth, and perhaps some others.

While some good pigs were raised and sold locally and a few were sold to breeders in other parts of the state the attempt did not fully succeed because of the lack of pasturage and feed. Later the Hoosier boys were to own some good Durocs. When I see a pig with the typical Hampshire white belt I wonder if it could possibly be a descendant of the LSU stock that the DeQuincy 4-H Club imported.

Some of the boys and girls of the DeQuincy 4-H Club carried on poultry projects, using the well known LSU sand floor, kerosene lamp type brooder. This brooder was so simple to build and operate that any club member could do it.

Cute Hyatt had a flock of New Hampshire Reds and Custer Hodges had some of the famous M. Johnson strain of White Leghorns. Later James E. Kimball, (this is machinist James, not the one mentioned above) had a flock of White Leghorns and Hi-Line layers. These were not club projects however.

The 4-H was once more the largest club in the DeQuincy school and I regret that I cannot recall the names of all the members and the projects they carried on. Girls were active in the sewing and cooking projects and usually were among the winners at Achievement Day.

Tribute must be paid to the local bank and its manager, Mr. Cruikshank, and the local businessmen, R.L. Richard and W.E. Holbrook among others who supported the club members with financial help and encouragement.

## **FIRE AT SCHOOL**

It was a Saturday afternoon in the middle of March 1943; the 13<sup>th</sup> comes to me as the exact date. It was spring, a south Louisiana spring like no other in the world. The cardinals and the mocking birds were discussing in musical tones their housekeeping arrangements, the azaleas were thinking about blooming and some people had already mowed the grass for the first time. In spite of worries about the boys and girls in the armed services and the petty annoyances of wartime shortages and rationing, most people were enjoying the spring. Over on McNeese Street some little girls were playing, laughing and chattering about such things as are important to little girls. I was standing at the door of the hen house getting ready to collect the day's contribution of eggs.

The peace was suddenly interrupted by the wail of the fire siren. During the war the siren could mean several different things; a fire, a lost child, the signal for air raid practice drill, or even an actual enemy attack. Everyone in hearing stopped to count the ward signal blast, the long blast as a general alarm, then one short blast, and then the long blast again. Ward One, the northeast section of town; people in the other wards sighed in relief for the moment. Then the little girls began to scream, "It's the school house! It's the school house!" I closed the hen house door and ran down the block on Second Street to see the smoke and flame pouring out of a class room on the second floor of the northeast corner of the Middle Building which housed the upper grades of the Grammar School, the Home Economics Department of the High School and the cafeteria.

Within a short time Fire Chief George Marcantel and his men arrived, laid their hose and started pouring water on the fire but it was too late. The rich, heart pine woodwork, the floors had been soaked in oil since 1914, made the situation ideal for an uncontrollable fire. Principal M.M. Walker soon arrived and since it looked like the two-story high school building might also burn; he, some others and I, started carrying the school records from the office across McNeese Street to the house now used as a home for the High School Principal, but then occupied by the Charles Budd family. However, Chief Marcantel and his men were able to prevent the fire from reaching the high school building except for some damage to the window frames on the north side of the building. Since the wind was from the north the old stucco covered brick building housing the lower grades was not burned, but it was damaged to some extent and in view of the age of the building it was decided later to wreck it. It was an eight room, two story building built in 1910; one of the earlier brick schools in the parish. By night fall it was evident that DeQuincy was without an elementary school plant and something must be done, war or no war.

A hasty conference was held by Supt. H.A. Norton and School Board Member T.E. McNamara, Principal W.W. Walker and many other interested people and by Monday morning plans were underway to continue school in whatever buildings were available. All of the churches who had Sunday School or recreation space which they could spare offered them to the school, two classes were set up on the lower floor of the Masonic Hall, screens were built to divide the gymnasium into four class rooms and one was in the band room of the gymnasium. Two rooms were available in the old Ward School on the west side of town. Miss Mary Douglass taught her fourth grade section in the old Willrich filling station at the corner of Harrison and Holly streets. The Home Economics Department under Miss Virgie McCall was moved into the science laboratory of the High School Building. With surplus equipment from other schools in the parish, some text books from the veteran teachers like Miss Pearl Jones, Misses Ruth and Elzey Fair and others, backed up by some beginners the school was soon "back in business." The School Board began to make plans for a new building and an election was called to vote bonds to supplement the insurance payments and in spite of the war time shortages of labor and material the new building was ready by January 1945.



How did the fire start? I do not know. The fire was first discovered in the class room above the boiler room of the steam heating plant. The thermostat on the furnace had been giving some trouble, but due to the war time shortages it had not been replaced. Just the week before the fire Mike Dunham, who was his father Charlie Dunham's helper as janitor, reported that the furnace was not working properly. It was cut off for the time being.

The State Fire Marshall and a representative of the insurance company spent several days in DeQuincy investigating and trying to discover the cause of the fire. They insisted that the fire could not have originated in the boiler room as there was no connecting door or other opening between the boiler room and the class room above. They insisted that the fire had to be of incendiary origin, starting in the class room. At the end of the week the investigators obtained an alleged "confession" from two groups of small boys, one group from here in town and the other from a neighboring community. The boys are said to have stated that they went to the school and were playing sliding down the old tubular fire escape. They found the door at the top of the tube open and went into the building. They decided that it would be more fun if there was a real fire and without realizing the danger to the building and themselves they piled up some waste paper in the middle of the room and lighted it. The fire soon got out of hand when the oil-soaked floor ignited. The boys panicked and fled from the building and the campus without reporting the fire. The actual truth of the matter is known only to the boys, now grown men. A neighboring woman, on First Street, is supposed to have been the first to see the fire and report it. Who she was, I do not know.

This was the second school fire in DeQuincy. The first school building in DeQuincy, a frame building twenty-four by forty feet was built in March of 1899 and destroyed by fire in May of the same year before it was ever used as a school. The plan was to celebrate the building of the school with a public dance, but the fire prevented this. This fire was also thought to be of incendiary origin and years later one local wag suggested that it might have been set by someone who was opposed to either dancing or school, or perhaps both.

## ARMY DAY IN SUMMER OF 1941

It was early September of 1941, three months before Pearl Harbor and Pres. Roosevelt's Day of Infamy speech in which he was to ask Congress to declare war against Japan and later Italy and Germany. Calcasieu, Beauregard and Vernon Parishes were to witness scenes never seen before – the Louisiana Maneuvers of 1941.

Gen. Walter Krueger was in command of the Southern Army, based on Lake Charles, and Gen Van Lear in command of the Northern Army, based on Leesville. The objective was to try out new weapons and equipment and tactics, as well as train the armies for possible future combat. DeQuincy, Starks, Ragley, Singer, Longville, DeRidder, Merryville, Rosepine and possibly other communities lay directly in the paths of the two armies. Ragley became the P. O. address for men all over the area.

After E Company, of the 109<sup>th</sup> Engineers, later reinforced by H Company of the same regiment, had done the preliminary work on the roads and bridges of this area, the next indication that the DeQuincy area was to take a leading role in the drama then unfolding was when the DeQuincy School was asked to vacate the buildings and make way for the Third Evacuation Hospital. All of the school equipment was removed from the high school building and stored in the elementary building and the High school building was made into the hospital. (Young readers may need to be reminded that this was the present day Junior High building and the old building that was destroyed in the Fire of 1943.) Tents were set up on the campus, back of the buildings. Until a few years ago students were still stubbing toes on the tent pegs left behind when the tents were removed at the close of the maneuvers.

Then the troops began to move in. Even small children soon learned to know when a convoy was coming through town. A truck load of traffic control men would pass along a highway or street and drop off a man at each turning point on the road. Sometimes it seemed like the Army forgot about these men and would leave them out all day or night without further attention. However, they were soon "adopted" by the "sub-teen" and "junior teen" aged boys and girls of the neighborhood. They visited with these men between convoys and exchanged home baked cookies, etc. for army rations. Army ration candy was a great favorite with the young visitors. When a convoy was passing through, older people who were not too busy went out onto the sidewalks, day or night, to wave at the men on the trucks, jeeps, half tracks, tanks and etc. The schools in Calcasieu Parish were closed until October.

For about ten days in the middle of September it was estimated that there were about 100,000 men bivouacked around DeQuincy. The streets swarmed with soldiers and equipment and even if you had a car and gasoline it was almost useless to drive them on the streets and highway. "Getting caught in a convoy" was a common experience for civilians.

Men whose names are now in the history books were here. I do not know for sure if Gen. Eisenhower was in DeQuincy at this time but he was in the area. At that time he was Col. Eisenhower, Adjutant to Gen. Kruger. Horace Howard, son of the Harley Howards, said that he was on his father's stump truck when they stopped at one of the stores at Ragley. An office, whom he later recognized as Gen. Eisenhower, bought Horace a coke. John C. Ricketts of Long Beach, Calif., then PFC Ricketts of the Remount Service of the Quartermaster Corps has a mimeographed copy of his order signed by Adjutant Eisenhower ordering Ricketts, at the end of the maneuvers, to proceed from Merryville, La. To Fort Clark, Tex. In charge of a railway stock carload of army horses which were being returned to their home station.

These maneuvers were the last attempt of the United States Army to use old fashioned horse cavalry, when it was demonstrated that mounted men had no part in modern warfare. The mounted unit had some

magnificent animals that ere a delight to the eye of horse lovers who saw them. East of DeQuincy, across the highway from modern Eastern Heights, a Veterinary Hospital where sick and injured animals were treated, ws set up. Modern students, who live on these grounds, have told me that they years later found horse shoes and other bits of horse equipment in the ground, or under pint trees. I overheard one young Lieutenant of the Cavalry ask and receive permission from a superior officer to swim his horses in the Sabine the next day. Had I been twenty years younger I would have envied him.

When the maneuvers were over and it was decided to discontinue the use of mounted troops the horses were sold at bargain prices. I fear that some of them became dog and chicken feed or perhaps fertilizer. The famous Remount Service horse breeding program was phased out and the stallions sold. The way this program operated, the Remount Service stationed in horse raising sections of the country, selected stallions of good quality of certain breeds, which were at service free to local people, but the Remount Service had the option of buying the colts if they met the Army requirements. Except for a few horses kept for ceremonial parades and military funerals, the horse has disappeared from the Army. Television viewers who saw the funeral of the late Pres. John F. Kennedy may remember Black Jack, the horse who was lead in the procession. The team of six white horses who are kept at Fort Myer, have appeared in several funerals of high ranking military men, including that of the late Pres. Eisenhower.

We, who were in this area, were witnesses of the final curtain of the drama of the U. S. Army Cavalry Trooper and his charger. There are still units in the Army using the names and numbers of famous cavalry units, but they are mechanized. The Army was to continue to experiment with pack train units using mules for a few years more, but it is my understanding that the famous army mule has joined his more glamorous half brother, the cavalry horse, in the Valhalla reserved for those who served their country well.

## ARMY AND MANEUVERS AROUND DEQUINCY, SUMMER OF 1941

Of the Army units stationed in the DeQuincy area during the maneuvers of 1941 perhaps none attracted more attention than the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiments, who had their tents down on what is now Highway 12 near the Calcasieu-Beauregard parish line. They were highly trained, well-disciplined Regular Army professionals who took an intense pride in their regiments. Most of the non-commissioned officers were mature men of many years service, as was attested by the service stripes on their sleeves, "hash-marks," I believe was the Army term for the stripes. These regiments were later to distinguish themselves in the South Pacific and units bearing the same numbers, but now expanded into Army Divisions, have maintained these traditions in Korea and Vietnam.

What made these regiments different was that, following the old system, the enlisted men were blacks led by white commissioned officers. Major Nichols, commander of one of the battalions of the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry, became well known in DeQuincy. He boasted that his battalion was the best trained and best disciplined unit in the whole Army. The men of his battalion gave DeQuincy no reason to dispute his claim, in spite of the fact that sometimes they were provoked almost beyond reason.

The 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment had a full military band, led by Chief Warrant Officer Hammond. CWO Hammond was a man of mature years, gray haired in fact, of whom it was said that he was a native of the island of Jamaica, born a British subject and educated in music in London. The band played for DeQuincy people at least twice that I recall. The first time was at a football game played during September before the DeQuincy schools opened in October. Coach Matt Walker had been training the football team, but since there was no band director, even if school had been open, there was no school band. At the game the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Band sat in the stands on the DeQuincy side and acted as a school band. One thing in connection with this event of which I have been personally ashamed in recent years is that, following the custom of the time, I was not permitted to sell tickets to the black members of their regiment and of the 25<sup>th</sup> Regiment. It should be said to the credit to the men of these well disciplined regiments they accepted the situation without open protest. This is my personal apology to the enlisted men of the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry, U. S. A.

It was during this time that the High School building and the surrounding campus was being used by the Third Evacuation Hospital and there were more highly skilled medical personnel in DeQuincy than there had ever been before or has been since. It was along about the third quarter of the football game mentioned above; (Oakdale may have been the visiting team) that one of the visiting players was completely knocked out. The visiting coach called out, "Is there a doctor in the audience?" At least a half dozen Army Medical men went out onto the field, examined the player, held a consultation at mid-field and agreed that the player, who in the meantime had recovered consciousness, might continue to play. Who won the game I do not remember.

A few days later the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Band gave a free concert to all of the people of this area in the DeQuincy stadium. Mayor Sid Fontenot acted as master of ceremonies and when he introduced CWO Hammond as "Mister Hammond" there were some raised eye brows and looks of disapproval among some of us, who did not know at that time that Warrant Officers in all of the armed forces are addressed as "Mister." It was at this same concert that a member of the band rendered a baritone vocal solo of a then popular song Amapola. The audience applauded him enthusiastically. The name of the young musician has escaped me, though I heard it at the time, but there was a story to the effect that in civilian life he was a well known professional singer in the cities of the northeast and Hollywood. I have wondered since if he could have been the singer who sang the solo "Old Man River" in the movie version of "Showboat." Perhaps not after all, "Old Man River" was sung by a basso.

Just as we were about to get accustomed to having the Army around, one night about eleven o'clock we were awakened by noise that sounded like all of the motors in the world were moving through town at once. We got dressed and rushed out to see what was happening. There were jeeps, tanks, halftracks, trucks, artillery, caissons and ambulances pouring into town by every road and all going up the Singer Highway. The convoy was traveling "black out", that is without lights. After one ambulance crashed into the end of a steel culvert, while coming down the little street between the I.G. Goode's house and the former home of Dr. A.E. Douglas, I lighted a kerosene lantern and placed it at the end of the culvert. I still have the lantern. Fortunately no one was hurt in the crash.

Later we were to learn that this was the final phase of the 1941 maneuvers locally. Gen. Krueger, who was in command of the Southern Army, had theoretically penned the Northern Army, commanded by Gen. Van Lear, against the Sabine River without hope of escape and forced it to surrender. Some of the men who went through these maneuvers and also served under actual combat overseas later told me that except for the enemy fire the Louisiana maneuvers were rougher than anything they experienced overseas.

Within a few days the school buildings were returned to the school and soon things were back to normal, that is, as normal as things could be under the wartime conditions.

**Note: TO ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE WRITTEN LETTERS OR TOLD ME IN PERSON THAT YOU ENJOYED THESE MEMOIRS OF ANOTHER GENERATION: THAN YOU. AS LONG AS YOU LIKE TO READ THEM AND THE PAPERS WILL PRINT THEM I SHALL CONTINUE UNTIL MEMORIES CATCH UP WITH THE PRESENT!**

## WARTIME RATIONING AND STAMPS

The old style Fabian Socialists had a slogan, "From Each According To His Ability and To Each According To His Needs." Americans who lived through World War II learned a great deal about the last part of this slogan through the rationing system used during the war. Congress passed laws setting up Rationing Boards in each parish or county, which were supposed to see that each person had a fair share, as the Board viewed his needs, of certain scarce commodities. Locally we closed school one day and the teachers were seated at tables in the gymnasium to issue the ration books containing the stamps to all from the oldest to the youngest. For the benefit of those born since 1945 let it be said now that these stamps are not to be confused with the modern premium stamps which some merchants issue today as trade builders. Far from it, the customer gave the merchant the stamp as evidence that the customer was permitted to buy the goods desired.

These ration stamps were about the size of a modern premium stamp and bore a letter "A" or "B" and a number, and came in books about the size of a modern paperback book, but not as thick. The stamps were in sheets and perforated along the edges. These stamps were presented to the merchant in order to buy such things as shoes, coffee, sugar and meat. Gasoline and tires came under a special category as did certain articles made of strategic metals. It was said that certain types of electrical wiring was done with silver wire because silver was more plentiful than copper. Even this wiring had to be deemed essential to the war effort.

Sugar stamps were highly prized as gifts and twice welcome was the guest who presented his hostess with a sugar stamp, on the other hand, the unwelcome guest was the one who consumed the hostess' sugar without replacing the sugar stamp used in his entertainment. All sorts of sugar substitutes were tried but most people did not like them. The same was true of coffee substitutes or coffee "stretchers." When Louise Goode and Keith Kent were married Mrs. Ratliff baked the "double ring" wedding cake, but to obtain sugar for the cake Louise had to talk her friends and relatives in Westlake and DeQuincy out of enough stamps to buy the sugar. In spite of all this, young lovers of 1970, the wedding reception was an enjoyable affair and the wedding a success. If you do not believe it, ask Louise or Keith or one of their stalwart sons.

When a baby was born the family quickly applied for rationing stamps for the baby because the books contained sugar and shoe stamps which some older member of the family might use. In case of a death the family was required by law to return the ration stamps to the nearest board. I still have one of the books tucked away among my "sacred junk or holy trash." It was announced in the papers and via radio when stamps bearing certain letters and numbers would be valid for shoes, meat and etc. Those who had stamps they did not need could share them with other members of the family or friends. Since men's shoes normally lasted longer than women's shoes and could be more easily repaired, men in the family usually gave their shoe stamps to the women of the family. This was not always true of men who worked in heavy industry and wore out their shoes more rapidly.

People were encouraged to raise poultry and rabbits and grow gardens for home consumption, but it was against the law to slaughter cattle for home consumption without a special permit from the Ration Board. Home canning using glass jars came back into use, but the rubber sealing rings for them were hard to find. I spent some time teaching poultry schools and demonstrating the famous LSU sand floor, kerosene lamp chicken brooder. When I went down to the old Rosenwald School, predecessor of the Grand Avenue School, Pat Patillo furnished the car and transported me and my equipment to and from the school.

For ordinary family driving around the community the car owner received an "A" stamp for gasoline. If the driver used his car in his work and could convince the Board that his work was essential or part of the "War Effort" he might receive a "B" stamp which entitled him to buy extra gasoline. Unless he knew you the filling



station operator was likely to ask for the stamp before putting the gasoline into the tank. There was just one grade of gasoline at the smaller stations. The traveler was everywhere confronted with the sign reading: "Is This Trip REALLY Necessary?"

For the ordinary driver tires were almost unobtainable. We Americans had always been able to get all of the natural rubber we wanted from the island of the South Pacific and had made very little effort to develop a synthetic rubber. The Germans had far outdone us in that respect. When the war cut off our supply of natural rubber, we almost frantically started experiments to develop synthetic rubber. If a driver could convince the Board that he really needed a tire, and his old one could not be repaired, the Board might give him a permit to buy a tire. W.S. (Geeboo) Renfrow said that these permits were really nothing more than "Hunting Licenses" to hunt a tire for sale. The Newport stump contractors usually had no difficulty getting a permit for a tire, but were hard pressed to find the heavy duty tires they needed. There was a dealer at Jasper, Texas, who had a source of supply for tires, where few people really knew. Some said that they got the tires through Mexico, others that they were retreaded tires and some whispered that they were "Black Market" (illegal) tires. Scot Drodgy drove to Jasper and paid \$100 for a tire which blew out on the first load of stumps he hauled with it. There was no warranty with the tire. Messrs. R.L. Douglas and Carroll Cole, Sr. of the Newport wood office were sympathetic and helped him get a new permit, but could not find a new tire for him.

When buying tooth paste, or any other substance which came in metal tubes, the purchaser had to deliver an old tube to the merchant before receiving the merchandise. "Tin" cans were salvaged just for the small amount of tin in the lining since tin had to be brought from Bolivia through the submarine infested waters of the Gulf.

Even though the Boards were composed of "friends and neighbors" who were usually sympathetic and did their best to be fair and patriotic, everyone, including the Boards, was glad when it was over and the "each according to his needs" experience was over.

## PARISH RALLIES IN EARLY DAY HIGH SCHOOLS

The weekend of April 4 the high school students of southwest Louisiana converged on McNeese State College for the annual District Literary Rally.

The competition is always keen and by the time this appears in print some high schools in the various classes will have been declared the winner of the sweepstakes in each classification. Then the individual winners in the different events will compete in the State Rally on the LSU campus at Baton Rouge.

In Calcasieu Parish all of this had its beginning more than fifty years ago in the Paris Rally, which was held at some parish high school (Lake Charles High School was not under the parish system and did not compete in this rally), on a Saturday about this time of year. The custom was to rotate the site of the Rally among the Parish high schools and each school would in time be the host school. Eventually there were ten high schools in the parish and a school would have the opportunity to be the host school about once in a decade.

In the earlier years McNeese did not exist. There were track and field events as well as literary events for both "juniors" and "seniors." In the track and field events a "junior" was any male student who was not above a certain height. There was keen rivalry among the schools about this and close watch was kept on the measuring to see that it was accurate. Sometimes a school had a boy who did not grow very tall and was able to pass as a "junior" when he was well above his rivals in age and muscular strength. Iowa High School had a Natali boy who was like this and "Shortie" Coward may have been one at DeQuincy. (Forgive me, Shortie, if I am wrong.) This measuring was the cause of considerable dissension in the schools and finally an age limit was placed on the classification.

The Track and Field events were held in the morning and afternoon of the same day, with a few added since. The custom was to invite the coach of some college in Louisiana to come with some of his college track men to act as the officials of the meet. It time it came to be almost standard practice to invite Coach (later Colonel) H.E. Walden from Louisiana College at Pineville to officiate. Coach Walden had the respect and confidence of all of the principals and coaches in the parish and I never knew of a decision of his to be questioned.

There were some outstanding track and field men in the high schools of the parish and in the early thirties Ralph Newell of DeQuincy set some records that went unbroken for years and one or two have not been broken yet.

In 1933 the Rally was held at Starks. Coach Jesse Verret and I laid out a half mile, elliptical track on the vacant lots south of the school campus and north of the old Deweyville road. Police Juror Robert Pinder "loaned" us the road grader and the crew to grade the track and the Rally was held. One year the DeQuincy Tigers, coached by Johnny Buck, won the Class A State Championship.

The usual literary events were Junior (elementary school) boys' and girls' readings, Senior (high school) girls' readings and boys' oration, girl's vocal quartet or trio and perhaps some contest in home economics, but I am not sure about the Home Economics. The "readings" consisted of memorizing and reciting a poem or a bit of prose. In 1927 Hayes School, with less than a dozen high school enrollment, won first place in senior girl's reading when Gladys Hayes recited "The Ambitious Dishwasher." The Rally was at Vinton that year and it was about 2 A.M. on Sunday when we reached home at Hayes and work up half the village to tell them the exciting news. In 1929 Ruby Kingrey, senior girl from Starks was to barely miss winning because her poem was a few second over the time limit.

In the boys' classifications patriotic orations by the great orators of the past were popular. J.G. Vinson competed as a junior and later as a senior. James E. Kimball did well with "The Unknown Soldier" and someone, it may have been Edison Jones, used Robert Ingersol's "At the Tomb of Napoleon."

In spite of not having a paid, professional vocal music teacher on the faculty in the early days, DeQuincy students have always done well in vocal music. Volunteers from outside the faculty like I.J. Goode, E.J. Vorman; Miss Velma Miller (Mrs. Edward Bredehoeft), Miss Billie Farque, Mrs. Ruby White, Mrs. Edgar Perkins, Sr. and perhaps others coached and accompanied the students. In 1937 a quartet consisting of Louise Goode, Vannie Belle Nelson, Marian Royer and Vivian Wilcox and in 1938 a trio consisting of Louise Goode, Romaine Fontenot and Maxine Royer won first place in the State Rally. Later vocal music was placed in the curriculum as a credit subject and a vocal music teacher was hired. As I recall, Miss Doris Ford of Oakdale (alias The Singing Lady) was the first of these. DeQuincy students have maintained the tradition as a "singing school."

The literary events have been expanded to include practically every subject taught in high school and while DeQuincy has never won a first place sweepstakes at the State Rally for Class A schools, we have nearly always placed high and several times individual students have won first place. At the District level our trophy case is well stocked with sweepstakes trophies and individual trophies. We have never gone in for the intensive individual coaching, "win or else" type preparation and the honors that the students have won in the past have been almost on their own. In most classes there have always been several students who could have done well at the Rally.

And so, students of 1970, that is about what it was like when Grandma, Grandpa or Mom and Dad "went to the Rally."

## CONFEDERATE FLAG AND CIVIL WAR DAY

Let us begin by saying that I DO NOT REMEMBER the Civil War, in spite of the fact one student so reported to his parents several years ago. I do remember several veterans of the war and their “women folks” who supported them on the home front. Fifty years ago, when I was in my teens, Confederate Civil War veterans were fairly numerous in most towns in the South; I knew only one Union veteran. They were men in their seventies and eighties, about the same age as veterans of World War I now. The last two Civil War veterans that I knew were a Mr. Doyle of Starks and Mr. Seagraves of DeQuincy. The latter owned some property on Center Street, about where the Douglas Hospital is now. He helped build the Confederate earthwork fort at Niblett's Bluff, remains of which can still be seen. Mr. Seagraves was an uncle to the late Mrs. U.L. Stephens of Starks and during the school session of 1929-30 he went with a group of Starks High School students and me on a trip to Niblett's Bluff and traced out the lines of the old fort.

The month of April played an important part in the civil war and there are several dates that are significant. The twelfth is given as the “official date” for the beginning of the Civil War, being the date that the Confederate artillery, under the command of Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard, fired on the Union Forces, under the command of Major Anderson, who were occupying Ft. Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina harbor. It should be remembered that fighting had already taken place along the Kansas-Missouri border some time earlier.

The causes of the Civil War are many and complicated, the right of a state to secede from the union being the basic one. A great many students and writers on the causes agree that until the middle of the war, January 1863, it was not a “grand and glorious crusade to end slavery”, though slavery was a dominant issue, or more specifically, the question of the right of southerners to migrate into the new lands of the west and create more slave states.

April 9, 1865 was the date of surrender of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia under Gen. Robert E. Lee to Gen. U.S. Grant at Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia. While the last Confederate troops, under General Edmund Kirby Smith in Louisiana, did not surrender until May 1865, April 9, 1865 is remembered in Louisiana as the dates of the battles of Mansfield and Pleasant Hill when the Confederates under General Richard (Dick) Taylor defeated the Federals under General N.B. Banks. These were the last important battles on Louisiana soil.

The fourteenth is the next memorable date in April, the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. occurring on the evening of that date. April 26 is observed in some southern states as Confederate Memorial Day, but in some other southern states the birthday, June 3, of Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy, is observed. This is the date observed in Louisiana and in some places the United Daughters of The Confederacy place flowers on the graves of Confederate men and women, or in Lake Charles at the base of the Confederate monument on the Courthouse lawn.

Of recent years I have been somewhat saddened by the use that some individuals and groups have been making of the Confederate battle flag. Notice the phrase “battle flag.” The familiar red flag with the blue and white Saint Andrews cross bearing the thirteen stars was not the national flag of the Confederacy. The Confederate Congress made three attempts to design an acceptable national flag. The first flag was the “stars and bars” design which resembled the stars and stripes so closely that they were confusing in the smoke of battle, so the bars were dropped and a pure white design used. This was found to be unsatisfactory because when hanging idle on the pole it looked like a white flag of surrender. To overcome this a wide red bar was added on the outer edge of the flag. The soldiers themselves adapted the familiar southern cross design, which

was carried in battle, but was never the official Confederate Flag. This is the one that, in my opinion, is being desecrated by those who carry it on unworthy occasions or in unworthy causes.

I should like to end this column by quoting a portion of an old poem written by Father Abram J. Ryan, the Poet-laureate of the Confederacy, called "The Conquered Banner." The poem is too long to quote in full in this space and some of it is not applicable to the modern South. Here it is:

Furl that Banner-furl it sadly;  
Once the thousands hailed it gladly,  
And then thousands wildly, madly,  
Swore it should forever wave-  
O'er their freedom or their grave.

Furl that Banner! True, 'tis gory,  
Yet 'tis wreathed around with glory  
And 'twill live in song and story  
Though it's folds are in the dust!  
For its fame on brightest pages  
Penned by poets and sages,  
Shall go sounding down the ages-  
Furl it though now we must!

Furl that Banner, softly, slowly;  
Treat it gently-it is holy;  
For it droops above the dead;  
Touch it not-unfold it never;  
Let it droop there, furled forever-  
For its people's hopes have fled.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR: CHARLIE TELLS ON T J

And then came Pearl Harbor. Some went and some stayed; some came back and some didn't. But everyone did his or her part; this included Mr. Ratliff.

During his summer vacation, he did his bit by going to work for the railroad. Yes, Missouri Pacific, DeQuincy yards, a hustling, bustling, switching and banging 24 hours a day.

T.J. fell heir to a night job, as all junior employees do regardless of actual age. Absolute seniority prevails. Clerking was the title, better known as a lowly mud hop, checker pounding gravel between the yard tracks; a spotlight cradled under your left arm and a clipboard supported in your left hand and your pencil in your right. If you were fast enough you could write the initials and numbers of the railroad cars as the switch engine, goat or jack, kicked them by you.

I was working as night yardmaster, dinger, 12 hours a night – green help, yard full, trains held out, get one out, let one in, clear the passenger train, duck the main trains (soldier specials), working two jacks, regular one on east lead and a bum job on the west end which also die the industrial work.

“Now, Mr. Ratliff, I've got to have a check of that eight rail.”

“Which one is that?”

“You will just have to count them. Will need the initials and numbers, kind, length, width, loaded or empty (short for empty), from east to west. Now, T.J., be careful, stay out of the middle of the tracks as you will have cars coming in from both ends of the yard. Your History books don't tell you this, those box cars don't run over you but once and they don't give you a second chance. Now hurry every chance you get, got to have so many cars to fill our orders in the morning.”

So off he goes in the blue-black night, light shining bright.

Wait....wait....No T.J. Worried. Better go find him. He's not as young as he used to be, I know, he taught me in school, too....

Yes, found him. He's OK. Good.

“How are you doing? You are checking No. 7 track and I told you No. 8.”

“Mr. Ratliff, you don't count the main line. Yes, I know, a track is a track.” Well, you can't think to tell them everything.

Well, it began to rain. “Come on back to the yard office. Have you eaten yet? Well, eat and put on your rain clothes. Haven't got any? No, an umbrella won't do.”

Yes, he sat down, his shoulders kind of slumped, but he held his head up, shaking it slowly from side to side.

“You know,” he says, “I taught most of you boys – Landers, Cliftons, Hartwell, Douglas, Rainwater, Magee, Perkins, Lyons, Wallace, Rigmaiden, to name a few – and I figured most of you would never amount to anything. I should have known better, this being a father to son railroad that it would be handed down to you

whether you day dreamed in class or not. I am supposed to be an educated man, a degree in this, a degree in that, but do you know something? My degrees don't help me one bit out there in that railroad yard."

Yes, he finally made a mud hop, but you know he had to lay aside that book sense and use some common sense.

Now you are railroading, T.J., and I bet you remember.

Harley Chartwell  
Or  
Charlie Hartwell



## RAILROADING WITH RATLIFF

I had not intended to do this particular “memoir” until later, but Harley Chartwell (alias Charles Hartwell) has brought about a flood of memories of twenty-five years ago that will not wait.

During my Texas boyhood on the Fort Worth and Denver line, railroad men, conductors, engineers, brakemen, and flagmen were not men that you knew by name, lived next door to, attended church and sat in lodge with. They were to small boys awesome, mysterious figures who stopped briefly at the station and then took the trains up or down the line to faraway places like Fort Worth, Wichita Falls, Amarillo and even all the way to Denver perhaps.

The agent or telegraph operator was a magician who made clicking noises on a sort of key which another agent or operator in another station could translate into English.

So, the summer of 1945 spent as a yard clerk or “mud hop” in the Missouri Pacific yards at DeQuincy was like a whole new world with new ways of doing things, new ideas of what was important and what was not important and a new vocabulary and above all acquaintance and friendship with a whole group of fine people who taught me many things.

I would never have learned otherwise. Space does not permit the mentioning of names of individuals, but I do not believe that I have forgotten many of them.

### NUMBER 508

One of the first things learned was that a station was not a name but a milepost number. DeQuincy was 508 and there were two Kinders, “Kinder proper” which was 544 and the Kinder yards where cars were transferred to the north bound Missouri Pacific lines.

An “Alex drag” was a train of “empties,” empty foreign cars being sent to Alexandria and thence to their home lines. In an “Alex drag” there were cars from practically every railroad in the United States and Canada.

Once in a while though not in an “Alex drag,” a car from the National Railways of Mexico found its way into the DeQuincy yards.

A “river train” was one destined for Port Allen, thence to Baton Rouge, New Orleans or the navy ammunition depot at Belle Chasse. For some reason cars for Belle Chasse crossed the Mississippi twice, Belle Chasse is west of the river, and for some one, I think it was Charles Hartwell himself, worked out a plan to send the cars direct to Belle Chasse without crossing the river at all, but so far as I know the plan was not used at that time.

A tank car was a “tank” and never a “tanker” which was a ship.

It finally dawned on me that while there was a daily, except Sunday, “local” to the east from DeQuincy and that “getting out the local” was an important early morning job to be done with all speed and accuracy; there was not “local” out of DeQuincy to the west.

The Missouri Pacific, due to the fact that they operated over the KCS tracks, between these stations, handled no local freight between DeQuincy and Beaumont but had a system of “shorts” between Mauriceville

and Houston. Conductors were inclined to growl and sometimes “cuss when that monarch of all he surveyed,” the yard master told the unfortunate conductor that he had to “take the shorts.” Later back in the class room, I was used to that word “shorts” as an example of a common English noun that might have many meanings, depending on the person using it.

In making out a switch list the yard clerk was told to ditto the station number of the destination of a cut of cars but warned not to ditto once too often or he might send a car hundreds of miles from its proper destination. I recall that I did this once and sent a Kinder car to the river.

The men in the yards taught me that freight trains are made up backwards, that is the caboose was set in on the track first with the rear end pointed away from the direction the train was to go, then the engine foreman directed the switch engine engineer as to which cars came next in the train. The cars to be set out first were the last added and were nearest to the engine in the train.

There were at least two important exceptions to this last statement; loaded stock were placed as near the engine as practical and cars containing explosives were placed in the middle of the train; this last was a safety measure for the crew in the event of an accidental explosion.

One night Conductor L.R. Roberts was acting as Yard Master and in the course of a conversation he remarked, “A man can either work his job or let it work him. If there is anything he can do ahead of time he had better do it.” I started making use of that philosophy in my school work and tried to impress its truth on the students in my classes.

For some reason the regular yardmaster, Mr. Montague, was not working that summer and E.C. Carpenter and several conductors served as yard master. From one of them I learned a quick way of arranging freight bills in numerical order which I was able to use for the next twenty-five years in arranging report cards and test papers in proper sequence.

Ordinarily when some event of historical importance happens I make a note of it or comment to students about it, but in August of 1945 when the news of the Japanese surrender came I was busy looking through a file for the record of a “lost” box car which the master needed as soon as possible. I never stopped looking for the card as finding that car was the most important thing right then – history could wait.

September and the end of the war came about together and it was back to the class room for me. Of the men I worked with many have now retired and some of them have reported to the Great Superintendent at the end of their Final Run and have reached the Eternal Terminal but I shall not forget them or the things they taught me.

Twenty-five years later when I am blocked by a freight train I still find myself almost automatically looking for the initials and numbers and types of cars as they go by. The amazing thing is all of the new types of cars designed to haul products that did not exist in 1945.

## WARTIME IN DEQUINCY LOUISIANA

How did the “home folks,” particularly the women and children contribute to the war effort? This is both a memory and a tribute.

One of the first things that small boys and girls learned was that there were certain things that must be given up because of the war, such things as candy, and cookies made of sugar and toys made of metal and new clothes when the old ones could still be worn. In each school there was usually one or more booths manned by older pupils where War Stamps were sold. These stamps cost twenty-five cents each and it was explained to the students that they were actually lending the money to the government, the money to be used to buy things that their older brothers, uncles, cousins and perhaps fathers needed in the war. Contests were held between the rooms in Elementary School to see which room bought the most stamps in a day. The competition was keen. These stamps could be redeemed at the post office at anytime the purchaser wished and the Postmaster at Starks told me that she noticed that every afternoon there was a line of small Americans lined up at the window to cash in stamps. An inquiry revealed that the enthusiastic young patriots were cashing in the stamps bought at school that day in order to have money to buy more stamps the next day to run up the total sales for their room. They were not doing anything wrong; they just wanted their room to win the contest.

DeQuincy students will never forget the famous “Get in the Scrap” drive held at school. The steel making process in use at that time required about twenty-five percent scrap iron to each batch of steel produced. The word was spread that the steel mills were running short of scrap and the American people were asked to bring in anything made of iron which they could spare and “get it into the scrap.” At DeQuincy a plan was set up whereby the students could join the “Army” by bringing in scrap. The scrap was weighed and the least amount “enlisted” the student as a private. As other scrap was brought in the young soldier advanced in rank until he might become a “general.” Parents, and grandparents were seen helping the young “soldiers” with cars, trucks, wagons, wheel barrows and just plain muscle power as they brought back into town junk that had been hauled out of town only a few years or months previously. One very near and dear to me has reminded me that she threw her cherished roller skates onto the pile. She was not alone in this. Fathers had to keep an eye on his garage or tool chest lest some favorite and useful tools wound up on the scrap pile. There was a rumor that there was an old logging locomotive somewhere in West Fork and efforts were made to find it for salvage but they were unsuccessful.

When the drive ended there was a pile of scrap as large as two class rooms in the space in the southwest section of the old high school campus. The Air Force sent men and trucks from the Lake Charles Air Base (later Chenault Field) who hauled the scrap to Lake Charles, from there it was shipped to the steel mills. The school library fund received nearly three hundred dollars from the sale of the scrap and some of the books bought are still in use in the school libraries. When the attitude of these young “scrappers” is compared with the attitude of some modern Americans toward the present war it is almost beyond comprehension!

One of the features of the times was the Air Raid Warning Tower which stood on the vacant lot back of the present Texaco station. The tower resembled the present day forest fire observation towers. High school students and older people, mostly housewives, manned the tower on an around the clock basis and scanned the skies for possible enemy planes. This was not just make believe, but a deadly serious business since the shipyards, the oil refineries and railroad yards in this section would have been likely objects of attack if an enemy carrier had succeeded in getting into the Gulf. There was a direct telephone line to Houston, I think, and watchers were told to report any suspicious looking object in the sky and give nothing the benefit of the doubt. One day a lady watcher (forgive me, Bartrella) reported something and the Air Force turned out and made a

search but found nothing. It was supposed that the suspected “enemy” was a soaring buzzard. Everyone was glad and Mrs. Peyton was congratulated for her vigilance.

An Air Raid Warden system was established with a “secret” center and Wardens were assigned posts near to which they reported in practice or real raids. We were warned that on a certain Tuesday night a long blast on the fire siren would be a signal for all Wardens to report to their posts and time themselves as to how long it took to reach their posts. Late on Monday night the siren started screaming. The Wardens leaped into action. I was halfway down the block to my post when it struck me that this was not Tuesday night and a sudden chilling thought struck me, “Could this be a real enemy raid?” Later it was revealed that two small boys had gone visiting and fishing on Beckwith, and had not returned and their absence was not discovered until late at night. The alarmed parents reported it and the night Marshall blew the siren to call for help in searching for the boys, who were found peacefully sleeping at the home of a friend, unaware of all the commotion.

For the women and older girls there were bandage rolling sessions for the Red Cross, cakes, cookies and sandwiches for the USO, which entertained service men in one of the buildings about where the F&S Store is now. Chaperoning trips by the girls to dances and parties for the service men at Fort Polk and the DeRidder Air Base was also a duty of DeQuincy matrons.

Then, as is always true for women in war times, the worries, the tears and prayers for their men facing death and wounds in combat, this along with this scanning the casualty lists with bated breath for the names of friends and loved ones.

The story of the men and women who worked in the Defense Plants will be told later.

## SHIPYARD AND OTHER WAR WORK IN WORLD WAR II

A stranger passing through DeQuincy about four or five o'clock any morning during the years between 1940 - 45 would have wondered what was happening. In the fork formed by Lake Charles Avenue and Fourth Street, where the Blgrave Garage is now, the Reese Perkins were operating the Top Notch Café, which was a sort of forerunner of the modern drive ins. The Top Notch was the gathering place and the point of departure for the DeQuincy people employed in the chemical plants near Westlake and the shipyards at Orange.

Practically any sort of motor vehicle that could make the trip over the graveled roads between here and the two places named, was there; buses, pickups and trucks converted into personnel carriers, cars of all types, makes and models were there waiting for their "riders." The route to Orange was via Starks, Toomey and thence over U.S. 90 and crossing the Sabine over the old bridge at the east end of Green Avenue in Orange. To Westlake it was via Sulphur and again over U.S. 90 to Westlake. At Westlake it was the new synthetic rubber plant that seemed to be the main employer of manpower, while at Orange it was the two shipyards; the Levingston Company and The Consolidated Steel Company, now the American Bridge Company Plant. Other plants using petroleum and clam shell as raw material were in the Westlake area.

Along with such skilled craftsmen as Elmer Faiszt and Elmer Beird were high school age youths, men and women whose regular work had been curtailed because of material shortages or were deemed non-essential, retired people, teachers and students who were out of school for the summer and housewives, who had never worked outside of the home before. Each of them dressed according to the type of work to be done and all of them carried the ever present lunch kit and vacuum bottle. For some jobs the steel safety helmet was a must. Women worked at mechanical trades usually thought of as strictly for men only and "Rosie the Riveter" was the heroine of a popular song. On some of the busses one could find anything from a crap game or a discussion of meaning of some passage of scripture to the short comings of a new coffee substitute. One man announced that when the war was over and the meat rationing ended he was going to eat steak every day until he had enough.

At Orange the day shift started at seven A.M. and ran until five P.M. and in many cases was seven days a week. The busses and cars usually allowed an hour and a half for the forty miles of trip to Orange and left DeQuincy shortly after five A.M. and reached DeQuincy at about half past six in the afternoon on the return trip. This meant that the worker had to go to bed before good dark in order to be up by four the next morning. This was a problem in many cases because alarm clocks were not to be had and all sorts of devices were used to wake up the worker. One plan was for the owner of a clock to call his neighbors or pass the clock around from week to week and take turns calling each other. During the summer of 1943 when I was getting ready to begin work for the Consolidated Steel Company I took an old alarm clock down to Mr. Rodgers to be repaired and on my way home with it at least three people asked me if I wanted to sell it. Some Spanish students may recall that this was the same clock that I used for a generation after the war to teach time telling in Spanish and Mrs. Baker uses it now to teach the same thing in French at DeQuincy High School.

The early ships build by Consolidated were Landing Craft (LCI and LCT) and later destroyers and destroyer-escorts. These last two were designed by the firm of Gibbs & Cox of New York, who literally bought the vessels piece by piece and had them shipped to Orange, where they were assembled. There was just the right number of parts for each ship, valves I remember specifically, and woe unto the installer who lost or damaged a part. (Ask the fellow who dropped a \$3,500 sea cock into the river and dived to talk the "valve lady" out of another.) The Levingston Yard was building some sea going Rescue Tugs for the British Navy and the chief inspector for the British Navy was a young British Navy officer named Edward Garlick (Don't call him an Englishman, he was a Scot.) now an American citizen, an official for the MOP and married to the former Ethel Cole of DeQuincy.

Only the higher echelons of workers for Consolidated had any previous experience in ship building and it was usual after you had become acquainted with a fellow worker to ask "What do you do in peace time?"

One of my fellow clerks was a graduate of M.I.T. in Textile Engineering and I met a former schoolmate whom I had not seen in over twenty years, who in normal times was a concert violinist, and an assistant producer of movies in Hollywood. My immediate superior was a teacher by profession, Roy Greenwood, a brother to Talbert. Next in line was J.P. Logan who had been a supervisor for Montgomery Ward & Co.; Paul Fisher, then of Port Arthur now of DeQuincy, worked in the same building, but in a different department. H.N. Perkins, at the age of 19, was a Section Chief responsible for keeping records for and issuing the electrical equipment, handling millions of dollars worth of material. Mrs. D.M. Hueston was an electrician doing actual wiring and after the war, so I heard, she used her skill to re-wire her home in DeQuincy. Vester Isdale mystified his fellow workers at Levingston by his uncanny skill at cutting out steel plates that somehow always fit exactly. He never told them that he used some Propositions from plane geometry about congruent triangles learned at DeQuincy High School some years before.

Mr. Sessions, father of Mrs. Phelan Hyatt, as a youth about 1900 had taken a correspondence course in drafting but had never used it much in his later work. By 1940 he had retired, but when the need arose he recovered his old drawing instruments and went to work for Consolidated drafting the installation sketches, called "dispatches", which were used by the craftsmen in making the installations. Most of the draftsmen in that rather large department were young men and women just out of high school who had taken mechanical drawing in high school. The scene in the room suggested a fond grandfather showing his grandchildren "a few tricks" as they stood around him to watch him use his old style instruments. The Beaumont Enterprise did a story showing Mr. Sessions with some of his "grandchildren" looking over his shoulder.

There is much more to tell, but the space is at an end.

## SHIPYARD WORK IN 1943

This is the second installment of the memoirs of the Summer of 1943 spent as a clerk in the material issue office of the Consolidated Steel shipyard at Orange.

To those of us from the smaller towns the changing of the shifts at the two shipyards at Orange; with the two streams of workers going in opposite directions was almost unbelievable. This was especially true when the shuttle train from Beaumont unloaded the day shift workers and picked up the graveyard shift for the return trip to Beaumont. The street leading to the gates of the two yards were so jammed that about all that a person could do was either join in the stream in one direction or another or try to find a space on the sidelines. To drive a car was impossible. However within a few minutes, by seven o'clock, the street was clear of everything but normal traffic.

The summer heat, the high humidity, there were no air conditioning or fans, and the monotony of sitting at the same table for hour after hour performing the simple, but necessary, clerical work caused the morale of the workers to become rather low at times. To offset this we were given frequent "pep talks" about the importance of our work, it was pointed out to us that not a piece of material of any sort could leave the warehouse to be installed until we had written and delivered the Issue Order for it. "Be sure to put the Bill of Materials Number on each Issue Order (called the BM number) or Mr. Guidry of the Auditor's office will be around to see you!" When we saw Mr. Guidry, who unofficially was a nice person to know, coming we wondered who was the guilty person who had left a BM number off an Issue Order and we began to "examine ourselves" to recall if we had been delinquent.

Another "morale builder" was that we were encouraged to take a break, not too often however, and walk through the yards and see the craftsmen actually installing the parts for which we had written the Issue Orders, and feel that we, the humble clerks, were actually helping build the ships. I even wrote an article for The Consolidated News pointing out that going all the way back to the Greeks that shipbuilders had been the defenders of democracy. I doubt that many people took the trouble to read it.

Perhaps the best of the morale builders was the launching of a ship. These launchings were held during the lunch hour and all hands were invited to come and witness the event. The ships were usually named for some deceased hero of the war and usually some female loved one of the deceased was invited to break the traditional bottle of champagne over the bow of the ship and to christen her. There were two ways of launching a ship, stern first and sideways; of the two methods the stern launchings were the more spectacular but required more space in the river so the custom finally came to use the sideways system. One of the destroyers I saw launched was the Leopold, and it was with a note of more than usual sadness when I heard later in the war she was sunk by an enemy submarine. When a ship was launched it was far from complete, about like a house with the walls, the roof and the floor completed; there remained all of the fine details on the interior to be installed. The ship was towed away to another part of the yard to be completed.

During that summer Congress passed an amendment to the income tax law providing for "the withholding feature" which is so familiar today. The story got around that twenty per cent of each worker's paycheck would be withheld and there was considerable grumbling about it. Finally the Consolidated company had someone, I think it was Judge Beaman Strong of Beaumont, come over to speak over the public address system and explain the new law. He explained that it would really be an advantage to the wage earner that when taxpaying time came around he would have his taxes paid and if a refund was due he would receive it. After the explanation there was less complaint. Workers were also encouraged to take a part of their pay in Series E War Bonds, which a great man of us did.



The Consolidated workers were paid each two weeks, but there was a time lag of two weeks between the end of a work period until payment was made. It was said that this was because the time cards were checked and the payroll checks made out by affirm from Houston on a contract basis. Anyhow, there were certain men who did not wear Consolidated badges and had special helmets with a capital "T" across the front. There was also a rumor that these men might have been undercover agents for either the company or the government.

Another incident that for a few hours one day seemed to be more serious than the tax question was that due to some minor incident in Beaumont the rumor ran through the yard that there was a race riot going on in Beaumont and that the Negroes in Beaumont were threatening to burn the city. Men who lived in Beaumont began to leave the yards and start back to Beaumont to defend their families and property. Again the Consolidated Company brought in someone from Beaumont, this may have been Judge Beaman Strong or the Beaumont Chief of Police, who took to the public address system and assured the workers that there was no riot in Beaumont; the excitement subsided and the men returned to their work. It was suggested that the rumor may have been the work of an enemy agent bent on disrupting the building of the ships. Later, I wondered if in part it might have been that some of the men involved were tired and bored with a seventy hour week with little time off and were just looking for a little excitement and relief from the monotony. Only the men involved know for sure what their motives might have been at that time.

Again to those of you who have said you enjoy these Memoirs, "Thank You." My pleasure in writing them and your pleasure in reading them is all of the pay involved or wanted.

## HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATIONS OF THE PAST

This week and next the seniors of the high schools of this area will be marching onto the stage to the solemn strains of "Pomp and Circumstance" or some other traditional and appropriate music to at long last become high school graduates. This will be the first important formal event in the lives of a great many of the graduates, except for in some cases certain ceremonies connected with their church or religious life. There is a story that when the late President Calvin Coolidge became president at the death of President Warren G. Hardin in August of 1923 someone asked him how it felt to be president. He gave a typical Coolidge answer, "Not half as important as I felt the night I graduated from high school." High school graduation is an important event and not to be taken lightly. It may be the key to the whole future of the graduate.

For the first time in fifty years I shall occupy the position of an interested and sympathetic spectator rather than a participant in the ceremonies in some capacity or another. During this half century many changes have taken place both in the requirements for graduation and in the ceremonies themselves, yet many of the traditional features of graduation have remained the same or have been amplified.

Previous to World War I the high schools that I knew about ended at the tenth grade and the seniors were graduated. Many senior boys received and still others boasted that they graduated while still in knee pants. Parents were more inclined to boast of this than the boys I have an idea. Elaborate, decorative diplomas bought from a school supply house and paid for by the graduate, were issued to be framed later and hung on the wall of the front room of the graduate's home. My older brother's diploma hung on the wall of our parent's home for nearly fifty years. But alas, when the graduate applied for admission to college, less than ten percent of them did, he was told he must attend at least one more year of preparatory work before he would be admitted to the college. Most colleges had a preparatory department or academy to prepare the student for college admission. There were also private academies that specialized in preparing student for college. Students of the Class of 1927 of the Starks School will understand and appreciate the situation of being graduates and yet not eligible for college.

Following World War I high schools began to add the eleventh grade and to become "approved" in Louisiana, or "affiliated" as it was called in Texas, and to issue diplomas that were valid for college entrance. With this, more and more of the colleges dropped their preparatory departments as no longer necessary. Texas Christian University at Fort Worth, Texas dropped theirs at the beginning of the 1921-22 session. Mrs. Ratliff has two diplomas from the same Texas high school, the first issued at the end of the tenth grade when the school was "unaffiliated" and the second a year later after the eleventh grade was added and the school became "affiliated." The origin of the word "affiliated" is a story within itself.

In the late forties, after World War II, high schools began to add the twelfth grade. In Louisiana the extra year was put in as the eighth grade at the beginning of the session of 1945-46. There was no freshman class in high school that year and the missing class moved on up until 1949 when there was no senior class at DeQuincy. Subjects are now offered in the last two years of high school were college level subjects during the twenties. I still have a copy of Wells & Hart, Plane and Spherical Trigonometry, 1915 edition, which I studied in college. A few years ago I discovered that students in Mr. Goode's senior mathematics class were using the same text, but a later edition. A similar situation exists in other fields, science and commerce among them. There are more teachers with advanced degrees on the second floor of the DeQuincy High School than there were in the first college I attended before 1921. I have an idea that the same can be said of the other high schools in the area.

As to the graduation ceremony itself; the salutatory and the valedictory have been in use since the beginning, the class motto, the class colors, the class song, all go back before my memory. The class will, the class history, and the class prophecy, which used to be on the graduation program have been relegated to the senior banquet or other festive occasions. The use of caps and gowns for high school received more impetus during the depression because they could be rented for a small amount when students could not afford new suits and dresses. There were other reasons also. Now the senior ring has become almost a “must,” but this was not always true during the depression and war years. What to do with the senior ring after some of the thrill has worn off and it has been replaced by other rings is sometimes a minor problem. I know one lady who sold hers for enough money for a young husband to use going to look for a job as a high school coach. He got the job, she got her money’s worth. Two other couples, in both cases the bridegroom was a dental student, melted up the senior rings and recast them into wedding rings.

One feature of the graduation ceremony that has been dropped is the “commencement address” usually by some prominent person in public life, an elected official, an educator or sometimes a minister. (This was not the same as the baccalaureate which is still used.) I heard the late District Judge Jerry Cline twice, at Bell City in 1926 and at Starks in 1929, the late District Attorney John J. Robira at Starks and Supt. Lunsford of the Beauregard Parish Schools at Bell City in 1927. The orations were long, so it seemed, the auditorium was crowded, the temperature and the humidity were usually high, there was no air conditioning, babies and small children fretted, and most people, including the speakers, were probably just as happy when this feature was dropped.

Now, to the seniors of this area, especially those parents and grandparents I may have taught, congratulations and best wishes.

## **BANDS IN DEQUINCY HIGH SCHOOL**

The recent appearance of Mr. Bill Noonan, Jr. on a television program being interviewed in regard to a national physical fitness program calls to mind that his father, W.E. Noonan, Sr., who was the Band Director for three Calcasieu Parish High Schools at the same time during the pre-war years, Vinton, Sulphur, and DeQuincy. People who have grown accustomed to elaborately uniformed bands with a whole squad of pretty girl majorettes and twirlers putting on a half time show with all sorts of complicated formations and breath taking exhibitions of baton skill may have trouble appreciating Mr. Noonan's success with his bands in view of the scarcity of his resources, both human and material.

In these pre-war, depression days band was not a credit subject, but a sort of extra-curricular activity. The band director, while considered a member of the faculty, was not paid a salary by the School Board, but each member of the band paid a fee of about two dollars and a half per month, which was all of the income the band teacher received. Mr. Noonan lived at Vinton and travelled to DeQuincy and Sulphur on a regular schedule to meet his band classes. As I recall Mr. Noonan, and this is not a criticism but a tribute, did not have a degree in music but had learned music as a member of school bands in his own schooldays. He had also played in other bands. Edward Garlick, himself an accomplished musician, said that it was almost unbelievable how Mr. Noonan could take a group of beginning students and have them playing in such a short time.

When the DeQuincy Band made a trip out of town, to a football game usually, I usually went along on the bus as the "band director" and was admitted to the game as such, but when we reached our destination, Mr. Noonan, who had driven over from Vinton, took over. A feature of the Calcasieu-Cameron Fair at Sulphur was a band contest between the three bands with Mr. Noonan directing each band in turn. He wore a sort of standardized uniform which was appropriate for whichever band he was directing. As I recall the three schools mentioned were the only parish schools fielding a band. (Remember that the Lake Charles City Schools were members of a different school system at this time.) There was a sort of joke among the students that regardless of the decision of the judges, Mr. Noonan always won first, second, and third places.

The matter of uniforms was a problem, so the DeQuincy Band Boosters, and perhaps the P.T.A., put on fund raising drives of all kinds and finally raised enough money to buy each member of the band a sort of Spanish bolero type cape and a cap, the cape being in the school colors. The other parts of the uniform, shirts, pants or skirts and white shoes were furnished by the band members individually. Each member of the band owned his own instrument, except the bass drum. Mr. C.A. Pray, who had been a member of the Orleanean Band of the MOP Railway, donated his large upright tuba to the school band which used it until it became too battered up for use and the School Board began to furnish some of the heavier and more expensive instruments.

When the war started Mr. Noonan, like thousands of other teachers over the country, gave up his school work and went to work in a war plant. He became a member of the Public Relations Department of the Consolidated Steel Company at Orange, Texas. The last time I saw him was at Consolidated in the summer of 1943. I do not know if he is still alive or not.

According to the DeQuincy High School yearbook, The Pine Stump, for the year 1948, there was an organization in the school called the Band Club consisting of ten members. Their music stands have the monogram "E P", which could mean no one but Edgar Perkins, Jr., who is shown as a member of the group. Mr. Perkins is now an attorney in DeQuincy. Mrs. Edgar Perkins, Sr., who was another "unofficial, unpaid" member of the school faculty who helped out with any music need, is listed as the sponsor of the Band Club.

The same yearbook shows a rather large mixed choral group directed by Miss Doris Ford who was a full paid vocal music teacher in the school.

About 1949 or 1950 Mr. Frank Mathews became the first full time salaried band teacher in the DeQuincy schools. I believe that Mr. Mathews worked full time in DeQuincy. Mr. Mathews, now the local representative of an insurance company holds a Master's Degree in music and in spite of this success in the insurance field, I suspect that his "first love" will always be music.

I have been asked if I have a file of old newspapers or perhaps a diary as a source for these memoirs. The answer is "NO." I may occasionally consult a copy of the Pine Stump or Decalla, as the yearbook is now called, or ask someone about the spelling of a name, but for the most part it is just like the heading says, THE WAY I REMEMBER IT. When my memory errs someone will usually set me straight. For example; Ralph Newell says that the dirt track at Starks used in the 1932 Parish Rally was short of the half-mile and that as a result Coach H.E. Waldon of Louisiana College, who was the Director of the Rally, refused to allow Ralph's record for the half mile. Ed Bredehoeft says that he recalls that Col. Walden also took into consideration that the wind, which was strong that day, was to Ralph's back. Mrs. D.M. Hueston says that she did not re-wire her home after the war, she only helped. She could have done it, but did not have all of the proper tools.

## **PINE TREES AND FORESTS IN LOUISIANA**

In these days when ecology, air and water pollution, conservation, and reforestation are all household words it seems a little difficult for me to remember that when I came to Louisiana in August of 1925 I had never heard these words used nor had I ever seen a pine tree to recognize it.

I had never seen a large forest of any one kind of tree; trees certainly, but not in the sense that we have trees in Louisiana and east Texas.

Down at Hayes on one side of the right-of-way of the Lake Arthur branch of the Southern Pacific there was a large short leaf pine of some kind, of what exact specie I never found out, but it was certainly not the long leaf pine once so common in this area.

In my enthusiasm and my ignorance I made a picture of the tree and sent it to my relatives in west Texas and wrote them that this was a ‘real Louisiana pine tree’ of which we had heard so much.

In 1928 I left the rice lands, the bordering sea marsh, and the tupelo and cypress trees of southeast Calcasieu parish and came to Starks. I shall never forget the wonder of it as I drove from Vinton to Starks and saw my first pine trees in any number. Even then I did not realize that what I was seeing was mostly cut over land and second growth trees. To me they were pine trees and beautiful.

To the north of the school campus at Starks there was still a fairly large stand of pines, but it was not long until they began to fall to the loggers’ axes and saws to be hauled away to the mills. One day during the short space on the noon hour I saw pass the school first: a log wagon pulled by three or four yoke of oxen, then another wagon pulled by six mules and finally a truck of logs, all headed for the Vorice Clark mill near the KCS depot. The land north of the school may have been logged by Ristom and Pridgen, since their mill and store were in that area.

## **TIMBER AS A CROP**

I am glad that the lumber companies have largely abandoned the idea that a forest is a “mine” to be exhausted and left to nature, the old philosophy described as the “cut out, burn out and get out” system, and substituted the idea that timber is a crop, to be harvested and replanted, to be harvested again in later years.

One has only to remember the scene of forty years ago when surrounding DeQuincy, except on the Lutchter-Moore land between Starks and DeQuincy, was one vast area of blackened stumps and a few scrub trees and now see the groves of young pines that have been planted to appreciate the new policy, though one of enlightened selfishness it may be.

I wish that years ago the state, the Federal government or one of the lumber companies had set aside a tract of at least a quarter section of virgin pine and left it as it was for late comers such as I and the younger generation to see. Some of my forester friends say that it would not have worked, but I still wish that someone had tried.

Forty years ago in the northeast corner of the school property at Starks there was a grove of fairly large pines and after school hours it was a relaxing experience to walk with my two small daughters and their mother among these pines and listen to the soft music of the wind in the tree tops.

I understand that later these trees were cut, why, I never knew. In the south extension of the present DeQuincy High School campus is a grove of pine trees which I hope will never be cut for any reason. In the ten years of teaching in Room 27 when the tensions became high and I was near the exploding point I could always look out at these tall, stately and calm appearing pines and relax. I hope that others, students and teachers will always have them to look at and gain relief in time of stress.

Whenever I travel along Highway 27 from Sulphur or Westlake toward DeQuincy it is always a relief to escape the fumes of the chemical plants and to see the Houston River Baptist Church framed against a background of young pines and to compare the scene with the way it was before the young pines were planted and to realize that these trees should be there for years to come, before they are ready to be harvested and that I, under normal circumstances, will not see them harvested.

I understand that at one time the lumber companies did not consider it economically feasible to replant their cut over lands because they could get all of the timber needed cheaper in the western states and that it took too long for the second growth of planted trees to reach a marketable size for lumber which would be of inferior quality. They were probably right. However, in recent years the development of new quick growing hybrid trees and a process of using southern pines for pulp wood has changed this and the cut over lands are now being replanted.

I should like to see established in the high schools of this area a course, at least one year in length, in practical forestry in which both girls and boys would be taught, among other things, to work with the professional foresters in the use of the tools of the forester, the care of the trees, the prevention and fighting of forest fires and an appreciation of the esthetic side of timber growing. To mind there is a great deal of truth in the line of poetry which goes:

“I shall never see a poem  
As lovely as a tree.”

If all this sounds somewhat too much on the sentimental side, remember that when it comes to birds, trees, and kids, YOUR trees, YOUR kids I am just about the worst sentimentalist you ever knew.



## OLD IRONSIDES

There should be a number of people, now middle aged or older, who visited the USS Putnam when she visited the Port of Lake Charles during the Contraband Days who can recall visiting another USS, the frigate Constitution, better known by her nickname “Old Ironsides”, when she called at the port about 1930. The Constitution is the oldest ship in the United States Navy and among the oldest in the world. During the twenties of this century the ship was overhauled and restored and then during the years of 1927-31 was sent on a tour of the ports of the United States on both coasts. It was during this voyage that she called at Lake Charles. It must be understood that on this long voyage she did not travel under her own sail, but was towed by another ship, the Cleveland, if I recall correctly.

The Calcasieu Parish School Board declared a school holiday on one of the days that Old Ironsides was in port and authorized the teachers to load all of the pupils from the third grade up, who wanted to make the trip, onto the school buses and bring them to Lake Charles. Some of the younger ones may not have realized what it was all about, but at Starks we had no difficulty in filling up all four of the buses and some went in cars. One lady, who could not have been more than three years old at the time, says that she vaguely remembers making the trip and can recall some of the things about the ship.

The statistics on Old Ironsides say that she was built in Boston in 1794 as one of three frigates authorized by Congress, the other two being the United States and the President. She is two hundred feet long, forty-three feet wide at the beam and fourteen feet and three inches in depth with a displacement of 2,200 tons and a gun range of 2,000 yards. She was classified as a forty gun ship with a crew of 450 men and boys normally, though at times she mounted as many as fifty guns and was manned by a crew of 500. She took part in the first of our “undeclared” wars, this one with France during the years 1798-1800 and in the piratical states of North Africa in 1801-1805. Out of this war, also undeclared, came the line “to the shores of Tripoli” from the Marines’ Hymn. Her most famous battle was when she defeated the British Ship Guerriere, during the War of 1812. About 1828 it was proposed to dismantle and scrap the famous ship, but Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. of Boston, who is better known as a poet and author than as a medical doctor, wrote his poem “Old Ironsides” which so aroused the American public that the plan to scrap the ship was abandoned and she was restored. It was doubted later that no member of Congress would ever admit having had any part in the plan to scrap Old Ironsides.

The preceding paragraph is of course not from memory but the following is from memory of that day in Lake Charles. My first impression on seeing the ship was the almost unbelievable height of her three masts and trying to realize that men and boys in their early teens climbed up into this high rigging to handle the sails in all kinds of weather and in the midst of battle. This was truly an era of “wooden ships and iron men.” The top deck, called the spar deck or main deck was ringed by cannon pointing outward and lashed to the gunwales by cables looped around a sort of knob projecting from the closed butt of the gun. On each side of the gun carriage was a block and tackle with one end attached to the carriage and the other to the gunwale. In time of battle the lashing was removed and when the gun was fired the recoil caused the gun to roll back on its roller across the deck. The members of the gun crew had to jump in front of the gun, swab it out and reload it from the muzzle. The crew then used the block and tackle to urn the gun up to the port for re-firing. This impressed me as a highly dangerous business, especially in rough weather.

There were some narrow stairs or ladders leading down to the next deck which was called the gun deck. The upper deck, which was also the ceiling of the lower deck, was supported by huge beams about ten by twelve inches deep in cross sections running across the width of the ship. A person of even less than average height would have to stoop to walk under these beams. This deck was also ringed with cannon like the one

above and secured in the same manner. In ordinary times it must have been rather dim on this deck and during battle with the smoke of the guns it must have been dark. Hanging from the beams were some candle powered lanterns called "battle lanterns." For the sake of the visitors on that day in 1930 the ship was lighted by electricity from the generators on the towing ship. The gun crews slept on hammocks slung between the guns. I was impressed by the thought that in case of disaster the men below decks would have little or no chance of escape.

On the third deck were the living quarters of the crew, the hospital and perhaps the famous "brig", though it may have been on one of the other decks, perhaps even lower. One of the lower decks was the powder magazine and they told us that in time of battle a soaked blanket was hung over the door to prevent a spark from causing an explosion and an armed marine was stationed at the door to allow only authorized personnel to enter the magazine. The "authorized personnel" consisted of boys ten to twelve years old who were called "power monkeys" whose job was to carry powder in leather buckets to the gun crews. In 1930 there were wax figures of marines and sailors in the uniforms of the early eighteen hundreds on board. The "bath tubs" were tin basins about the size of a No. 3 wash tub but only about six or eight inches deep. I cannot recall seeing the galley (kitchen) or any of the mess gear, but I am sure they must have been there.

The latest information that I have is that the restored Constitution can still be seen at the Charleston (Boston) Naval Yard and that the Louisiana Pine decking used in the 1920's is still intact.

## NEWPORT DAYS RECALLED

The Dequincy area, including south Beauregard parish, is full of people who know far more about the operations of the old Newport plant which operated in DeQuincy between the years of the early twenties and the late fifties. This memoir will be based solely on my experience of three months duration during the summer of 1944 while I served as a sort of relief scale operator and clerk in the office of Woods Superintendent R.L. Douglass and his First Assistant, Carroll Cole, Sr.

Due to the war time demand for naval stores products (I seem to recall that Newport was classified as sixty-five percent war essential) and with the shortage of labor Newport was making some changes in the method of tedding out the stumps and sorting them. Since the first, stump contractors had used dynamite to blast out the stumps and on each truck there were usually two men, the truck owner (contractor) and his "shooter." Most of these men were independent contractors, owning their own trucks and fixing their own days and hours of work. There were however, a few "company trucks" whose drivers and "shooters" were employees of the company. This was to be an important issue when the plant was unionized. Under this system stumps that were considered too small or not rich enough in resin to be worth drilling or worth a charge of dynamite were by-passed.

Sometimes during this period Newport began using the bull dozer system of getting out the stumps. Two caterpillar type tractors were bought and the Letourneau Company developed a huge steel fork which was attached to the front of the tractor and with this machine the stumps were literally "rooted" out, "bull dozed" was the phrase for it, I believe. This system made it profitable to extract stumps which would have been ignored under the old system. Indeed, some land that had been shot over was reworked with the machine to such an extent that the land was relatively free of stumps and could be cultivated without much trouble. Due to the high price of stumps and the new system land owners began to come to the office wanting to contract their stumps immediately. This could not always be done as Newport could not use the stumps that fast, a circumstance which probably contributed to the building of the Newport plant at Oakdale and the establishment of the Crosby plant at DeRidder. During this summer a Texas man who owned some dirt moving machinery wanted to try using the common blade type bull dozer to "doze" out the stumps. Mr. Douglass told him that he might try it at his own risk, but that he (Mr. Douglass) did not think it would work. It did not and the man moved on to other work.

The dynamiting system was still in wide use since the two dozers could not get out enough stumps and were still in the experimental stage anyhow.

From my standpoint one of the more enjoyable features of the summer was getting to know and associate with people that ordinarily I might not have known at all or at best only casually. One of them was one of the older contractors, Mr. Eli Drake. After his truck had been weighed and was being unloaded Mr. Drake liked to come by the scale house and visit. One day he told me that he was getting too old for the hard, rough and dirty work of hauling stumps and that as soon as the war was over he was going to retire. Within a few weeks he was killed in some sort of blasting accident out n the job while making his contribution to the "war effort."

Another operation that was changed was the method of unloading and stacking the stumps. Under the old system the trucks were unloaded by hand, the wood stacked in long rows like cord wood, then reloaded onto trucks and hauled to the conveyor chain which took it to the grinder, called the "hog" and the, now in the form of chips, into the plant for distillation. Getting the wood to the chain was under the supervision of Mr. Felix McDonald who had a relief man, the late Mr. Custer Gimnick. Someone worked out a system which required

less labor. A sort of chain network was laid over the bed of the truck and the wood stacked on the chains. These chains terminated in a steel ring at the front and top of the truck load of wood, then a tractor with a crane was attached to the ring and the wood dragged from the rear of the truck. The tractor had a huge multiple toothed claw at the end of the crane which picked up the wood and piled it into a huge pile suggesting an old fashioned wood pile or hay stack. The same crane was used to reload the wood onto trucks to be hauled to the chain, or if the distance short the crane loaded the wood directly onto the chain.

Another change brought on by the war and the stepped up production at the plant was the use of more feminine workers in the office. Two of them were Miss Fannie Sue Robinson, now Mrs. Heard of DeQuincy High School faculty and Miss Jackie Nichols, in addition to Mrs. Grady Grimes who was a regular employee. There may have been others but these are the ones I remember.

Ordinarily when a stump contractor needed to go to a certain tract of land in Louisiana Mr. Douglass or Mr. Cole would give him the section, township, and range numbers and the contractor could find the land without much trouble. In the case of large land owner the land might be designated by the owner's name, such as Rice University land or Four C land. Not so in east Texas, where the old Spanish, Mexican, or Republic of Texas head right system was in use and in the deed the land would be described being in such and such a survey bearing the name of the original grantee who might have been a soldier in the Texas Revolution of 1836, with no indication as to size, shape or location of the land that meant anything to a person not familiar with the system. Raymond Pickering had an "interesting" experience while shooting stumps on what he thought was the Hankamer land in east Texas. I overheard this report to Mr. Douglass and recalled that I met Earl Hankamer, Jr., in Orange the previous summer. Mr. Douglass contacted Mr. Hankamer and arrangements were made to help Raymond locate the land and he was able to continue the stumping operations.

If I had ignored the men who worked inside the plant it is because I never was inside and have no memories of it. Some of you who have the facts should write the story for the benefit of the younger ones who have no firsthand knowledge of the Newport plant and its operations.

## **WHIT'S CHAPEL – ONE ROOM SCHOOL, A TEXAS TEACHING MEMORY**

The setting of this memoir goes back in time 48 years and in locale to Haskell County in west Texas. Anyone under fifty years old who attended DeQuincy High School has probably heard the story, but there may be a few older people who attended an old-fashioned one-room school taught by one teacher and may recall similar scenes from their own past.

The story begins in the spring of 1922 when the Sagerton, Tex. School, a five teacher school at that time, where I was teaching my first year, closed at the end of March due to lack of funds.

Some twelve or fifteen miles southeast of the town of Haskell, out in the farm and ranch country, was the community of Whit's Chapel. The same one-room, frame building which was the school also served as a church on weekends and for any other type of community gathering. The building sat beside a graded dirt road surrounded by pasture land. There was no sort of entrance way or vestibule and the front and only door opened directly to the outside.

Across the road was the farm of the Walter Haley family which consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Haley and their small son, who was about seven years old, his name I have forgotten. Down the road about a half mile was the Whit Williams place. The origin of the name Whit's Chapel is obvious and the building may have stood on Mr. Williams' land.

These were good, substantial farms, but for some reason the nearest mailbox and telephone were about two miles across the fields and pasture from the school and the only way to reach them was to walk as far as I was concerned. The Haley family boarded the teacher, three good substantial meals and a bed in the front bedroom, for thirty dollars a month.

The three Trustees of the Whit's Chapel Common School District had enough money on hand in the fall of 1921 to operate the school for six months; paying the teacher one hundred fifty dollars a month with a few dollars left over for other expenses. A young lady from Haskell was employed in the fall of 1921 to teach the six months term. At the end of the fifth month she, for some reason, decided that she had had enough and resigned. The Trustees asked Mrs. Ed Robertson, the county superintendent to find a teacher to complete the term and since I was unemployed, due to the closing of the Sagerton school, was hired for Whit's Chapel.

Someone drove me from Haskell to the Haley home on a Sunday afternoon before I was due to start teaching the next morning. One of the Trustees showed me the large storm cellar back of the school building and told me that it would be my responsibility to watch the weather and if it looked as if a tornado might be likely I was to take the pupils down into the cellar.

For those unfamiliar with that part of the country let me say that practically every farm and small town home had and still has a storm cellar or storm house. I mentioned my instructions from the Trustees to some of my students and one of the older boys spoke up and said that there were rattlesnakes in the cellar and that he would take his chances with the weather. I took his word about the snakes and fortunately there were no storm clouds sighted and I did not have to find out about the snakes the hard way.

In the Haley pasture was a rather large pond (tank in Texas) which we and the Haley cattle shared as a source of drinking water, as did the Haley family. Out from the dam which formed the tank was a sort of small wharf extending out over the deepest water, which was several feet deep, and when recess time came one of the

older boys would take the school water bucket over to the tank, walk out onto the wharf and dip up the water, being careful not to disturb any cattle who might be standing in the shallow water on the other side of the tank.

This tank water was considered better than the well water, if any existed, because of the gypsum (“gyp”) in the well water. No one was ever made ill that I ever heard of from drinking tank water, and the late Dr. Walter Prescott Webb of the University of Texas was of the opinion that the hot sun shining on the surface of the water probably sterilized it.

Our garbage disposal system was automatic. The twenty-eight students, ranging from about seven years old to about sixteen, were distributed from the first to the ninth grades except there was no one in the sixth grade. They all walked to school and brought their lunches, which they ate sitting under the shade of the mesquite trees, leaving their scraps on the ground. I have since assumed that the neighborhood dogs, the cattle or perhaps coyotes ate them. At least they disappeared.

I was expected to teach about thirty classes per day with usually three or four students in each class and class periods fifteen or twenty minutes long. Each class in turn came up to the front of the room and sat on a long “recitation” bench.

My former students at Starks or DeQuincy who were in any of my history classes can readily foresee what happened. If I were teaching a class in history or geography I got so interested in it that before I realized it I had used up that period and perhaps the next two or three periods in which I was supposed to have been teaching arithmetic or English grammar.

Somehow we made it through and at the end of April when I had completed my contract to teach one month, the Trustees gave me a voucher for the month’s salary. Mr. Haley hitched a team to his wagon and hauled me and my trunk back to my home in Haskell. I have never seen any of the wonderfully kind people of Whit’s Chapel who were so charitable to a green young teacher from town trying to teach a one-room school.

This was the last year that the Whit’s Chapel school was operated as by the next year it was consolidated with the Howard School, a two teacher school, in the adjoining district.

Whit’s Chapel was one of the last one-room schools in Haskell County.

## **BOSQUE VALLEY VISIT: TURN BACKWARD, OH TIME!**

At old fashioned Christmas programs, a popular elocution number or reading contained these lines:

Turn backward, Oh  
Time in thy flight  
And make me a child  
Again just for tonight.

A recent visit to a couple of central and north Texas county seat towns, where Mrs. Ratliff and I grew up, demonstrated the futility of the sentences expressed in the poem, but like the adults at the Christmas parties, we experienced a nice, warm, nostalgic feeling which we enjoyed very much.

The first of several towns visited on this ten-day trip was Mrs. Ratliff's girlhood home of Meridian, Texas, in Bosque County in the heart of the Bosque River Valley. The Bosque Valley is a well defined valley several miles wide, with steep escarpments on each side with the Bosque River flowing through it in a south easterly direction until it joins with the Brazos near Waco. The little towns along the river and in the Valley bear the names of China Springs, Valley Mills, Clifton, Walnut Springs, Meridian, Iredell and Hico.

One community that must not be overlooked, while not directly on the river and back in the hills a few miles, is the old Norwegian settlement of Cranfills Gap. Settled well over a century ago by Norwegian immigrants, it is noted for the red brick St. Olaf's Lutheran Church with its large pipe organ and the old cemetery. The old grave markers have the dates and epitaphs in Norwegian, some in both Norwegian and English, and later ones in English.

Meridian has just under a thousand population composed for the most part of families who have lived there for several generations. The Baptist Church has a marker stating that the church was established in 1854, which is also the date the town was founded.

Up in the Meridian cemetery on a high hill overlooking the river and town is the grave of Capt. T.C. Alexander (1824-1907) who in 1958 wrote Pres. James Buchanan that the local citizens had defeated the Comanches in a decisive battle and did not need the help of the Army. Down on the courthouse square is a marker outlining the career of another local citizen, Gen. Allison Nelson, who died in Arkansas while serving in the Confederate Army.

In 1907 the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, established a private academy which later became Meridian Junior College. The college, due to changing condition and the need, and hence lack of proper financial support was forced to close in 1927. Today all that remains of the college is a pair of concrete benches that once flanked the entrance to the main building, a new memorial marker with a part of the original corner stone imbedded in it, and the memories of several hundred now aging men and women who attended it in their youth.

To stand on the rim of the valley in the late afternoon and look across to the opposite rim with the town of Meridian centered around the public square with its native stone courthouse built in 1886, the homes scattered among the oak trees, the cattle and the fields below and the river flowing along at the foot of the cliff of Bee Rock is an experience never to be forgotten.



One of the most unforgettable sounds is that of the melodious tones of the courthouse clock striking late at night.

The Bosque Valley has been called the Switzerland of Texas.

The other town, Decatur is in the rocky hills of Wise County, and is very much like Meridian in some respects except a little larger, but still not a city. Its most distinctive feature is the massive red granite courthouse, also in the center of the public square, which architects say should stand for a thousand years. Built in 1895, it is the same Burnet County granite as the state capitol at Austin. Decatur is also the home of several families whose roots go back to the cattle ranching, pre-Civil War days. One fork of the old Chisholm Trail originated in the county. On the east side of town stands the old stone Waggoner mansion, built before 1900 by Dan Waggoner, originator of the famous DDD brand and the modern Waggoner cattle and oil estate, one of the largest in Texas.

Until 1965 Decatur was the site of Decatur Baptist College which claimed to be the oldest junior college in the world. Like most church-operated junior colleges locked in small towns, changing tastes in education and competition with several nearby state schools made it no longer feasible to operate DBC, so it was move to Dallas where it is still DBC, but Dallas instead of Decatur. An industry has taken over the campus, but the main building has become a civic center and public auditorium.

People are often referred to as being “legends in their own time” and in my opinion Miss Bell Ford of Decatur comes as near being that as anyone I know. She is a native of Decatur who began teaching the third grade in September of 1910 and never taught anywhere else until her retirement a few years ago. She is a founding member of the Owl Club, the second oldest women’s study club in the state, and one of two surviving charter members of the Decatur Chapter of the Eastern Star. She is the unofficial guide to all of the historical and other interesting sites in Decatur and an enthusiastic member of the Wise County Historical Society. Everyone in town knows Miss Bell as she walks over town to visit old friends and make new ones. If you are between twenty-five and seventy and grew up in Decatur and are not in condition to climb some hills and steps, don’t look up Miss Bell.

Two other towns visited on this trip were Sagerton and Rule in Haskell County. Sagerton, where I began teaching in 1921, is now a ghost town, due to changing farming and ranching methods. Gone are the school, the bank, the drug store, the doctor, most of the business block which burned and were never rebuilt. Still there is the old lumber yard and the brick Lutheran Church, where fifty years ago the Rev. Mr. Holm conducted services in German. He was said to have been the only man in Haskell County with a degree of Master of Arts.

Rule is a bigger town, where I taught in 1923-24, but it has also lost ground. Where there were two banks there is only one, where there were three doctors and one dentist there are none. The school is larger due to consolidation with surrounding schools. While there I returned to a former student, Verna Cassle, now Mrs. Morris Neal, her Spanish and Economics notebook I have kept for forty-six years, always planning to return it to her sometime.

To the readers of this paper, please forgive this “Sentimental Journey.”

## **DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, FOURTH OF JULY**

This week we shall again depart from the “remembering” and talk about our country’s birthday and some of the things concerned with it in times past and the present. On the Fourth our country, The United States of America, celebrated its one hundred and ninety-fourth birthday; which is a long time in the age of a person but a short time for the age of a nation.

When the First Continental Congress assembled at Carpenter’s Hall in Philadelphia on September 5, 1774 the members made it very clear that they were loyal subjects of King George III contending for their rights as Englishmen and any man who mentioned the subject of independence probably would have been shunned as a dangerous radical.

By May 10, 1775, when the Second Continental Congress met, conditions had changed to such an extent that there was more and more talk of independence. Space does not permit the relating of these events and conditions, but any good American history text book will do so. On June 6, 1776 Richard Henry Lee of Virginia introduced a three part resolution; one part of which contained these words, “These united colonies are, and of a right ought to be free and independent states...”. John Adams of Massachusetts seconded the motion and after much discussion the resolution was adopted on July 2, 1776. It was predicated at that time that July second would be the national birthday. When Lee’s resolution was introduced a committee of five was elected to put the resolution into writing; this committee was composed of Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman and Robert Livingston. What followed is familiar to anyone who has ever served on such a committee; some said something like this “You go ahead, Mr. Jefferson, anything you say will be all right with me”. Anyhow, the Declaration, except for a few minor changes suggested by Franklin and Adams, is the work of Jefferson. The preliminary draft was submitted to Congress and adopted on July 4, 1776 which date became our national birthday. The Declaration was read to the group outside the hall by Charles Thompson, the Secretary of the Congress. Mr. Thompson was so highly respected for his honesty and veracity that in Philadelphia when a man wished to affirm the truth of something he said, “It is as true as if Charlie Thompson had said it”. The document was delivered to a professional engrosser who produced the parchment official copy which is familiar to most school boys and girls today. It was not until August that the signatures were affixed to this official copy and one man did not sign until 1781.

In the first draft of the Declaration of Independence Mr. Jefferson listed as one of the unalienable rights the right to own property, but he changed it to “the pursuit of happiness” which is in my opinion is about as all inclusive as it can be made. No people on earth are or ever have been as free as modern Americans to indulge in this pursuit of happiness and if any man doubts this let him read the history of this world both in ancient and modern times. The pursuit of happiness should not be taken to mean the right to deprive my fellow citizen of his equal right to find happiness. The right to equal opportunity to make of himself all that is humanly possible in every field should be taken for granted, but not the right to destroy America in the process. Young people born since World War II cannot realize the changes that have come about right here in southwest Louisiana during their lifetime. The new opportunities for all people in the fields of political and civil rights, economic and educational opportunity are almost unbelievable to those of us who grew up in the first half of the twentieth century.

Let us honor the month of July, Mr. Jefferson and his colleagues by studying, working to make his immortal words of the Declaration a reality rather than an impractical ideal.

Some history texts divide the Declaration into three sections, but it seems to me there are four; the introduction, Jefferson's philosophy, the accusations against King George III and the final paragraph which is the actual declaration.

The second section which gives Jefferson's philosophy begins "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights...". There are some ideas or expressions in the above quotation which are even today not clear as to just what Mr. Jefferson had in mind. It is a highly idealistic statement and by some considered extremely radical at that time. The question is, did Jefferson mean "equal" literally or was it a figure of speech? In 1790 there were about 3,800,000 people living in the new nation, "excluding Indians not taxed" and including 600,000 black people most of whom were slaves. Among the white people were well-to-do merchants, large plantation owners, college graduates, small farmers, craftsmen, log cabin frontiersmen and white bond slaves who were little better off than the African slaves. So, who were included in the "all men" referred to? Perhaps it was an ideal in Jefferson's mind rather than a fact.

It has been argued that Jefferson meant equal only in the sight of God, some hold the extreme view of equal possession of material things which ought to be redistributed at least each generation and they quote the old Hebrew law to substantiate this idea. I cannot conceive of Mr. Jefferson not meaning equality before the law and in the courts.

Whatever Mr. Jefferson may have had in mind, we have come a long way in the past 194 years in realizing the ideal he expressed. When the first election was held in 1788 only about one adult in ten had the legal right to vote; property, educational, racial, sex and in some states religious bars to suffrage existed and were enforced. Just this month a new Federal law has been passed lowering the voting age to eighteen, and a court decision has removed the property requirement for voting in bond elections. In Mr. Jefferson's time not only were most black people slaves, but only three-fifths of them were counted as "population" and the slave trade was legal until 1808. In some states it was illegal to teach a black person to read and write or for them to meet in groups for religious or any other purpose.

## MCNEESE STATE UNIVERSITY HISTORY

The passage of the Act raising McNeese State College to the rank of university should bring to realization of a dream many people of this area have had for many years. There may be a few older citizens who can recall the efforts to establish a college in Lake Charles before the turn of the century. The three story, frame building was located on the site of the modern Lake Charles High School. Two different attempts were made to operate Lake Charles College; first by the Watkins interest and later by the Methodist Church. When this last effort failed, Mr. J.B. Watkins, who still held title to the property, in 1903 sold the property to the Calcasieu Parish School Board for use as a public high school.

The campus of McNeese State University was once the site of the parish Poor Farm, but when the parish, and later the state, welfare program was instituted the land became a cattle pasture. During the late twenties and the thirties I can recall passing along that part of old South Street, now Ryan, and seeing cattle grazing on the land. Even after the college was established cattle continued to graze on the campus, to the irritation of faculty and students. The name Cowboys for the athletic teams has a logical, historic background.

During the thirties, after the cattle tick eradication program was established and the Swift packing plant was built, it became possible and profitable to raise good cattle in this area and there was talk of building a cattle show arena on the old Poor Farm land. The Calcasieu Cattlemen's Association was among the supporters of this idea. During the Depression a small group in the Police Jury wanted to sell the land and put the proceeds into the General Fund, but the majority of the members of the Police Jury, led by the late W.E. Holbrook of Ward Six, opposed this plan and continued to advocate the cattle arena plan. It was about 1936 or 1937 that Mr. Holbrook, T.H. Peyton, Dan McFatter and I attended a meeting of the Cattlemen's Association in Lake Charles where the matter of the arena was discussed. Arthur Gayle of Lake Charles was, as I recall, president of the Association and actively supported the plan.

At some point in the discussion someone, Mr. Holbrook I believe, suggested the idea of making the arena a two or three story building with an auditorium and perhaps a junior college on the upper floors. Then the question arose as to who would operate the college. The Calcasieu Parish School Board was approached with the plan for LSU to operate the junior college as a branch of LSU. Dr. Smith is said to have told the committee something like this: "Gentlemen, you may build yourselves a cattle arena and or a junior college, but if you try to put the college on top of the arena LSU will have nothing to do with it." Mr. Holbrook is the authority for this incident.

Finally, a WPA grant was obtained under the sponsorship of the Police Jury and the original buildings of the college were constructed and Lake Charles Junior College of LSU was opened in September of 1939. The head of the college held the rank of Dean and most of the teachers that of Instructor in the LSU organization. At first high schools had some difficulty in persuading their graduates to attend Lake Charles Junior College. Part of the objection seems to have stemmed from the facts that there were no dormitories, no college social life and no athletic program. A more serious objection was that some students complained that when they attempted to transfer their credits to the main LSU campus they were not accepted. The reason given was that the Lake Charles School had not been authorized to offer that course. I mentioned the matter to Mr. W.B. Nash, Registrar of Lake Charles College, who admitted that it had happened, but that in the future a written statement of authority would be obtained from the proper official at Baton Rouge before the course would be taught. This seems to have solved the problem as we heard no more about it.

The college was well under way when the outbreak of the war in 1941 caused most of the young men of what would have normally been college age to enter the armed services. The enrollment dropped to a low ebb

and there was even a rumor that the school would be closed. The end of the war, the passage of the G.I. Bill under which veterans could attend college at government expense, the expansion of the curriculum, establishment of extra-curricular activities, an athletic program and general upgrading of the college in public esteem brought about rapid growth.

In 1940 the college was given independent status and its name changed to John McNeese Junior College in honor of the late John McNeese, Parish Superintendent from 1888 to 1913 and founder of the parish system of public schools. In 1950 the college was given four year rank and the name changed to McNeese State College which it remained until June 1970 when it became McNeese State University.

The late Tather Frazier was the last Dean of McNeese Junior College and the First President of McNeese State College. The following story is told about him upon assuming the position as Dean: He called the faculty together and said something like this; "Ladies and Gentlemen of the faculty of McNeese Junior College, you are to do the teaching here and I will play the politics, you do a good job of teaching and I will do a good job of "politicking" and together we can make McNeese a great school." Whether the story is true or not, it worked out that way and McNeese was on its way to become a great school of which not only southwest Louisiana but the entire state is justly proud.

## TOLEDO BEND HISTORY

Perhaps the word “Read” should replace “Remember” because the events related below occurred long before the time that anyone now living can remember. With practically everyone either going to Toledo Bend or talking about going it seemed that our readers might be interested in the history of the spot and the origin of the name, Toledo Bend. Most of the following is based on John Henry Brown’s History of Texas and some other sources. Mr. Brown was a newspaper man and printer who lived in the 1800’s and took part in a great many of the events he wrote about and knew most of the people concerned. He wrote two rather thick volumes which ended about 1892.

In 1803, when the United States bought Louisiana from France, actually Napoleon I, it theoretically contained all of the western side of the Mississippi Valley. The western boundary of the Louisiana Purchase was very uncertain and subject to dispute. The United States claimed that the Purchase included Texas because LaSalle had established Fort St. Louis on Matagorda Bay while Spain claimed that since the rivers of Texas and southwestern Louisiana were not a part of the Mississippi system, that what is now southwestern Louisiana belonged to Spain. Each side had what it considered reasonable historic basis for its claims.

For about a generation following the Purchase the situation was ideal for a series of semi-piratical filibustering expeditions from Louisiana into Texas. There are all sorts of excuses for these expeditions; catching wild horses for sale to the United States Army, trade with Mexico (Spain), helping Mexico get its independence from Spain or taking Texas for the United States, any good excuse would do. Natchez, Mobile, New Orleans, Pensacola and Opelousas swarmed with adventurous men who were willing to stake their lives for a little excitement and the chance of making a fortune by joining with one of these expeditions. Some “Yankees” and all Mexican historians insist that the Texas Revolution of 1836 and the United States-Mexican War of 1846-48 were but extensions and developments of the filibuster idea.

Skipping over for the time being the story of the Neutral Ground (1806-1819) and the Free State of Sabine we move down to the year 1812. Stationed at the United States Army Post at Natchitoches was a young lieutenant named Augustus Magee who was a graduate of West Point but unhappy at the slowness of promotion and the humdrum of garrison life. Over at Nacogdoches was a former Spanish officer, now a Mexican Revolutionary named Jose Bernardo Maximiliano de Lara Gutierrez (short form Guterrez). He and Magee, who resigned his commission in the U.S. Army, decided to try their luck at filibustering, using as an excuse a plan to help Mexico in its war for independence from Spain.

They organized a force of about 300 men and started down El Camino Real (Now La. 6) into Texas via Nacogdoches. They pushed on toward San Antonio, defeating the Spanish forces sent out against them. Magee’s health was poor, he was said to have tuberculosis, and he grew weaker day by day so he relinquished his command to Col. Kemper, who was an experienced hand at filibustering. The filibusters attacked San Antonio and compelled the Spanish garrison to surrender. Gutierrez caused fourteen of the Spanish officer to be killed, using the excuse that they had been responsible for the deaths of some of Gutierrez’s friends after a battle in Mexico. The resulting dispute caused both Gutierrez and Kemper to resign and both returned to Louisiana. Col. Perry, a friend and associate of Kemper, was elected as commander.

Gen. Jose Alvarez Toledo, a Spanish creole (criollo) born in Cuba had been a member of the Spanish forces in Mexico but had joined with the Mexicans in their war for independence. He had been banished to Louisiana where he aided Magee and Gutierrez by organizing and sending reinforcements. In July 1813 he joined the group at San Antonio. He set up a civil government and established discipline among the filibusters, which had been lacking.

A new Spanish force under Gen. Arredondo came up from Mexico to drive out the filibusters. At Medina Lake, near San Antonio they set up an ambush into which the filibusters fell. Kemper had in the meantime rejoined the group which was now led by Toledo, Kempner and Perry. Magee had been found dead in his tent, the exact cause of his death was disputed, some claiming that he died a natural death, others that he committed suicide and others said that he was murdered. The battle at Medina was fierce and the filibusters were defeated. Toledo assumed full command and started a retreat toward the Sabine with the few men left. Another battle was fought at Spanish Bluff crossing at the Trinity River. Toledo was able to cross the river with his remaining men and continued his march to the east. He finally reached a bend in the Sabine and camped there until he was able to cross into Louisiana. He is quoted as saying that if he had 2,000 men like the Americans who fought under Perry at Medina he could plant the Republican (Mexican) flag in the city of Mexico. An attempt was made to prosecute Toledo for the violation of the United States neutrality laws, but he was such a popular hero on both sides of the Sabine that the attempt failed. He lived the rest of his life in Louisiana with his family across the river from the site of his camp and the bend in the river which became known as Toledo Bend, at least so says John Henry Brown and oral traditions which come down to us.

## VASE FROM LOCAL CLAY

Some of you who were in my history classes between 1944 and 1969 may remember a rather crude, unglazed clay vase with the finger prints of the potter still visible which sat, for the last ten years, on the ledge above the front chalk board and to some of you I told the following story:

Before World War II the schools used to book professional assembly programs through the Southern School Assembly Company. These programs were of various types; musical, cultural, scientific, inspirational, or comic. They lasted about an hour and the cost was nominal, about ten cents per student and most of the student body attended.

In the school session of 1934-35 one of these programs was a husband and wife team whose program was about pottery. They had an exhibit of different types of pottery from several different countries and cultures and periods of time which were exhibited and explained. The demonstration included an old fashioned foot powered potter's wheel similar to the ones mentioned in the Old Testament and elsewhere. The plan was to actually demonstrate the actual making of pottery by the use of the wheel. It was during this time that foundation pits for the present Elementary School were being dug and there were piles of clay heaped alongside the pits. On impulse I sent a student to the pile for a bucket full of clay which was given to the lady with the request that she make something from it if possible.

After carefully washing the clay and removing all the bits of gravel and other trash she put the lump of clay onto the wheel and started spinning and shaping the clay into its size and shape. It has the usual shape of a clay vase, about the size of a quart milk bottle, a little less tall and a greater diameter just below the neck. The lady did not have the time or the facilities to fire or glaze the vase, so it has the color and texture of ordinary dried clay.

By coincidence about ten years later the same sort of program was booked and to my surprise the same couple appeared with the same sort of program. I showed the vase to the lady and asked if she remembered it, but she said that she did not. I told her the story of the vase, but she said that she travelled all over the country and did not remember ever having been in DeQuincy before. She told me that if I would coat the vase with shellac it would hold water and could be used. I still have it, however, in its original condition.

I had heard from my first days in DeQuincy that the bricks used in the original brick school, built in 1910 and some of the other brick buildings in DeQuincy were made at a kiln east of town from clay dug on the spot. The late Harry Floeter was Secretary of the DeQuincy Chamber of Commerce at that time and greatly interested in finding new industries for this area. I told him what I had heard about the earlier brick kiln and showed him the vase and told him its story and he began to speculate on the possibility of establishing a brick plant near here. He decided to collect some samples of local clay and send them to the proper department at Louisiana State University for tests. In due time Mr. Floeter received a report from the testing laboratory stating that the clay was suitable for making common brick and clay pots, but probably not for making the finer grades of bricks and pots. It was suggested that boring for samples be made to determine the extent of the deposits of clay and if they existed in sufficient amounts it might be feasible to develop the industry.

Mr. Floeter contacted several companies in the clay products industry, but as I recall they indicated that they were able to produce all of the product at that time that the market demanded from facilities already in operation and they were not interested in expanding their operations. I wonder if such a situation still exists or if there is a possibility of developing a clay products plant in this area.



## **LOS ADAES, LOUISIANA ARTIFACTS NEAR NATCHITOCHES, LOUISIANA**

About half way between Many and Natchitoches, near the town of Robeline, on El Camino Real (now La. 6) is the site of the only Spanish mission built in Louisiana; the Mission and Presidio of Nuestra Senora del Pilar de los Adaes (the spelling of Adaes varies, sometimes Aades). The mission and military post served a double purpose; that of Christianizing the Indians and holding the territory for the Spanish against the French at Natchitoches. The interesting thing about it is that the men at the two posts, Spanish and French, were usually on friendly terms and shared supplies in time of need and visited back and forth. There was even a wedding between a Spanish girl and a Frenchman.

At the close of the French and Indian War, which was between the French in Canada and the British in their colonies, as far as America was concerned in 1763 all of the western part of LaSalle's Louisiana was ceded to Spain and that part east of the Mississippi to England. There was no need for a presidio at Los Adaes and it was abandoned and after a time the buildings disappeared. The preceding is based on reading and the following from personal experience of the writer.

In the spring of 1946 I attended a meeting of foreign language teachers on the campus of Northwestern State College at Natchitoches. Late on a Sunday afternoon as I was preparing to leave the campus I noticed two young men in Army uniforms who looked as if they were looking for a ride to Fort Polk. I invited them to ride with me and they introduced themselves as Frank Smith of New York whose hobby was bird study. His companion was Frank Fenenga a graduate student and instructor in anthropology at the University of California at Berkley. They were just at Fort Polk while waiting to be discharged and had spent the weekend exploring around Natchitoches; Smith studying birds and Fenenga anthropology.

I asked Mr. Fenenga if he knew about the site of Los Adaes. He did not but was interested in seeing the site, so we stopped. He began to walk over the ground and look for artifacts that had been there almost 200 years waiting for his trained eye to recognize them.

By good fortune the parish road crew had been by recently running the ditches along the road and had exposed over against the outside bank a spot about the size and shape of an old style wash pot where the black top soil had penetrated down into the clay. Mr. Fenenga remarked that it looked like an old trash burial spot and started digging into it with a stick. In time he filled a cigar box with bits of pottery, both of Indian and Mexican manufacture, bits of deer bones, a piece of a Spanish wine bottle and a couple of Spanish musket balls. One of the pottery fragments is that of a shallow, flat bowl which has imbedded in the clay bits of clear glass like substance which appears to me to be of obsidian, the material from which the Aztecs of Mexico made knives and tools as well as dishes and vases. It is beautiful material. Mr. Fenenga was kind enough to offer the artifacts to me and I was selfish enough to take them. Two generations of DeQuincy High students have seen them and heard this story.

I left Mr. Fenenga and Mr. Smith at Leesville and have never seen either of them since, but I have kept up with Mr. Fenenga. In 1955 he was teaching at the University of Nebraska when some bones of a pre-historic man were discovered in a gravel pit and he was sent with a group to examine them. Life Magazine wrote up the story with pictures. I have a copy. Later while I was visiting a museum in California I got into a conversation with Mr. Evans, the Curator, and told him the story of the meeting with Mr. Fenenga. Mr. Evans told me that he and Mr. Fenenga were classmates at Berkley.

During the summer of 1968 I was sitting at the kitchen table in Long Beach, talking with my granddaughter, Donna Ricketts Kelly, and John Kelly, both students of anthropology at California State College at Long Beach, and mentioned my meeting with Mr. Fenenga. They spoke up almost together to tell me that they had been in his classes at Long Beach State where he now teaches. They both will be out on an exploring party with him the summer of 1970. Twenty-two years, two generations and two thousand miles farther along the road and the paths converge again. Small world!

## FOND MEMORIES OF DR. GEORGE LYONS

It is hard to realize that a whole generation of DeQuincy people have been born and grown up without the services of or a memory of the late beloved Dr. George Lyons, known as “Dr. George” to the people of north Calcasieu and south Beauregard parishes.

It is my information that Dr. Fluitt practiced in DeQuincy earlier, but Dr. Lyons “came early and stayed late”, as far as medical service was concerned. Whole families firmly believed that they could neither enter this world nor leave it without the attention of Dr. George!

I first met Dr. Lyons in 1933 following the death of his colleague and friend, Dr. C.R. Price, at Starks. Dr. Lyons made scheduled visits to care for the sick and injured until the late Dr. W.G. Hart arrived and established practice at Starks. However, it should be remembered that the late Dr. A.E. Douglas also helped fill the gap created by the death of Dr. Price.

Older people of this area still remember and repeat stories about Dr. Lyons. One of them concerns a vile-tasting, brown liquid known as Dr. Lyons’ Flu Medicine which he is said to have used during the flu epidemic of 1918 and later. It was never patented but, as I recall, any pharmacist in this area could compound it and dispense it over the counter. A few years ago I asked Carl Perkins or Clyde Walker what was really in it and he replied that it was mostly tobacco juice and quinine. Since Dr. Lyons was known to be a “chewer of the weed” and judging from the taste of the concoction it could have been literally true, but of course it was not. I understand that some old former patients of Dr. Lyons still use it.

Retired Postmaster M.A. Kent is authority for the following story: One night a man from out in the country came to Dr. Lyons home and asked him to come to his house at once to attend some member of the family. Dr. Lyons is reputed to have asked him, “Do you have any money to pay for the call? If you do I wish that you would call one of the other doctors as I was out all night last night and have just come in from a late call and need to sleep. If you do not have the money, however, I will go with you.” (This story is not to be taken as an inference that the other local doctors would not have gone with the man, they all did that sort of thing; but that Dr. Lyons was not going to evade a charity call at the expense of another doctor.)

One afternoon when Coach Alden Vige of Opelousas was coach at DeQuincy on one of the red headed Haley boys was hurt in football practice and Coach Vige brought him to the DeQuincy General Hospital looking for Dr. Drez. At that moment I happened to be leaving the hospital and knew that Dr. Drez was not there but that Dr. Lyons was there. Coach Vige had not met Dr. Lyons previously and when Dr. Lyons left the room for a minute, Coach Vige asked me, “Who is that man, is he a doctor?” I replied, “Oh yes, that is Dr. Lyons; he probably brought this boy into the world”. Haley spoke up and affirmed by statement and from that time on there was a warm, friendly relationship between Coach Vige and Dr. Lyons.

Some time in the late forties Dr. Lyons was involved in a car wreck down in the Starks area. When the news reached DeQuincy, there was considerable concern not only that Dr. Lyons might be seriously injured, but also that Starks people might be deprived of his services for a time. We just did not know “Dr. George,” he commandeered the first car and driver available and continued on his way to make his call. The car was a wreck but not “Dr. George;” it took more than a car wreck to stop him.

Until sometime after World War II there was no veterinarian nearer than Lake Charles, so Dr. Lyons and some of the other medical doctors were sometimes called upon to prescribe for a four-footed patient. The late R.L. Richard told me this story: Someone up in Oretta community had a valuable bull that was ill and seemed

to be choking; so Mr. Richard and Dr. Lyons drove up to see what could be done for the animal. They found a lump in his throat that they thought might have been a sweet potato that had gotten lodged in the animal's throat. I seem to recall that the bull died from something. Later Mr. Richard told Dr. Quilty, Veterinary Surgeon of Lake Charles, about the incident and Dr. Quilty said that lump was normal for cattle and that the bull died from something else.

The day that DeQuincy celebrated "Dr. George Lyons Day" commemorating fifty years of practice in DeQuincy by Dr. Lyons, a parade was held depicting the various stages of Dr. Lyons life with different people impersonating Dr. Lyons at the various stages of his life. I do not recall everyone who took part, but I do recall that Carl Perkins was "Dr. George" during the Model T days. As Carl drove along he was chewing something which may have been Granger Twist, Honest Scrap, Star Navy, Thick or Thin, Tinsley or Brown Mule and never knew what brand Dr. George actually chewed.

At the end of the parade I fell into a conversation with a young man whose face was vaguely familiar but whose name I could not recall. (This happens often with some of the about 5,000 former pupils who have grown up into adults and I have lost contact with them for some time.) The young man and I talked for several minutes about things in general and about Dr. Lyons and I kept thinking that eventually he would mention something or someone that would give me a clue as to his identity. I was just on the point of asking him what year he had graduated either from Starks or DeQuincy High when a group of local and state political leaders dashed up and called him "Senator". Then it was revealed to me that my unidentified "former pupil" was none other than Senator Russell Long. The reason his face looked familiar was because I had seen his picture so many times in the papers and magazines.

## **BOOKS – OLD TEXTBOOKS AND FREE TEXT BOOK LAWS**

Two separate and unexpected telephone calls, one from George (Curly) Hodges and the other from Pannel Sanders, about some rare old books which each had acquired was very interesting to me because I like old books and it called to mind some of the problems we had in Louisiana prior to the passage of the free text book law in 1928. Curly has some old books which he found in some old furniture he acquired. Among them is a set of geography texts bearing a copy write date of 1858 and an old arithmetic text. They also carry a stamp stating that they are the officially adopted text for the state of Louisiana and listing the retail price fixed by contract between the state and the publisher.

Mr. Sanders also has some old text books which were given to him by some friends in Texas. One of them is in French with a title that can be translated approximately as the Elements of Fire Power (or perhaps Fire Works). I have not seen the book but it sounds as if it might be a text used in a military school. Pannel also has a copy of an arithmetic book by Sutton and Bruce. Dr. Sutton taught at the University of Texas before World War I and Sutton Hall on the campus in Austin is named for him. Dr. Bruce was, I believe, was the same president of what is now North Texas State University at Denton.

Mr. B.J. Heath has some old and very unusual law books which are worthy of a separate column and with his permission we shall deal with them later.

Before 1928, when the Louisiana free text book law went into effect, there was usually in the larger towns a store designated as the agent for the state adopted text books. In Calcasieu parish Gunn's Book Store on Ryan Street of Lake Charles was the agent and doubtless there was an agent in DeRidder who handled the books for Beauregard Parish. On the opening day of school each student was given a list of the books and other materials he would need with the supposed cost. He was told to return the next day with the total amount of money needed. This was more theory than fact. The first thing most families did was to check at home and see if there were any of the books which might have been used by some other member of the family. Next the checked with the neighbors and sometimes sales or exchanges could be worked out that were perfectly satisfactory. The trouble with this plan was the parents frequently did not understand the changes that had been made in the state adoptions throughout the years. To the parent an arithmetic book was an arithmetic book and a geography text was a geography text and they did not see why books by different authors and published by different companies could not be used in the same class, especially when it might mean the saving of several dollars. Believe it or not, some of the most modern educational theorist would agree with the parent now. They advocate that each pupil use a book suited to his own reading ability and development in a given subject and that the students in a class use books by several different authors with different viewpoints.

One very frustrating problem facing the teacher was that the family might not have the amount of money needed for the books; this was certainly true if there were several children in the family. The breadwinner of the family might have to wait until payday to buy the books or a farmer might not have sold his crop which in either case might be several days or weeks after the opening of school. Another problem that always arose was that the price asked by the merchant might vary a few cents from the published price which resulted in explanations to the parent and bookkeeping problems for the harassed teacher. The law provided that if a parent would sign a statement that he was unable to buy the books the School Board would buy them for the pupil. However, I have known this to occur only one time, the case of a widow with several children; most men were too proud to sign such a statement.

In his campaign for Governor in late 1927 and early 1928 the late Governor and Senator Huey P. Long advocated that the state own the books and lend them to all of the students regardless of the economic status of the family and following his election the law was passed and the system started in September of 1928.

One unusual feature of the law was that if a student already owned an adopted text he might sell it to the state and then borrow it back, to be returned to the school at the end of the session. This again entailed some long explanations to parents as to why the state would not buy his book but would buy his neighbor's book.

There were some objections to the law from some citizens. One objection was that it would prove too expensive, another was that the whole idea was socialistic (communistic), another was that it would discourage people from owning books and building up their own collection of books; that students would not take proper care of the books that they did not own and that books passed from one student to another might spread disease. To offset this last possibility sometimes removable paper covers, usually furnished by some business firm, with advertising on the cover, were used until the book was returned at the end of the session.

Getting the system established at the beginning of the session of 1928-29 was a little hectic, but it was done and now though there are still problems, usually a shortage of some particular book at the opening of school, the system works very well and is accepted as a matter of course.

The "free paper and pencil" plan was another campaign promise of an "anti-Long" candidate for governor. It has never been fully implemented. Some years ago I started, partly as a joke and partly to remind the students that there is no such thing as "free" materials, the custom of when giving a student paper or a pencil of saying, "Courtesy of John H(igh) Taxpayer". Students started referring to the state furnished materials as "John H's". May I have a John H. pencil or some John H. paper?"

## THOUGHTS ON THE FIRE AT SCHOOL ON AUGUST 18, 1970

If this column sounds as if I am usurping the Editor's chair, I hope that he will forgive me and that the readers will bear with me if it is repetitious in sections

It would appear that about once every generation DeQuincy people lose a school by fire. As has been mentioned, the first school building in DeQuincy was burned in May of 1899 on the eve of opening of the school. The first brick school building in DeQuincy, and this area for that matter, which was built in 1910 and the original DeQuincy High School building built four years later were both destroyed on March 13, 1943. The original building was not burned, but it was damaged and outmoded anyway and was dismantled to make way for the new building in 1943.

On Tuesday, Aug. 18, I was listening to the news on the "Six O'clock Report" from Lake Charles and was mentally congratulating the people of Wards Five and Six, Starks and DeQuincy, that they had no problems concerning a unified school system which, regardless of the anticipated decision of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, could not be solved by the application of a little of the tolerance and good will that exists between the racial groups of the two towns. My sympathies were with Supt. C.W. Hanchey, the Administrative Staff, the School Board and the teachers as they strove to find a solution to the situation in Wards Three and Four of Calcasieu Parish.

Shortly before 3 a.m. on Wednesday morning Mrs. Ratliff called me to investigate something that sounded ominous; which was a loud popping noise. We looked out, and the north wing and across the front near the center of the elementary building was already in flames, just a half block down Second St. from our front door. I called the City Police and they sounded the alarm and as soon as possible the DeQuincy Volunteer Firemen were on the job. It must be remembered that these dedicated foremen were at home in bed and even after they received the call had to dress and report to the station to man the trucks and that the fire was well underway when it was reported. They arrived as quickly as it was humanly possible. They were later assisted by units from Sulphur and DeRidder. It soon became evident that a choice would have to be made whether to sacrifice the gymnasium and save the cafeteria and rest rooms and some class rooms or save the gymnasium and lose the other parts of the buildings. Whoever made the decision, it was a wise one as an elementary school can operate very well without a gymnasium, but it cannot operate very well without restrooms, a cafeteria and classrooms.

The gymnasium was built in 1937 under the administration of Supt. H.A. Norton, Asst. Supt. T.S. Cooley, Principal C.W. Hanchey and the late M.M. Walker as athletic director. The late T.E. McNamara was school board member from Ward Six. The gymnasium was sponsored by DeQuincy American Legion Post No. 183 with C.E. Cline as Commander and the late A.E. Humphrey, Sr., as Post Adjutant. The architect was H.J. Duncan and T. Miller and Sons were the general contractors.

The first outside electric welding done in DeQuincy was on the gymnasium frame.

I believe that the DeQuincy gymnasium was the first full-sized gymnasium built in Calcasieu Parish except for the Lake Charles City High School, which was not a part of the parish system at that time.

The two-story building originally the DeQuincy High School, was built in 1924 and has the dubious distinction of having survived two fires in the Elementary School without serious damage.

The building just destroyed was built under war-time conditions when materials and labor were almost unobtainable and a lot of substitutions in materials had to be used. Some of these were later changed when materials became available. I recall that brass and bronze plumbing fittings, valves and faucets, were not used originally but substitute metals of iron and aluminum were used. Dunn and Quinn of Lake Charles were the architects and a Mr. Quick was the general contractor. In a conversation with some of the bricklayers I found out that they had learned their trade at Tuskegee Institute and were personally acquainted with the late Dr. George Washington Carver, the distinguished scientist to whom the world owes so much for his discoveries of new uses for southern farm crops, especially peanuts and sweet potatoes.

The problems now facing DeQuincy and the School Board is how to house the some 400 little people whose classrooms have been destroyed. A small grain of comfort can be obtained from the fact that we are in a better position than we were in 1943. Then all of the white school was on one campus, which presents no problems; then neither the former Grand Avenue School (now the DeQuincy Junior High School) nor the single story annex to the old high school building had been built. The cafeteria, the restrooms and some of the classrooms of the elementary complex are still usable.

In 1943 the churches, the Masonic Lodge and even one filling station were all made available for class rooms and I am sure that DeQuincy churches and other organizations and firms having available space will gladly make them available. There are, I believe some vacant store buildings in town which could be used as "store front" school rooms like those which are used in some of the larger cities now.

I am of the opinion, not supported by any real knowledge however, that the most serious problem facing Mr. Hanchey and the School Board will be that of financing the new construction. Of course there will be some insurance but I doubt if there will be enough to replace the burned building and I suspect that District 21, Ward Six, is already bonded to just about its limit. We citizens may be called upon to make some extra sacrifices and adjustments but with patience, good will and hard work, not only by the administration and the school board, but by the students, the faculty and the citizens as a whole, the problem can be solved.



## OLD MILITARY ROAD

On September 8 a group of interested Texans and others will gather near Sabine Pass to celebrate the anniversary of one of the most unique battles known to warfare, the Battle of Sabine Pass of 1863. Lt. Dick Dowling, in civilian life a Houston bar tender, and “forty-seven Irishmen” defeated and almost destroyed a Federal force of some 4,000 men designated “to show the flag in Texas,” capture Beaumont and cut a trade route that was itself unusual.

When the Southern states seceded from the United States in 1860-61 and formed the Confederate States of America, the leaders on both sides knew that the Confederacy would be compelled to trade with the outside world, selling its products, mostly cotton, and buying the countless things which it did not produce. President Lincoln of the United States proclaimed a blockade of the southern ports and as fast as possible sent ships to enforce the blockade. The blockade was never one-hundred percent successful; it was nearly enough so as to force the Confederates into some ingenious and daring plans to “run the blockade.” This column deals with one of those plans and its effect on local history.

Several attempts were made by the Federal forces to invade Texas and southwest Louisiana but none of them were ever really successful. The area on both sides of the Sabine extending into the eastern half of Texas became important sources of men and supplies and blockade running points. Niblets Bluff on the Sabine became a point in by-passing the blockade.

A map printed by the National Geographic Magazine for April, 1961 shows several roads leading from Louisiana into Texas in 1861, at the beginning of the Civil War. One ran from Shreveport to Marshall, Texas; another ran from Mansfield, Louisiana to Shelbyville, Texas; a third from Natchitoches, Louisiana to Nacogdoches, Texas. This was the historic “El Camino Real,” now Louisiana State Highway 6 in Louisiana and Texas State Highway 6, also. The fourth route led from Alexandria southward to Vermillionville, now Lafayette, thence west via Lake Charles to Niblets Bluff.

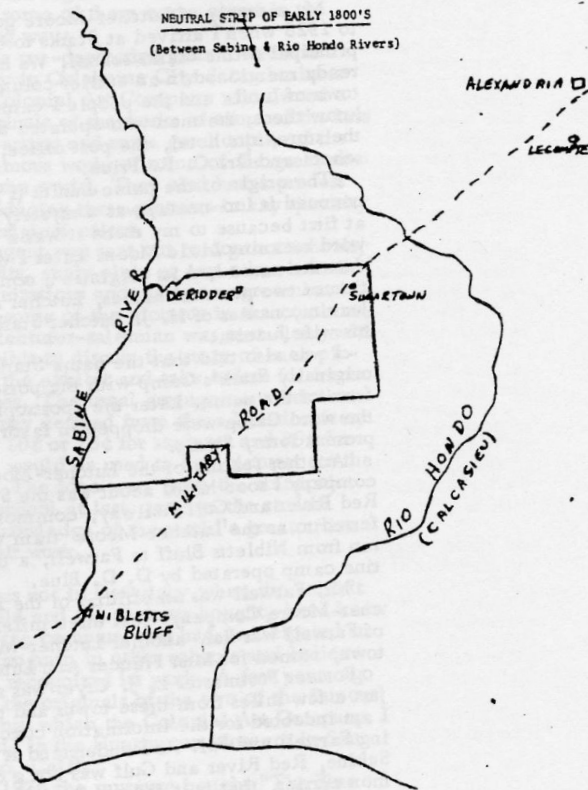
The stream now known as Old River, southwest of Starks was then the main channel of the Sabine and the site of Niblets Bluff was an important crossing, hence the Confederates had built a rather strong earthwork fort to protect the crossing. Parts of the old earthworks can still be seen. The late Mr. Seagraves of DeQuincy and Starks, an uncle of the late Mrs. U.L. Stephens of Starks, as a young Confederate soldier helped build the fort and in 1930 pointed out the remains of the fort to a group of American History students from Starks High School and me.

Early in 1863 Confederate General Edmund Kirby Smith was made commander of the Trans-Mississippi Department of the Confederacy which consisted of Louisiana (west of the Mississippi), Texas, Arkansas and theoretically Missouri. The Department was sub-divided into Districts with a subordinate general in command of each. General Richard (Dick) Taylor was in command of the District of Louisiana.

Gen. Smith (Some books give his name as the hyphenated surname form Kirby-Smith.) planned to make his Department as self supporting as possible, since he knew that he could expect little or no help from the Confederacy east of the Mississippi. He almost succeeded and the Department was sometimes facetiously referred to as “Kirbysmithdom”. He was the last Confederate General to surrender. Part of the plan was to build a road from Alexandria, Louisiana to Niblets Bluff as an outlet into Texas and Mexico and then to the outside world. Parts of the road, known as the Old Military Road, can still be seen and used.

A recent hand drawn map found in the files of The DeQuincy News shows this road starting at Alexandria, then to Sugartown, passing, passing through the square block of Calcasieu Parish where DeQuincy is now and thence to Niblets Bluff. I doubt the detailed accuracy of this map. I talked with three living men, the Rev. Clarence Green, Mr. M.A. Kent and Mr. W.W. Bishop, all of whom lived as young men along the Old Military Road and can still point out parts of it. They agree that the road passed some six or seven miles north of Dry Creek and thence southwest, crossing the present Highway 27 north of Singer, probably near old Juanita. The lower end of the road, which can still be travelled as a parish road, begins as a fork from the Starks-Vinton highway just before the highway passes the Starks oil field and sulfur mine. It ends to the right and passes in front of the old C.T. Van Meter home. People who have gone swimming at the old pumping canal have traveled it. The road continues on beyond the canal to Niblets Bluff. The canal is modern and did not exist in the eighteen sixties.

Cotton was loaded on to wagons at Alexandria and hauled over the road to Niblets Bluff where it was transported down the Sabine River into Sabine Lake and from there up the Neches River to Beaumont, where it was transferred to the Texas and New Orleans Railway. (Maps show that this railway went to Orange but apparently that section was not used in this trade.) The cotton went by rail to Houston where it was again loaded onto wagons and hauled to Brownsville, Texas, thence across the Rio Grande to Matamoros and Bagdad, Mexico where neutral ships, mostly British, brought in goods the Confederacy needed and picked up the cotton. The imported goods were then sent east over the same route in reverse. When the Federal forces held Brownsville for a time the western terminus of the Military Road was moved to Laredo and down Mexican roads to the Mexican Gulf ports. This was made possible partly because of the French occupation of Mexico at this time. Space does not permit going into that story. After the defeats of the Federals at Sabine Pass the trade along this route continued until the end of the war. In May of 1864 there was the battle of Calcasieu Pass, but “that is another story.” The iron “walking beam” of the USS Clifton which was sunk in the battle of Sabine Pass can be seen on the left of Sabine Pass Avenue in Beaumont on the bank of the Neches just before the traveler reaches Hotel Dieu Hospital.



MAP OF OLD MILITARY ROAD

## YELLOW JACK RECALLED

There may be a few older people around; I am not one of them, who remember the yellow fever epidemics which existed in the south before 1900. No one knew exactly what caused the disease or how to prevent or cure it.

It was deadly; for example in the summer of 1878 there were 3,000 deaths in New Orleans alone from "Yellow Jack", but the following summer of 1879 there were only 17 cases and six deaths in New Orleans. Of the six deaths three of them were former Confederate General John B. Hood, Mrs. Hood and one of their children.

All sorts of devices were tried to prevent the dread disease; one of them was that of firing cannons at regular intervals to break up the foul air which was supposed by some to cause the disease. Another device was that of burning barrels of tar on the streets. This last may have been of some benefit in that it drove away the mosquitoes which spread the disease; though no one seems to have realized it.

One old friend told me that when his family lived in Missouri but had relatives in south Louisiana and a letter was received from the Louisiana relatives it was the custom to hold the letter with fire tongs and put it in the oven of the cook stove and heat it thoroughly before opening it.

Another device was the "shotgun quarantine" by which armed guards were stationed at the roads leading into a town to exclude anyone who did not have a certificate signed by a doctor, or lacking a doctor the postman of the last town the traveler had passed through stating that there was no yellow fever in that town.

While doing some research on another topic about ten years ago I saw in the Shreveport Journal, files for the years 1897 or 1898 a daily list of the men who would be on duty the next day to enforce the fever quarantine. They were all volunteers. The same paper carried an editorial in one copy condemning the city of Monroe for not enforcing the quarantine and threatening to stop all rail shipments and travel between the cities if Monroe did not enforce the quarantine.

About the same time the Lake Charles American had two different news stories about the matter; one was that a carload of scrap iron from the east was isolated from Lake Charles for fear that somehow fever might be carried in the car, the other story was that a car load of cabbage from below New Orleans was destroyed for fear that it might cause the fever.

The late Senator Gilbert Henagan told this story at the celebration honoring the late Dr. George Lyons for his fifty years of service to the people of this area: Mr. Henagan left Merryville on his way to Lake Charles and when he reached the outskirts of DeQuincy they stopped him and called for his yellow fever certificate. It was satisfactory and the guards told him to look up young Dr. George Lyons who would countersign his certificate to the effect that there was no yellow fever in DeQuincy. This was done and Mr. Henagan was able to proceed to Lake Charles where he was again stopped and required to exhibit his certificate signed by Dr. Lyons.

The late H.W. Hamilton told me this story: He was employed at a sawmill in the Leesville area when the yellow fever scare hit the community and the mill closed down. Young Mr. Hamilton had not yet married Miss Vyola Ballard, the future Mrs. Hamilton, so he left that area and made his way over into east Texas looking for a sawmill job. When he reached a town over in east Texas and tried to enter it, the guards stopped

him and refused to let him enter the town. Fortunately, the fever epidemic did not develop that year and the mill near Leesville reopened and he returned to his previous job.

Down in Havana, Cuba, there was a Dr. Carlos Finlay who had an idea that somehow mosquitoes had something to do with the spread of the dread “Yellow Jack”, but he lacked the resources to experiment with his idea. After the Spanish-American War of 1898 a team of United States Army doctors and others lead by Dr. Walter Reed carried out an experiment based on the theory of Dr. Finlay.

They build two identical screened cabins, in one of them they placed a group of volunteers who used the clothing of men who had died with the fever, and they slept in the beds in which the patients had died, used the cooking utensils and dishes which they had used. None of these things had been washed or sterilized since the death of the previous users. If bodily contact would spread the fever these men should have taken the fever. They did not.

In the other cabin everything was carefully sterilized but mosquitoes were introduced and the volunteers were encouraged to allow the insects to bite them. These men did develop the fever and in spite of the most careful attention some of them died. Among the survivors was a soldier named Hanberry who was a relative of the late Will Hanberry and J. Mertz Hanberry, both of DeQuincy. Dr Finlay, who had been ridiculed at one time, was vindicated.

Following the experiment people were taught to screen their houses, drain the pools of stagnant water or put oil on them and avoid mosquitoes as much as possible and yellow fever could be controlled. About 1900 the Lake Charles American carried a full page notice signed by Dr. Reed, Dr. Finlay, Dr. Lazear and others advising people that yellow fever was not contagious by person-to-person contact, but only by mosquito bites and then only by a certain species of this mosquito, the Stegomyia.

As a result of this experiment yellow fever has practically been eliminated from the United States and I dare say that the most modern doctors have never seen a case of “Yellow Jack”. However, constant precautions are taken to see that the Stegomyia does not enter from one of the countries where full precautions are not taken.

## **DR. ROBINSON – DENTIST IN DEQUINCY**

In 1921 there arrived in DeQuincy from north Louisiana a family that for almost fifty years was to serve and continue to serve the DeQuincy area in ways that would be impossible to list completely. Dr. and Mrs. Robinson and their baby daughter, Fanny Sue, composed the family.

Dr. Robinson had been a millwright before he studied dentistry and built the sawmill at Elizabeth as his last job of that type. The doctor never lost his love for fine tools and workmanship and more than one local carpenter told me that Dr. Robinson knew more about the use of the carpenter's steel square than any one in town and when the carpenters encountered a difficult problem involving the use of the square they looked up "Doc."

When the L.J. Cryer home, next door to the Robinson home, was being built the workmen were having some difficulty laying out the long elliptical arch which spans the front porch of the Cryer home. I happened to be with Dr. Robinson when he reached home one afternoon and the carpenters asked for help with the arch. Within a few minutes with the square and a small device resembling a pantograph the doctor laid out the ellipse and the workmen were able to saw it out full size. He carried his operative work over into the speculative field and was a lifelong member of the Masonic fraternity and served as Master of the DeQuincy Lodge.

There are numerous adults around this area who recall, as children going to Dr. Robinson for dental work and being frightened and nervous but forgot their uneasiness when "Doc" pulled a toy or some sort of treat out of the thin air. All this means that Dr. Robinson as one of his several skills was a magician or sleight of hand artist. He never claimed to be anything but an amateur magician, but those who saw him work declare that he could have made good in show business as a magician.

There were and are numerous violinists and "fiddlers" in this area, but Dr. Robinson was the only one I ever knew who made his own instruments. He told me that he had no real talent as a musician that it was purely mechanical on his part, but I suspect that he was just being overly modest about his talent. He made his violins with the same care and attention to detail he used in making a set of dentures or fitting a bridge for a patient. He chose the wood with care and seasoned it well. On one of my last visits to his office he showed me a cross-section of a log he proposed to use for violins, but he was going to air dry it for at least two years before using it. I doubt that he ever used that particular log section.

His interest extended over into the fields of gardening and poultry raising. He always had a small but scientifically managed garden and at one time he had a flock of purebred bantams and was experimenting in reducing their size even more by selective breeding. He was one of the first men I knew to experiment with vitamins in chicken's drinking water to see what effect it would have on their growth.

One of his friends was a Mr. Ousley, who will be remembered as a somewhat eccentric but talented artist of the Grandma Moses type, who had a sort of combination camp and studio on the Calcasieu River near Westlake. Mr. Ousley specialized in painting scenes along the river, using canvas and also odd shape cypress boards. Dr. and Mrs. Robinson owned, and perhaps Mrs. Robinson still owns, several examples of Mr. Ousley's work.

The doctor had two problems; he could not pass a construction job without stopping to evaluate the plan, the workmanship and the material and if they were not all up to his standards, he worried. The other problem was that once he had a patient the patient did not want to leave him. People who moved away tried to wait until they could come back to DeQuincy to Dr. Robinson for dental care. There is a story that one man who moved

to New York City waited to get back to Dr. Robinson for dental care. Another patient who was out of town when she heard of Dr. Robinson's death in 1946 said she felt like it was the end of everything as far as her dental work was concerned. She is still wearing the dentures he made for her.

Mrs. Robinson has served DeQuincy in all sorts of community projects; in her church, she and her daughter, Mrs. Fannie Sue Heard, are both Past Matrons of the Adah Chapter No. 34 Order of the Eastern Star. I wonder if there are not some of the voters in DeQuincy who would have doubts about the legality of an election if Mrs. Robinson did not serve as one of the Commissioners.

Mrs. Heard has taught a full generation of DeQuincy High School students how to type and keep books and has been the producer and director of the baccalaureate and graduation programs at DeQuincy High School "since the memory of man not runneth not to the contrary." For almost a generation DeQuincy High School students have had the guidance of Mrs. Heard as they worked together to produce the school yearbook, The DeCalla, formerly The Pine Stump.

## **YAMBILEE GAME STORIES**

About the time this appears in print the citizens of Opelousas and vicinity will be celebrating their annual festival, the Yambilee which calls to mind that a generation ago the DeQuincy High School Tigers nearly always played the Opelousas High School team a football game as a part of the program.

About the same time but later in the years, the Tigers made at least two trips farther east to play in a bi-district game, once to Lutchter and once to Reserve. This may not be the order in which they played and they many have made more than two trips, but these tow I remember.

To each of these games the band, the Pep Squad, and the student body and adult supporters traveled by train. If the game was on Friday we dismissed school in time to catch the east bound Mo. Pac. Passenger which passed through DeQuincy about noon. We returned on the night train which reached DeQuincy sometime in the "wee small hours of the morning".

The students enjoyed these trips very much, but to those of us who were older and charged with the responsibility of the safety and welfare of the students it was not an entirely relaxing experience. The students were usually well supplied with enthusiasm as well as numerous bags of sandwiches, cookies, homemade cake, candy and anything else edible and portable.

It might seem to an adult that there were enough of these things to last a week, but not so. By the time we reached our destination almost all of the supplies had disappeared and there remained only the paper bags and napkins to litter the cars. The enthusiasm also remained in generous amount.

The Yambilee games were played in the afternoon and until the end of the game we chaperons did not have any serious problems or worries; they came later. As soon as the game was over the DeQuincy boys and girls descended upon the stores, restaurants and other places where fuel to re-stoke the "inner man" (boy or girl in this case) was sold.

It was during this period on one of the trips that a recent bridegroom from DeQuincy, Horace Lynn Jones, discovered that somewhere on the trip by pickup truck he had lost his billfold, and there he and Gloria were hungry and no money.

Fortunately, Horace Lynn saw Joe Clark, a friend from DeQuincy, but working in Opelousas, who helped Horace cash a check and Horace and Gloria were once more "the happy couple". After the "re-stoking" process was over it was the picture show. The show would be over about 10 p.m. and then there was the waiting of several hours until the west bound train arrived about 1 a.m.! Most of the business houses had closed and there was nothing for the DeQuincy students to do while waiting for the train, and that is when the strain on the nerves of the older people began.

I realize now that if we had shown a little more enterprise and initiative we might have organized some sort of activity for the students such as a late picture show or asked some local church group or other organization to help us organize an activity for the out of town students, but we did not.

Be it said to the credit of the DeQuincy students of those days, they never did any serious damage to Opelousas. One night it rained and everyone went to the depot early to wait for the train. There were some



bundles of a New Orleans newspaper of the day before piled up on the platform which had missed the connection of some other train. Someone broke into the bundles and started using the papers as improvised raincoats and hats. By the time I reached the depot the papers were well scattered over the platform and the night operator ticket agent was to put it mildly just plain “mad as hops”. We gathered up the papers and left the platform in fair condition once more. The train finally arrived, we boarded it and arrived home wet and tired and ready for bed and breakfast.

On one of the Lutch or Reserve trips, I do not recall which, it also rained during the game, which was played at night. The home team outweighed the DeQuincy boys by several pounds on the average and the wet grounds favored the heavier team, so we lost, by what score I do not recall. After the game was over and we started home “Doc” Clyde Walker was heard to remark, “Oh well, DeQuincy is still the dry field champions”.

It was during this game that some former DeQuincy students who were enrolled at LSU came down to the game. Among them was “Spud” Baldwin, Jr., now a Ph.D. in modern languages and a college teacher. Some of the “home town people” were talking about the DeQuincy team in French, so Spud and I decided to turn the tables on them by talking in Spanish.

The local fans overheard us and began to wonder, out loud in French, what language Spud and I were speaking. They knew it was not English and still not French, though it sounded a little like French. We never did enlighten them.

From this trip we also arrived home on the early train, cold, wet, and tired and hungry but in our own minds “we could have beaten them on a dry field”. The end of passenger trains in this area makes it impossible for modern day students to have an experience such as this.

\*\*\* W.S. “Gee Boo” Renfrow told me that the statue of Lt. Dick Dowling near Sabine Pass, Texas erected in honor of Dowling and “his 47 Irishmen” was executed by Herring Coe who is a cousin to Mrs. Renfrow. Mr. Coe also did the memorial to the students and teachers of New London, Texas who lost their lives in the explosion and fire which wrecked the school about 1935. Mr. Coe is now engaged in executing a memorial to the Texas men who served in the Confederate forces during the siege of Vicksburg, Mississippi in 1863.

## **HISTORY OF LUTCHER-MOORE**

The sale of the stock and assets of the Lutch-Moore Lumber Company to Boise-Southern brings to a close the career of a firm which goes back almost a century, to 1877. Lutch-Moore has been almost a family enterprise since it was founded by Henry J. Lutch and John Waltermann at Orange, Texas.

My memory of Lutch-Moore goes back to 1928 when I arrived at Starks to become the principal of the Starks school. We have already mentioned in an earlier column the town of Lunita and the people I came to know there; the men who operated the mill, the store, the hotel, the post office, the school and Dr. C.R. Price.

The origin of the name Lunita (I pronounced it Loo-neeta) was a mystery to me at first because to my mind it was a Spanish word meaning Little Moon. Later I was told that the name had its origin in a combination of two personal names, Lutch and Juanita, names of H.J. Lutch Stark and his wife Juanita.

I was also told that the name Starks was originally Stark's Camp with the possessive form of the name. Later the apostrophe and the word Camp were dropped in favor of the present form, Starks.

Another feature of the Lutch-Moore company I soon heard about was the Sabine, Red River and Gulf Railway, commonly referred to as the Lutch-Moore tram which ran from Nibletts Bluff to Farwell, a turpentine camp operated by D.D. Blue.

Mr. Farwell was an official of the Lutch-Moore Company. Just three miles south of Farwell was Fal, another Lutch-Moore town, named for Mrs. Frances Ann Lutch.

Former Postmaster L.J. Cryer was reared just a few miles from these towns and to him I am indebted for the information concerning Farwell and Fal. As I understand it the Sabine, Red River and Gulf was not a common carrier; that is it did not furnish transportation to the public, so that shortly after 1930 when it was decided to discontinue the operation and scrap the line there was no problem as far as legal permission was concerned.

They brought all of the rolling stock down to Starks and then started taking up the track behind the last train. The rails and other metal parts were brought down to Starks and stored.

Among the locomotives were some that were said to have been used in the construction of the Panama Canal shortly after 1900. When the canal was completed Lutch-Moore bought the locomotives and brought them to Louisiana. Among them was an unusual type of locomotive called a Shay, (I hope this is the correct spelling,) whose pistons and cylinders were arranged vertically and drove the drive wheels through a system of gears. I never saw one of these machined in motion and do not pretend to know just how they operated, however I did see them after they were stored at Starks.

These materials were sold as scrap iron and the story got around that they were sold to the Japanese who converted them into war material, and that they were later used against Americans. I heard one of the Drakes, I have forgotten his given name, say "I sure would hate to see one of those old fish plates come sailing toward me." It was later determined that the metal was sold to Japan.

To me Lutch-Moore meant one man, the late H.J. Lutch Stark. While I never met Mr. Stark, I heard so many stories about him that I almost felt as if I knew him in person. I hope that the Boise-Southern

Company will see fit to maintain the Shangri-La Botanical Garden in Orange, and if it is still there, the herd of Texas Longhorn cattle which Mr. Stark established.

One of the contributions for which Mr. Stark was know over a wide section of the United States was his sponsorship of the Bengal Guards, a girl's drum and bugle corps of the Stark High School at Orange. Mr. Stark, so they said furnished the instruments, the uniforms and all other equipment, including buses for the members and a truck for their equipment, hired an instructor and sent them on trips over the country to appear on programs at all sorts of worthwhile events.

Any girl student of the Stark High School who had musical talent of almost any degree, who maintained a high standard of scholastic grades and conduct was eligible to be a member of the Bengal Guards. It was considered a high honor and a privilege to be a member and the family had to make sacrifices of time and energy for the sake of having a daughter in the organization.

One mother of a Guard told me almost a generation ago that the family schedule had to be almost built around the practice hours of the Guards. The organization was dropped shortly before Mr. Stark's death, but I have an idea scattered over the United States there are mothers of teenage daughters, and perhaps granddaughters, proudly saying, "I was a member of the Bengal Guards!"

The name of Lutch-Moore may disappear, but somehow I feel that Mr. Stark, the Bengal Guards and the familiar blue alligator painted on the trees of Lutch-Moore timber will be remembered for years to come.

## ART IN THE SCHOOLS

For about as far back as any ex-student or former teacher can remember copies of some of the works of some noted artists have hung in the class rooms of the old school on McNeese Street. One of them is "The Horse Fair" by the French woman artist Rosa Bohhuer. It hung in the auditorium to the left of the stage, as the viewer faced the stage. There was another picture on the right side of the stage, but I think it was changed from time to time.

Over the main doorway to the auditorium is an oil portrait of the late M.M. Walker, the father of Rolly and Tom Walker, who was Coach and later Principal of the DeQuincy High School in the late thirties and middle forties. The portrait was painted by Mr. Olivier of Lake Charles and was given to the school by the class of 1945 following Mr. Walker's death. It is a composite picture copied from two photographs since Mr. Olivier never saw Mr. Walker in life.

Another older picture is a bust portrait of Gen. Robert E. Lee dressed in his uniform as a Confederate General. It hung in my class room above and back of my desk for about twenty five years. It was about the most conspicuous non-living object in the room and visitors usually noticed and made some comment.

Once in a while some student, if I were out in the hall while classes were changing, thought it a huge joke to turn the general's picture upside down and waited to see me climb up in my chair to return the general to his proper position.

One of our visitors who noticed the Lee picture was a young man from Mexico, a relative of the Kroger family. He noticed the military uniform at once and asked in Spanish, "What is the name of the great general"? I translated his question to the students and someone spoke up and said, "Now, you have said that you would like to try teaching United States history to Spanish speaking people in Spanish, here is your chance". So we took a few minutes to tell Jorge (George) about the American Civil War and General Lee.

There were a number of pictures which were lost in the fire of 1943 as well as some others which are still in the rooms of the old high school building. The source of these pictures is perhaps unknown to a whole generation of DeQuincy students. A few of these pictures were given to the school by individuals and organizations here in town, but at least some of them came about in the following way:

In the pre-depression years there was a company in Oklahoma City doing business as the Colonial Art Company who owned a few originals of the works of some of the less famous artists and some good copies of the more famous works of some of the great artists of the world. They also had a process of reproducing these pictures in any quantity in the original colors.

An agent was sent out to contact schools, PTA units, study clubs or any other interested organizations and make an agreement to exhibit some of the pictures in the community. A lecturer-salesman was sent along with the exhibit to discuss the story of each picture in the exhibit and take orders for framed copies. The usual arrangement was that the money derived from the admission fees, usually 10 cents or 15 cents for students and 25 cents for adults would be used to buy pictures for the school. The idea was, from the standpoint of the school at least, to give the student some knowledge of the world's great artists and their work.

I was not in DeQuincy when the exhibit was held and the pictures bought, but I knew about the company and had participated in their program in other schools and believe that I recognized its work. A few years ago I

saw the originals of the two of the famous paintings which the Colonial Art Company copied, in the Huntington Museum in San Marino, Calif.

In 1926 the museum bought “The Blue Boy” by the English artist Sir Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788) for approximately \$375,000, the highest price ever paid for a painting at a private sale. The museum also owns “Pinkie” by Sir Thomas Lawrence for which it paid \$359,650, the highest price ever paid for a painting at an auction. These two paintings were popular and the Colonial company sold many copies of them, but I do not recall seeing either of them in the DeQuincy School.

## **AIR SHOW AT LAKE CHARLES AND STORY OF EARLY DAY BALLOONISTS**

DeQuincy High School graduates previous to the class of 1970 need not read this column. You have already heard this story, which is suggested by the recent air show at Lake Charles featuring the world's largest airplane.

When I was born in 1901 the Wright brothers had not made their historic flight and all the progress in aviation and aerospace exploration has occurred within my lifetime. I use to see the old fashioned hot air balloon ascensions at the Wise County Texas Old Settlers Reunion and elsewhere before World War I. The "daring balloonist" went up from the reunion groups and floated over the country side for a short distance and up a few hundred feet and then released his parachute and floated to the ground before the eyes of his admiring and awestruck audience. His balloon would deflate and drop to the ground, to be retrieved and used again at another fair or reunion in another town.

One balloonist called "Little Dutch" lost his life at Bridgeport, Texas when his parachute failed to open. I did not see this tragedy, but read about it in the newspaper.

At Decatur, Tex., there lived the family of Dr. Ingram, whose sons, Jay, Aubrey and Selma, as well as his two daughters, were all interested in motor vehicles of all sorts. The oldest son, Jay, owned a Jackson Racer (probably a "hot-rod" to moderns) which one of the Ingram sisters drove at the "high speed" of fifty miles an hour and had her picture in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram seated at the wheel as a result.

About 1914 there appeared in Decatur a rather small man whose name was, as I recall, Lefevre or something like that. He was commonly referred to as The Frenchman. He announced that he could build and fly an airplane, but he seemed to be looking for a partner who could finance the project.

Dr. Ingram and Jay entered into the plan and the plane was built. The "hangar" was on the second floor of a building and when the plane was finished it was dismantled, carried down stairs, loaded onto a wagon and hauled out to a pasture and reassembled.

From there it took off for short flights around town and was dismantled sometimes and hauled to surrounding towns for exhibition flights at fairs and other community gatherings. The plane was a very simple box kite, pusher type biplane. The propeller faced to the rear, hence the designation "pusher". The pilot, Lefevre, sat on a seat similar to a modern motorcycle seat with each foot on a rudder and operated the elevators, as I presume they were called, by turning a wheel which was mounted in front of him about chest high.

There were some sash cord cables which ran to the rear of the plane. The motor was cranked by spinning the propeller; this was done by someone with strong arms and agile feet, this last to enable the cranker to get clear of the propeller if the motor started.

If some aviation fan says I am in technical error about these things, please remember that I am not an aviator and write from pure memory about events of well over fifty years ago.

Skipping over World War I, the Lindberg flight and the subsequent development of commercial and private aviation until World War II brings us down to a tragedy which occurred just south of DeQuincy in the early part of World War II.

Barksdale Field near Shreveport or Bossier City was the training center for bomber crews and the DeRidder Air Base (abandoned after the war) was a center for training fighter pilots, the former using the B-17 Bomber and the latter P-38 Fighter or Pursuit planes. Planes from both bases frequently flew over this area. One day a B-17 was cruising south of DeQuincy not far from the Marcantel settlement and at the same time a pilot in a P-38 was soloing over the same area. For some reason the pilot of the P-38 started “buzzing” the B-17 and on one of his sorties he crashed into the bomber, sending it plunging to the ground. The entire bomber crew was killed but the pilot of the P-38 managed to bail out and parachuted to the ground in safety. His plane crashed into the woods along Houston River.

Witnesses to the tragedy reported it at once and before long the Military Police arrived and sealed off the area but not before people from this area began to arrive on the scene. The Rev. James Douglass, then Jimmy Douglass, a student at DeQuincy High School, was one of those who visited the scene.

He told me that he tried to take pictures of the accident, but that the Military Police confiscated his film. A few years ago a student who lived in that area told me that pieces of the wreckage could still be seen.

## **GROCERY STORES IN THE EARLY DAYS AND COMPARISON WITH MODERN SUPERMARKET**

The other day while shopping in one of the local stores the thought struck me of the changes in retail merchandising since I worked in a grocery store about fifty years ago. Then the stores were all locally owned, a one store operation; no chain stores and no nationally franchised stores. I never saw a store with the sign "General Store" such as are seen in movie and television shows depicting those and earlier times. I saw a few country stores with the sign "General Merchandise", however. The store I worked in carried the sign: W.L. Dallas, Pure Food Store, Staple and Fancy Groceries.

The noticeable difference is in the things that the grocery stores did not handle which are common stocks today. No school supplies, no shelf hardware, no drugs, no cosmetics, no fresh meat except for a few dressed turkeys at Christmas, no fresh milk and generally only "country butter". "Creamery" butter was unpopular and the average housewife would buy it only as a last resort. Pure lard was in demand with Cottolene about the only acceptable vegetable shortening sold.

Among the fresh vegetables cabbage was the staple with lettuce, English peas, okra and green beans in season. For fruit availability, there were apples in season, oranges and lemons most of the time, and rarely grapes. On Saturday a stalk of bananas usually hung near the front door and regular customers felt privileged to help themselves to a banana when they passed by. Most people raised their own vegetables or bought them from market gardeners who had a regular route selling from a wagon.

Most families kept chickens and tried to raise their own fryers or bought them live from the grocery store or a farmer. Fryers were generally available only after the first of June until late in the fall. Fresh eggs were available at the store only from the spring until the fall months. Even then eggs were sold almost on the old "Let the buyer beware" system. The story of the efforts to develop a breed of "Winter Layers" will have to wait until another time. Fresh beef and pork were bought from a separate business called a meat market. Since most families did not have adequate refrigeration they bought fresh meat early in the morning of the day that it was to be cooked. Most markets offered early home delivery service.

About all of the bakery food offered were two or three types of cookies in boxes and one style of unsliced "light bread". The bakery business was separate. There were two kinds of crackers, the familiar "saltine" crackers in boxes and the larger soda crackers sold in bulk by the pound. Flour came in large, forty-eight pound and small twenty-four pound bags and one store usually handled only one brand.

There was no such thing as a "dairy case", two types of milk were sold, evaporated milk and Borden's Eagle Brand Condensed Milk. The latter usually used for babies being "fed on the bottle". Eagle Brand was considered expensive and Borden later brought out a cheaper brand called "Dime Brand". The name indicated the retail price. Usually there was only one type of cheese, the familiar hoop of American "rat trap" kind. Missing were the "frozen foods" and the dog and cat foods. These animals were fed table scraps with an occasional bone from the meat market.

Soap, bluing and scouring powders were sold, but not in the numerous brands and types now on sale. Kerosene, called "coal oil" was sold in grocery stores and almost all families used it for lamps and starting fires in the wood and coal stoves.

The user of tobacco had his (sometimes her) choice of several types and brands of chewing tobacco. (While on the subject, let me hasten to say that Welsh Miller tells me that Dr. George Lyons chewed



Drummonds Natural Leaf which must have been a superior brand sold only in two stores, Mr. Dallas did not handle it!) Smoking tobacco came in two types, cigarette and pipe tobacco. Bull Durham, Duke's Mixture and R.J.R. (called Run, Johnny Run) were popular with "roll your own" cigarette smokers while a great many pipe smokers preferred Prince Albert or Granger Twist. Levi Garrett and Honest were popular brands of snuff. More than once some lady has come into the store and looked around to see if any of her friends were nearby before she approached a clerk she felt she could trust before calling for her favorite brand of snuff.

There were some choice as to brands and roasts of canned coffee, but most stores had two open barrels of whole bean roasted coffee. One was a large flat bean called "rio" and the other a smaller more rounded bean called "pea berry". Most families ground their own as needed but the store had a mill and would grind it if the customer wished.

One thing missing in the store of a half century ago were women clerks. A grocery store was a man's world and about the only lady working in a grocery store was the book keeper, and they were rare.

Since there was little choice as to quality few people shopped in person. Those who had telephones called in their orders or one of the clerks came to the kitchen door and took the order in the early morning. The order was filled and delivered later in the morning. Part of my job was to deliver these orders, using a wagon pulled by a pair of small mules or a larger horse.

Regular customers who were wage or salary earners usually had charge accounts which were payable on the first of each month. On the first of each month one of the clerks or the book keeper took the bills in a sort of accordion style bill case and called on the customer and presented the bill for payment. This was a job I dreaded because I felt sorry for the people who could not pay, especially if I knew that they had suffered a misfortune in some way that affected their ability to pay. Farmers and professional people whose income came from farmers, paid once a year when the crops were sold. A poor crop was bad for the entire area. Today when I go to the store I am bewildered by the countless articles and numerous brands and types of the same commodity offered by the modern food store.

## **HORSES – BREEDS, TYPES, AND CHANGES IN BOTH SINCE 1920**

As I walk up Second Street to the new post office I pass by Jim Abdalla's barn. I stop to admire Jim's beautiful sorrel quarter horse and am reminded of the changes that have come about in the popular breeds and types of horses since I first became a horse fan over fifty years ago. At least three or four types and breeds that were common then have almost completely disappeared from the American scene and at least three breeds that were rare then are the favorites today.

The huge draft horse eighteen hands (six feet) high and weighing from 1800 to 2200 pounds were in common use then on the city streets and on farms, today they are a curiosity and used for advertising different products. People are invited to visit certain business establishments to see them. Let me hasten to say that the huge Clydesdale and Shires with the white feathering (hair) around their ankles or fetlocks were not common in the South. The south preferred the Percheron which was usually gray, but I have seen some beautiful blacks and bays among them. The Percheron did not have the feathering and was more agile than the others. However, pure breeds were rare on the farms of the south; the half breeds were preferred because they were smaller and could do the work the farms required on less feed. The cross bred mares were popular as brood mares for raising mules. My grandfather always kept three or four of these mares and raised mules as a part of his "cash" crop. The tractor and the truck have largely displaced these breeds. The Standard Breds, commonly called Hambeltonians, were the favorite buggy and carriage horses used on the roads. They were usually bays, but blacks, sorrels and an occasional gray were also common. They were from fourteen and one half hands (for those of you born since 1940 a "hand" is four inches.) to sixteen hands high and weighed from 800 to 1400 pounds. They were desired because they could pull a buggy or carriage, either single or double, over the dirt roads at a speed of eight to ten miles per hour and maintain it for hours. Their gait was either a trot or a pace, never a gallop. They were the "hot rodders" and "drag racers" of their times. They can still be seen on the tracks pulling the two wheeled carts or gigs and every owner still lives in hopes of breaking "two minutes" though few do. When the breed was new the standard, hence the name Standard Bred, was a mile in two minutes and twenty seconds to be eligible for registry. Most of them carried the blood of Hambeltonian, a noted horse of the early 1800's!

Professional men of all types, doctors, lawyers, preachers and others who had to travel a great deal used them to pull their buggies. The late Rev. L.W. Stuckey, a north Texas Methodist preacher of fifty years ago, owned a pair of beautiful bays which were known all over his District as he made his rounds as Presiding Elder (District Superintendent today).

Hambeltonions could be used as pleasure saddle horses also, though the American Saddle Horse was "the horse" for pleasure riding. The larger Hambeltonion crosses made good farm horses. In the north there was a similar breed, the Morgan, which was also popular and was used for the same purposes. They were not common in Texas or the south that I know of. When Henry Ford put the Model T car on the market, followed by Chevrolet, Dodge and others, the buggy horse began to disappear from the streets and roads.

There was an intermediate type of horse called the Coach horse, smaller and more agile than a draft horse, but heavier than a Standard Bred. There was one called the German Coach, two British breed; the Cleveland Bay and the Hackney and another rarer breed called the French Coach. Originally developed to pull carriages and stage coaches; they were used later in this country as farm horses and crossed with the western mustang to produce a horse larger than the mustang. Standard Breds and Thoroughbreds were also used for this purpose. I find that few younger horse men ever heard of the coach horse.

The first Appaloosa I saw was about 1916 when a party of people moving west stopped at the Morris blacksmith shop in Decatur, Texas to have some work done. They had several of these oddly marked animals which attracted considerable attention. They even had some mules with the Appaloosa markings, raised from mares of the breed. Nearly a half century was to pass before I saw another Appaloosa.

The first Palominos I saw were in circuses, also about fifty years ago. They were rare elsewhere. Sometime about 1928 a friend who had just returned from California told me about seeing some beautiful “cream colored” horses out there but he did not know what breed they were or what they were called. Then “Palominos”, from a Spanish word having several meanings but among them “clay colored”, became the name of the animals. At first they could be of any type of body as long as the color was right, it was according to some authorities merely a color phase. One of the ways of producing a “palomino” was to mate a certain type of chestnut sorrel with an albino, but this did not always work. In time an Association was formed for the registering of animals that met the requirements for the true palomino and the breed became recognized as such.

Quarter Horse breeders insist that as a type they go all the way back to colonial times, and it seems to be true that there were horses capable of running short distances at high speeds and having other characteristics of the Quarter horse. Gen. Robert E. Lee’s famous gray horse, “Traveler,” was said to be of Gray Eagle stock, meaning that his sire or grandsire was a horse named Gray Eagle, from the pictures appears to resemble modern Quarter horses in some ways. Nearly sixty years ago at Decatur, Texas there was a strawberry roan sire locally merely called “the Burton Horse” who as I recall had the build of a Quarter horse. His sons and daughters usually inherited the roan color and the other characteristics of their sire.

At the Texas Centennial in 1936 the King Ranch had on exhibit some of their quarter horses. They were all sorrels, said to be derived from crosses of native range mares with sires of several blood lines. Generally any “pure” breed of animals traces back to some one animal with the qualities sought for, examples are the Morgans who trace back to Justin Morgan and Hambeltonians to Hambeltonian. The amazing thing is that almost all the improved breeds of horses from Western Europe and America trace back to three Arab or other Middle Eastern sires brought to the British Isles nearly three centuries ago.

## ENGLISH IS IMPORTANT

Some time in the thirties I took a Civics class on a tour of the business section of DeQuincy to give the students a brief view of the various business operations. The business and professional people were very cooperative in demonstrating their processes and equipment.

At the DeQuincy News office, Mr. and Mrs. Masingill explained some of the steps and problems of publishing a weekly news paper and operating a job printing office. The linotype machine was demonstrated and each student was given a type slug with his or her name on it.

One or two of the boys were introduced to the “sport” of hunting for “type lice” and it was explained that in newspaper English “pi” was not something to be eaten.

At the drug store, Mr. Clyde Walker talked about what a pharmacist had to know and emphasized that responsibility and integrity were the most important characteristics of a pharmacist; that he must be able to interpret the prescription of the doctor exactly, otherwise the patient ran the risk of death each time he took a dose of prescribed medicine.

Mr. MacNamara and Mr. Hamilton discussed the intricacies of the retail mercantile business. Mr. Hamilton emphasized the problem of the hundreds of small articles that a variety store must keep in stock and Mr. MacNamara the problem of changing styles and keeping a stock of all the different sizes required.

Some of the girls of the group elected to visit a beauty parlor, who ran it I am not sure but I think it was Mrs. Blackburn. Some of the girls came away with the ambition to become beauticians.

In the meantime the boys visited a garage which was operated by Mr. Naismith where the Mobile station is now. Robert Kingrey was Mr. Naismith’s helper. While at the garage one of the boys, probably at my prompting, asked Mr. Naismith and Robert what subjects they had studied in high school and which had been of use to them in their work and if there were any that they wished they had taken more seriously while in school. Robert said bookkeeping, since he kept the books at the garage. I halfway expected Mr. Naismith to say science or mathematics, but to my astonishment he said, “English.” He explained that when he took the General Motors course for mechanics and shop foreman he did well in the shop part of the course.

At the end of the course he was called into the office of the head of the school for an interview, which was rather lengthy and detailed, covering subjects that had nothing to do with motors and shop operation. At the conclusion of the interview the official told Mr. Naismith something like this:

“Mr. Naismith, your knowledge of mechanical work is excellent and your relationship with your fellow students is such that we were considering offering you a position as instructor in the school, but your knowledge and use of English is such that we do not believe that you would be a successful instructor”.

Mr. Naismith advised the boys that regardless of what other skills they might have, not to overlook just plain English grammar and speech habits.

To digress a little from the main theme, but still along the same line as the above; during the summer of 1936 the Ford Motor Company had an exhibit at the Texas Centennial Exposition in Dallas, Texas. While there I noticed that the young men and women who explained the workings of the exhibited machines used very precise and clear English. In talking with one of the men in charge I mentioned that the English that the young

lecturers used and the man told me that good English and speech habits were absolute requirements for a position as a lecturer at the exhibit. The moral, if any, is that good English and speech do pay off in dollars in rather unusual places at times.

I think the last place we visited on that trip was Mr. Meadow's grocery store and from there back to school. How many future mechanics, newspaper men, pharmacist, beauticians or merchants were inspired by the trip I have no way of knowing.

#### MADE VIOLINS

In a recent column I mentioned that the late Dr. Robinson was the only person I knew who made his own violins. Now it is revealed to me that John LeBlanc, whom I know as a fellow history fan, makes his own violins and as a small boy visited Dr. Robinson and saw some of the instruments that the doctor had made.

## ARMISTICE DAY

November the eleventh – Armistice Day – Veterans Day! I doubt that Americans who remember November 11, 1918 can ever forget the wild excitement and enthusiasm that prevailed beginning in the early hours of that November morning and lasting until dark. The war was over and the “boys would soon be coming home” that was all that mattered that day.

I was just recovering from a ten day battle with the flu when I awoke that morning to hear bells ringing, guns firing and people cheering. Having heard of people becoming delirious just before they died from the flu, my first thoughts were that I was delirious and about to die. However, when my brother Roy told me that he heard the same thing I felt better. Our father soon told us that the war was over and that was what the noise was about. Forgetting about the flu, I soon joined the crowd around the court house square at Decatur, Texas.

For the only time in my life I saw and heard the old American custom of “anvil shooting”; it is something to be experienced. A blacksmith’s anvil has a hole about one inch square running from the middle of the base up through the throat to just below the face. The trick was to turn an anvil face down, pour the hole full of gunpowder, leaving a small trace of powder off to one edge of the anvil. A piece of paper was then placed over the trail of powder and a second anvil was placed slightly to one side on top of the first anvil so that the paper and trail of powder were exposed. A long iron rod was heated red hot and touched to the trail of powder. The explosion that followed was about like that of a small cannon. Wolfe Cohen, a native of Russian Poland, as he put it, was marching around the square dressed in one of Mrs. Cohen’s red kimonos with an old wash tub hung around his neck like a base drum, beating it and shouting “Hooray for Voodrow Vilson! Hooray for Poland! (One of Pres. W. Wilson’s Fourteen Points was that Poland was to be given its independence!) The whole celebration continued until dark.

When World War II began DeQuincy did not have a National Guard unit, so there was no mass unit departure of the men such as was held in towns where such a unit existed. Our men left singly or in small groups as the volunteered or were called up by the Selective Service Board. Too frequently no one but the immediate family or close friends knew when a man left for the Service.

As soon as Americans were on the front lines the names of area men began to appear on the casualty lists and following the fall of Bataan and Corregidor it became known that Paul Joffrion and George (Bubba) Cockerham were prisoners of war. For some reason the Joffrion family received letters from Paul. No news was received from George; it was assumed that he had died a prisoner. As the war drew to a close it was talked in town that when Paul returned perhaps we would learn what happened to George. The first news that the public had from him was when a letter from one of the Van Winkle boys was published in the DeQuincy News stating that he had seen Bubba in an Army Hospital in the Philippines. It was not long before the family had news directly from him. Later it was revealed that Paul Joffrion had died in the POW camp and had been buried in a mass grave with many other allied prisoners of war.

There was no spontaneous rejoicing locally on VE Day, May 8, 1945 or VJ Day, September 2, 1945, and on Nov. 11, 1918. The local men returned as they had left singly or in small groups as those who were able bodied were discharged or those who were wounded or ill were released from the hospitals again too frequently with little notice except from their loved ones and close friends. Someone suggested that when Bubba came home an official welcome be extended to him to represent all of the area men who had been in Service. On Oct. 24, 1945 when he returned on the east bound afternoon Mo. Pac. Train a large banner reading, “Welcome Home, Bubba”, was prepared, school was dismissed, business houses were closed and everyone who could get there met the train. Bubba could hardly believe it! I recall that when he stepped off the train and saw the

banner and the crowd his first words were, "What's this all about?" A parade was formed and marched to the front of the City Hall where the official welcome took place.

The great tragedy of all wars is of course the fact that a number of men make the supreme sacrifice and do not return at all. Dating all the way back to ancient times it has been the custom for each community to erect some sort of memorial to those men, but for some reason DeQuincy has been delinquent in this regard for the men who died in World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. In the front entrance of the old two story school building on McNeese Street is a simple paper document provided, I believe, by the American Legion Auxiliary listing the names of some of the former students of DeQuincy High School who died in Service during World War II. The list is incomplete; I know for sure of two men whose names were never added due to the fact that it was not known until sometime after the war was over that they had died in Service and their names were not added. The names of the men who died in Korea and Vietnam are not posted anywhere that I know of. Post war students have asked me and perhaps other teachers what the simple little framed paper plaque represents and I pointed out to one student the name of a close relative that he did not know had died in the war.

I propose that with the permission of the school board when the new Elementary Building is completed that a permanent plaque containing the names of all the ex-students of all three of the DeQuincy Schools who died in any of the wars be placed in a conspicuous place and that the school be dedicated to their memory.

## A LAST TRAIN TRIP

Last month Mrs. Ratliff and I took what may very easily be our last train ride together, when we made a trip to California via the Southern Pacific from Lake Charles to Los Angeles. In the last 46 years we have ridden several types of passenger trains together, ranging from the Wichita Valley and the Kansas City, Mexico and Orient in west Texas, both old style open vestibule wooden coaches; the Mallard Junction and Lake Arthur, this one a mixed train with one coach making a daily round trip between Lake Arthur and Lake Charles, to the more elaborate Santa Fe-San Francisco Chief and the Southern Pacific Sunset Limited.

If the new tri-weekly service on this last train does not prove popular it may be the last of the passenger train service in this section of Louisiana and Texas. So, if you and your children have not ridden a train recently or not at all, it might be a memorable experience to make such a trip.

I delayed making a trip on one of the last of the old stern wheeler river packet boats, the "Borealis Rex" which used to run between Lake Charles and Cameron, until it was too late and I never made the trip, to my regret.

On the Southern Pacific trip the passenger sees a panorama of the southwestern United States, beginning with the sugar cane and rice fields, the river bottom swamps, cattle carrying a high percentage of Brahman blood, and towns and business signs, names of French origin. The topography does not change much between Beaumont and Houston and the influence begins to disappear as one nears Houston.

Between Beaumont and Houston is Liberty whose original name was a whole Spanish phrase ending in the word Libertad. It is one of the older towns in the state, originating before the Texas Revolution of 1836 and is noted as being the stopping place of the Texian; they spelled it with the "I", refugees who fled from the army of Santa Anna before the battle of San Jacinto.

At Houston the ruins of the old Jefferson Davis Hospital, seen from the train window, brought back memories of hearing people talk about going there for treatment and young doctors to intern. The modern medical center has made it obsolete and it has been abandoned. Then too, moderns would probably not name a hospital or anything else for the "tall chieftain who wore the gray".

Beyond Houston the names of towns and institutions become German, such as Weimar, Schertz, Schulenberg (School Hill), New Braunfels (Brown Rocks) and Fredericksburg, these last two are not on the main line of the Southern Pacific.

German is still the everyday language and the tall steeples of the white painted Lutheran churches and usually the most conspicuous objects in towns.

Beyond San Antonio the scenery begins to assume a distinctly "western look" and the names begin to change to Spanish. Some of the towns are: Hondo (Deep), Seco (Dry), Pavo (Turkey), Del Rio (by the river), Lobo (Wolf) and El Paso (The crossing of the Pass). It becomes no problem to start a conversation in Spanish with a fellow passenger. Later in New Mexico, Arizona and California, Indian names begin to appear on the station signs.

Beginning east of El Paso and extending all across into Arizona are cotton fields that recall the old South, except we were never able to produce as much cotton to the acre as the irrigated fields of the west



produce. The land is as level as any land I ever saw for mile after mile between ridges and if water is available irrigation is easy.

The cotton stalks appear much shorter than those of the South, but are heavier laden with bolls. Most of the picking now days seems to be done by machines, which contrasts with the ads that “La Prensa”, a Spanish language daily published in San Antonio until a few years ago, used to carry advertising for thousands of cotton pickers for these lands.

In 1850 the United States Senate was debating a bill which became known as the Compromise of 1850, one feature of which was to organize the great southwest, except California, into the territories of New Mexico and Utah with the settlers to decide for themselves whether or not the territories should permit slavery.

Sen. Daniel Webster from Massachusetts, who normally opposed the extension of slavery into new states, supported the Bill giving as his reason that God had already ruled out the possibility of slavery in that area since cotton could never be grown in the desert and if there was no cotton there would be no slavery. One hundred and twenty years later the cotton is there, but there was never slavery.

As the traveler goes along through southern Arizona by any means of travel it is easy to see why the United States wanted to buy in 1853 the strip known as the Gadsden Purchase in order to have the right of way for a Pacific railway. This passage way through the western highlands is by far the most practical route to the coast.

The great cattle feeding pens of Arizona were filled with cattle in all stages of the fattening process. The dry mild climate makes shelter for both cattle and hay unnecessary. While Hereford and Angus blood appeared to predominate in the cattle there were numerous herds where Brahma blood was clear. I wondered if some of the animals could have originated in this area and even passed through the DeQuincy sale barn.

To “The High Chaparral” fans the scenery around Tucson would be perfectly familiar. The train passes through the western end of the 1800 mile trip at night in both directions so that the traveler does not see the great deserts of western Arizona and California with their irrigated fruit and vegetable farms in the Salton Sea area which is some 200 feet below sea level.

The story of my visits to the twin cities of Los Angeles and Long Beach will come in another article.

#### TELEPHONE CALL

A telephone call from a lady who did not identify herself told me that Fred Stewart also makes violins, I failed to mention in the article about the grocery story that I was inspired by a talk with Lee Peterson.

#### LETTER

A letter from James Puerta gives more detailed information about the development of the Quarter Horse and the part the King Ranch played in it. James is able to go into detail about the ancestor of the King Ranch horses, especially Old Sorrel, the sire from which the sorrel horses I saw at Dallas in 1936 were descended. James also mentioned Old Monkey, the bull which was the foundation sire for the Santa Gertrudis cattle.

Old Monkey was dead by 1936, but the King Ranch exhibit at Dallas had his head mounted and hung in a stall at Dallas, surrounded by his progeny.

## THANKSGIVING ORIGINS AND CUSTOMS FOR CELEBRATION

Sometimes we may get the impression that Thanksgiving was something invented by the Pilgrims at Plymouth, Massachusetts three hundred and fifty years ago. The idea has become so traditional that I never realized until a few years ago why some old “unreconstructed” Confederates declined to have much to do with the Thanksgiving holiday because, as they said, “It’s a ‘dam Yankee’ holiday”. Why they felt that way will be explained further on in this article.

A little research and experience will reveal that the idea of giving thanks to some Higher Power is almost universal and very old. Anthropologists find evidence that primitive man realized his dependence upon and obligation to that Higher Power for the protection and blessings that he received and made some efforts to express his appreciation and gratitude.

On Thanksgiving Day of 1918 I had little difficulty in getting a group of non-English speaking railway track workers from central Mexico to understand the idea of Thanksgiving when they came to town to shop and found the stores all closed. They had never heard of the Plymouth colony and the Pilgrims, but they understood giving thanks to God.

Even a most hasty examination of the historical books of the Old Testament will reveal that individuals and groups set aside certain days or groups of day on special occasions to offer prayers and sacrifices to Jehovah as marks of gratitude. Although the story of Cain and Abel is a tragedy it had its origin in an act of sacrificial thanksgiving.

When Noah left the Ark he built an altar and offered some of the “clean” animals as a thank offering to God. The Passover was a festival of remembrance and thanksgiving when the Hebrews gave thanks that they had been spared when the death angel passed over Egypt and slew the first born of the Egyptians. The Law of Moses and its later expansions into the Torah and the Talmud make provision for numerous days of sacrifice and thanksgiving. When Jesus and the Twelve met in the Upper Room to celebrate the Passover we are told that Jesus “took the cup and gave thanks”. (Math. 26:27 )

As the Church of the Middle Ages began to develop the rituals of the Mass several of them were in thanksgiving. One of the great hymns dating from this period is the Te Dum, the opening words of which were Te Dum Laudamus (We Praise Thee O God). In the European churches and later throughout the world of Christianity spread the Te Dum as sung as a Thanksgiving for a great blessing from God, frequently for a military victory or the birth of an heir to the throne.

Virginians claim that the settlers of early Virginia celebrated Thanksgiving Day several years before the Pilgrims of Plymouth observed it in the autumn of 1621. The people of Massachusetts continued to observe the festival but it was not until 1789 that Pres. George Washington issued the first presidential Thanksgiving Proclamation in honor of the National Constitution. Thanksgiving was observed on a state level at different dates until the Civil War.

During the Civil War both Pres. Jefferson Davis of the Confederacy and Pres. Lincoln of the Union issued proclamations to the acknowledgment of the power of God. Pres. Davis called up the people of the South to observe a day of fasting and prayer rather than celebration, but in October of 1863 Pres. Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday in November as a day of thanksgiving largely for the Federal victories of Gettysburg and Vicksburg both of which ended on July 4, 1863. It was probably for this reason that the old “unreconstructed rebels” were not inclined to pay much attention to the later proclamations by the presidents.

In 1939 Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed the third day in November as Thanksgiving Day, giving as his reason that the retail merchants of the country needed more time between Thanksgiving and Christmas to re-arrange their show windows and stocks between the two seasons. There was an adverse reaction and some states refused to go along with the change and continued to observe the fourth Thursday in November. One newspaper editor remarked that America had been so blessed that it was appropriate to observe two days, as some people did. In December of 1941 Congress passed a law making the fourth Thursday in November Thanksgiving Day. Different groups, religious and otherwise, observe the day in different ways but to a great many Texans it is noted as the day of the annual football game between the University of Texas (at Austin) and Texas A. & M. University. Most of the paintings and greeting cards for Thanksgiving still rely heavily on the Pilgrim and turkey themes, with sometimes snow and sleighs all of which are of course Northern concepts.

Several nations besides the United States observe some sort of Thanksgiving festival. In Canada different provinces or communities observe different dates, but the second Monday in October is the day generally observed. Some of the Latin-American representatives in Washington in 1909 began observing Pan-American Day, April 14, as a day of thanksgiving.

Whatever the date, or whatever the manner of observing Thanksgiving it is my firm opinion after a lifetime of study of world history that the people of the United States of America, whatever our faults, weaknesses, mistakes and injustices sometimes, are the most blessed people who have ever lived and have more reasons to give thanks to God than any people who have ever lived. Let us give thanks!

## **KNUTE ROCKNE RECALLED**

It was early June of 1925 and the main campus of the University of Texas at Austin was enrolling students for the summer session; mostly public school administrators and teachers with a few professors from the smaller colleges, working on advanced degrees.

But the talk in the corridors of the University buildings; in the boarding houses on Whitis Avenue and along the “drag” on Guadeloupe was not about courses or what Dr. J.L. Henderson said in his course on Methods of high school teaching, or what the eminent visiting professor from Rice Institute, Dr. Charles F. Arrowood, would offer in History of Education or what the rising young professor of history, Dr. Walter Prescott Webb, discussed in his course on the Great Plains; rather that the great Knute Rockne of Notre Dame and Dr. Walter Meanwell, M.D. of the University of Wisconsin, but better known as the outstanding basketball coach of the nation and author of “The Science of Basketball,” would be conducting a coaching school at St. Edwards University south of town.

Even people like the writer, who had no intention of taking the course, attended the first two or three sessions just to see and hear the great Rockne and his colleague, Dr. Meanwell. Among us was a young high school teacher, with political ambitions, from east Texas; Julian P. Greer, later to be State Senator Greer and for many years Superintendent of the Vidor Texas Independent School District and now Mayor of the City of Vidor.

The opening session was taken up largely to introduce the staff of the Coaching School and important visitors. Among those introduced were: “Doc Stewart, head coach of the University of Texas Longhorns and handsome young Jack Chevigny, coach of St. Edwards, who had played under Rockne at Notre Dame. Later he was to be coach at the University of Texas and still later to die in battle in the south Pacific during World War II. Stewart some years later was to die a tragic death in a hunting accident in south Texas. Some of the outstanding college and high school coaches enrolled in the course were also introduced. Most of us present were not really interested in seeing those men, we wanted to see and hear Rockne.

We were invited to buy Dr. Meanwell’s book for \$3.50, which a great many of us did. One thing which he advocated which I tried to use in my brief span as a basketball coach at Starks High School was; never allow your players to watch the other teams play when they are participating in a tournament. The nervous energy expended watching the other teams play might make the difference in the following games. He advocated taking the players completely away from the tournament and if possible put them to bed. I passed the idea on to Jesse Verret when he became coach at Starks and he used it first time Starks boys won the parish rally.

Later I gave my copy of the book to Coach Denton Henrich who said that the plays were so old they were new and might be usable. Some of the basic ideas were still sound.

When Rockne was finally introduced he told some of the stories that were later re-told in the movie about him. One of the stories was about a huge, slow thinking but good natured player called Chuck who rarely got a chance to play in a real game. One rainy day during “skull practice” Rockne outlined a rather complicated play and then turned to Chuck and asked, “What would you do in this situation, Chuck?” Chuck thought a minute and answered, “I am not sure, Coach, but I guess I would just move a little farther down the bench so that I could see a little better.”

Another story was about a back field player who had become rather conceited and was reputed to have written a poem called “Only A Guard” and also to be given to collecting the newspaper clippings about himself.

One day after the game was safely won Rockne removed the first string line and sent in the second stringers. Without the protection of the first string line the conceited back field player was almost helpless. Rockne called the player out and said to him, "What is the matter, aren't you as good as those fellows on the other team? Get out there and show them how good you are, show them your newspaper clippings."

It was reported back on the "Forty Acres" that Rockne could not abide stupidity from a player and could use some rather strong talk in pointing out the errors which he thought were stupid. Among those taking the course was a husky young coach from one of the larger high schools in Louisiana who received some cutting remarks from the "Wizard of Notre Dame." The high school coach announced to Mrs. Foster's boarders that if Rockne ever talked that way to him again that he, the young coach, was going to whip Rockne. The next day several of Mrs. Foster's "boys" found an excuse to go out to St. Edwards to see the prospective fight. Again the young coach ran afoul of Rockne's tongue, but there was no fight. Around the supper table that night some of the bigger fellows made sly remarks about Rockne's rough tongue, but there was no reply from the young coach.

Some time later there was some criticism of Dr. Meanwell's recruiting practices and as I recall he resigned his position as a coach and entered into the active practice of his true profession, medicine. I do not vouch for the accuracy of this story, however.

The airplane crash that cost Rockne his life in 1931 occurred near the Kansas home of Mrs. C.K. Davis of DeQuincy.

\* \* \*

It was last December that we started these columns with the idea that there would be one or two a month for a while until the readers became tired of them or the editors and I agreed to end them. You, the readers, have been most kind in your letters, telephone calls and personal messages. Your kindness is my only pay and as long as you like to read these columns and the editors will print them or until I 'run out of soap' I shall try to keep them coming. Again thanks to you both readers and editors.

## **LAKEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL VISIT IN LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA**

For one who spent forty-eight years teaching in high schools whose enrollments ranged from thirty-five pupils with one graduate (The class of 1930 at Starks High School) to an enrollment of an average of 350 students with never over 90 graduates, the Lakewood High School of Lakewood (Long Beach), California was almost beyond belief.

With an enrollment which I estimated at about 5,000 and graduating in the neighborhood of 1,500 seniors per year, Lakewood High is larger than any college I ever saw until I enrolled in the graduate school of the University of Texas in June of 1925. Whereas I have been accustomed to a one building high school with generally one, or at most two, rooms for a subject taught and a faculty of less than thirty it was amazing to see a high school with entire buildings devoted to one subject and an area of instruction. Someone with imagination and a love for the poetic legends of King Arthur named the buildings for characters in the story of Camelot. For example the Administration Building is King Arthur's Hall. While no one mentioned it I wondered if the principal's desk was the Round Table and if he had a sword of justice called Excalibur. One of the academic buildings is Lancelot Hall and the athletic teams are the Lancers.

Since the campus is only one block from my daughter Dorothy Rickett's home it was easy to follow the daily schedule by the bells. However, the first sound to be heard was the notes of a traditional army bugle call, done with a recording, calling the ROTC Cadets to their first formation for the day. The other students listened for the bells.

About eight a.m. the students began to converge on the campus; on foot and with about every type of motor vehicle available except that I did not see any of the traditional yellow school buses so common in this area. Though Lakewood may have some sort of school operated bus system I did not see any evidence of it.

I got the impression that most of the students are city boys and girls; there are doubtless some who had lived in smaller communities at some time. I talked with one boy who was born near Fort Hood, Texas and had lived in Dallas part of the time before moving to California. He suggested that he and I enter into a mutual assistance pact against all non-Texans. Most of the students as to dress and manners could be easily fitted into one of our local high schools without attracting any more attention that is normal for a "new" student. I understood that the school had recently adopted a permissive policy in regard to dress and hair style and there were a few extremist among the students but they were the exceptions. I saw a few student of Oriental background; otherwise the ethnic groups were about like ours.

The thing that the students with whom I talked, including my own twin grandchildren, Jerry and Jane, found difficulty in grasping the close relationship between teacher and pupils existing in our schools. To the Lakewood students a teacher was someone whom you saw in a class for one hour a day for a school year and nowhere else. The idea that a teacher could be a family friend, or a relative sometimes, whom you saw in church, in a store or on the street and waved to in passing and perhaps exchanged news about mutual friends or events was unbelievable. Jerry, a sophomore, was aghast when I mentioned talking to a student during a class break and mentioned that her grandfather and I were old friends of many years and that I remembered when her father was born and how he received the name.

One afternoon I went to King Arthur's Hall and asked permission visit a couple of classes, one in American History and one in Spanish. I was sent by Mrs. James, an Assistant Principal, who very kindly made the arrangements for me to visit Mr. Berger's American History class and Mr. Anderson's first year Spanish class. Mr. Berger was showing a film strip about twentieth century presidents of the United States. I had

promised Mrs. James that I would not interrupt the class in any way, so my former students will realize perhaps sympathize with me because I had to refrain from telling some of my well worn and oft repeated stories about Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft and Woodrow Wilson; not to mention how in 1908 I saw and heard Williams Jennings Bryan when he stood on the real observation platform of a Pullman car at Decatur, Texas and spoke for a few minutes.

Mr. Anderson, the Spanish Teacher, is a young man who studied in Spain and knows the language well. He and I introduced ourselves in Spanish and talked for a couple of minutes before the class began. I liked the way he was teaching, he used some devices that were new to me and the students were attentive and cooperative. To me the only regrettable thing is that the class was too large; thirty-seven is too many students for a teacher to be able to give each student the individual attention so necessary in learning a foreign language.

A little group of sophomore students, two boys and one girl, I shall never forget. Each day they sat on the curb across the street from the Rickett's home and ate lunch together. One day I went across and after introducing myself engaged them in a conversation. Students enter Lakewood High as sophomores from several Junior High Schools in that area. The little group had been together in junior high school and have continued their association through they are not in any classes together. There was something almost poignant and wistful about them and I wondered if their daily meeting was not an effort, sub-conscious perhaps, to cling together and avoid losing their identity in the new and strange environment. If I were an artist I would have sketched them and called the result, "Three Friends".

Southwest Louisiana students, accustomed to smaller high schools might enjoy a visit to modern "Camelot", officially Lakewood High, as much as I.

## **CHANGES IN CLOTHING STYLES FOR STUDENTS AND FACULTY AT HIGH SCHOOLS IN CALCASIEU PARISH, LOUISIANA**

A couple of weeks ago I was called out to DeQuincy High to teach for the first time since the new dress and hair regulations went into effect. I confess that I was somewhat startled when I saw a young lady student wearing one of the new pants suits in the office and my first thought was that she was a visitor. Then it occurred to me that the new regulations were in effect.

Having observed, participated in and survived all of the changes in styles of dress and hair which have been in vogue for about sixty years I must say that for the most part I am very well pleased with the new styles. I saw one student who was trying out a new maxi dress but her movements, even the simple task of walking was so handicapped that I wondered if she would continue to wear it. I was back a few days later and saw only one maxi.

When those of my generation started to school we small boys wore straight legged knee pants which in most cases were supported by being buttoned to our shirt, which instead of being straight had a band around the bottom to which our pants were buttoned. Later we were “promoted” into knicker-bocker style pants which had a strap below the knee, somewhat like the “plus fours” which later day golf players wore. Those pants were supported by a belt or suspenders, sometimes called galluses. About the time we got into the tenth grade we were graduated into long pants and regular tailed shirts and men style socks, which were supported by “boston” garters.

The little girls usually wore homemade cotton dresses of aprons of calico, percale or gingham, usually with a flower, striped or plaid design. Both sexes wore heavy ribbed stockings held by elastic garters, or if a garter was lost, which often happened, the stocking could be held up by a clothes string tied around the leg. As soon as warm weather permitted the small boys, sometimes girls, started going barefoot.

For warmth in winter we wore heavy cotton union suits for underwear and a sweater or coat. I recall that the turtle neck sweater has been in and out of style at least three times throughout the years. When the young ladies reached high school age they tended to wear skirts about the length of the new midi style. Along with the skirt they wore a type of blouse with a large square collar which was known as a “midi blouse”, named for the blouses worn by the midshipmen of the Naval Academy and men in the Navy. One of my high school class mates, Suwanne Van Cleave whose father combined careers as a medical doctor and a stock farmer, rode horse back to school and wore a divided skirt while in the saddle and changed into a regular skirt when she reached school. The divided skirt was somewhat like the modern culottes except it was much fuller and longer, so long that it reached the wearer’s feet when she was in the saddle, a decided advantage in the cold north Texas winters. The other day I asked a group of freshman girls in DeQuincy High if they knew what a divided skirt was; only one, Teresa Jones knew. She recalled that her grandmother Richard owned one and showed it to her. In warmer weather the young ladies wore cotton dresses again. Plaid gingham was popular with this age group.

One of the things at which I marvel today is how we older boys and men endured the old fashionable detachable, stiff linen collars with our dress shirts. They could not be laundered at home and had to be sent to the laundry. They were as stiff as metal and came up to the top of the neck. They were attached to the shirt neck band by a pair of collar buttons, front and rear. The rear button had a sort of hinge which went through the button hole on the back of the shirt collar and the collar. Two minor disasters were to be dressing for an important affair and discover that there were no clean collars available. There was only one answer to this problem, try to borrow a collar from a friend or hope that a store was still open where a new collar could be bought. The other disaster was to drop the collar button. They seemed to have a sort of fiendish intelligence



which enabled them to roll under the far side of the bed or some other equally inaccessible place. Some public benefactor invented a plastic collar (celluloid) which could be washed at home but they were never quite “the thing” for the young male.

Business professional men were expected to wear a coat at all times in public, regardless of the weather. A man teacher who appeared in the classroom without a coat and tie was liable to receive a gentle reminder from someone in authority that his appearance was not in keeping with his position. In the summer of 1918 I was helping my uncle on his farm in Oklahoma and went into a store with my shirt sleeves rolled to my elbows and received a reprimand from the proprietor for coming into his store when there were ladies present.

To even mention the hair styles for both males and females which have been in and out of style in past generations would fill a small sized book. Modern male hair and beard styles seem to me to resemble those of the Civil War period than any other period in America. The younger girls of the first quarter of this century usually wore their hair in long loose curls or braids down the back or around the face. Their hair was usually surmounted by a large bow of brightly colored, wide ribbon which might be several feet in length if unwound. When the young lady “put her hair up” it usually meant that she no longer considered herself a girl but as a woman ready to accept whatever responsibilities that lay ahead. It was not until World War I that Irene Castle, feminine member of the popular dancing team of Vernon and Irene Castle appeared with short hair and set the style for women which has continued to the present.

So, be it mini, midi, maxi or pants suits, long hair or short sideburns and mustaches I can survive them all, anything, young ladies, except the hoop skirts which the young ladies of the 1950’s tried and abandoned. How you endured them you alone know except that a fellow who endured the stiff collar era sympathizes with you.

## CHRISTMAS

‘Dreaming of a White Christmas’ is a popular song at this season, but I doubt if very many of us who live in the Deep South actually ever experienced one. My memory of Christmas goes back to 1903 and I cannot actually recall a white Christmas. It was in 1903 that my two brothers and I received dolls for Christmas, little dreaming that on January 4<sup>th</sup> we were to receive a real, live doll when our oldest sister was born.

The Christmas of 1904, 1905 and 1906 were spent in Ada, I.T. (Oklahoma) and the first two are rather vague, but 1906 is very vivid in my memory. That was the year of my first Sunday school Christmas tree, with candles, decorations, recitations, songs and finally Santa Claus in person, bringing me a wooden hobby horse. At home there were apples, oranges, candy, nuts and my first knowledge of Christmas turkey. It was during this time that I began to hear my father and uncle talk of something called ‘Statehood’ and there was even a parade downtown with a marching band and banners. My elders seemed so excited over it I vaguely wondered if it could be something like another Christmas. It was not until much later that I learned that on November 16, 1907 the two territories, Oklahoma and Indian Territory were combined and admitted to the Union as a state. By this time my father’s family had moved to Bridgeport, Texas where we spent Christmas of 1907 which is a virtual blank in my memory.

Christmases of 1908 through 1920 were spent at Decatur, TX and at that point Miss Bell Ford of Decatur, who was my teacher in the third grade for the school session of 1910-1911, in a recent letter described Christmas as it was in the earlier years of this century. Miss Bell writes:

‘Christmas opening was held every year; huge crowds lined the streets and sidewalks. A bit Roman candle fight took place. Some (men and boys) were on the roofs on the west side (of the court house square) and the ‘enemy’ on the east side. As years went by it got so bad that they stopped it. They got off the roofs and had ground fights which were dangerous. I think someone lost an eye in the scrimmage. They also shot firecrackers on the sidewalks. It was a hulla-ba-loo! The officers did not try to prevent them from shooting them. (People from other sections of the country do not understand early Texan’s obsession with fireworks at Christmas. It was a part of our Spanish-Mexican cultural heritage. – T.J.R.)

Miss Bell continues. (Note that I refer to Miss Ford as Miss Bell, rather than Miss Ford. It was our custom to address lady teachers by their first names with the prefix Miss. It was a title of respect and generally of affection.) ‘One (custom) was going from house to house on Christmas Eve wishing friends a Merry Christmas. Some had egg nog others candy or fruit, but most had nothing for one did not have time to linger. I can remember the first cards sent out in Decatur. Gifts were very simple in those days; clothes were not given. Trees with lots of popcorn, cranberries and peanuts made into strings were used for decorations. Candles were not much used for fear of fire. Lots of fireworks were going off all day- nothing but Roman candles and firecrackers. My brother visited Fort Worth and came back with sparklers, pin wheels and other things I had not seen before. I cannot think of the names of the kinds new to me.

Non mechanical toy trains were most popular with the boys but you had to pull them. (I received one in 1908 – T.J.R.) Dolls were favorites among the girls and a few who could afford them received bicycles. Jewelry – mostly rings – were very popular, as were toy monkeys that climbed a string. To give something to wear was just not done. Mrs. Baumgartner had her usual Christmas program at the Methodist Church for about forty years. (This concludes Miss Bell’s memories of Christmas as given in her letter.)

My own memories of the same town a few years later are about like those of Miss Bell. Some years we children received our presents from a Sunday School Christmas tree on Christmas Eve and some years we hung up our stockings. Family Christmas came some years later. One year we had a "White Gifts" program at the Christian Church at which instead of gifts for each other we brought a gift wrapped in white paper. The gifts were sent to the church supported orphanage at Dallas.

One of my most treasured gifts was received in 1912, a small King James version of the Bible, given to me by a very dear friend, the late Silar Morris of Decatur. I used this little Bible until the binding wore out, but last year I had it rebound and sent it to his granddaughter as a wedding gift. I still have another book he gave me in 1913.

Skipping over a few years, Mrs. Ratliff and I spent the Christmases of 1925-26-27 at Hayes, Louisiana where the Christmas customs varied somewhat from those to which we had been accustomed. We shared the hospitality of such friends as the A.T. Carmouche, the Alvin Hayes, the Andrew Hebert and T.S. Cooley families and a host of others who taught us to enjoy Louisiana food and customs. Our two girls were born during these years. By 1928 we were at Starks.

There was almost a white Christmas in 1929; a heavy snow fell about a week before Christmas, but was just about all melted by Christmas day. Nolan Kingrey came home from Texas A&M where he was a student and warned us not to try to drive to Texas for Christmas through the snow. We took his advice.

By Christmas 1930 the Depression was well under way and people had to learn to celebrate Christmas with things they could make or produce at home without a cash outlay. Some improvised Christmas cards by using a "penny post card" with a Christmas Seal and a personal message. In some communities so called "white elephant" Christmas parties were held where each person selected some useful article from his own possessions which was no longer needed, wrapped it as a gift and gave it to someone who could use it. These years were the beginning of the bag of fruit and candy gifts at the DeQuincy Methodist Church School which has been continued with variations to the present time. The DeQuincy Methodists did not invent the custom however; it is an old one.

The war years brought shortages and rationing of foods, especially sugar, which meant that Christmas cooking had to be curtailed. Families who had loved ones in the service who could not return home for Christmas tried to share with them the limited resources by sending packages of non-perishable gifts. The end of the war and the return of the men and women from the Services made the Christmas of 1945 the happiest in years for those whose loved ones returned.

For the post war years and the present Vietnam War, each heart knows best for itself what it has been and is like and so whatever each one feels and knows may this be the merriest Christmas possible.

## **NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATION AND OLD FASHIONED CHURCH AND SCHOOL BELLS...**

Happy New Year! One year ago we were saying, "Happy New Year and Welcome to the Seventies". However, there were some who insisted that the "seventies" did not really begin until January 1, 1971. If you are of that opinion, then again, "Welcome to the Seventies!"

About two generations ago every town was filled with bells not modern electric bells, but old fashioned steeple bells rung by pulling a rope. Almost ever church had at least one bell, some had a whole set of tuned bells which could play hymns. All schools had a bell, some of the factories used a bell instead of a whistle, the larger farms and plantations had bells, the steam locomotives all had bells, as did the ships on the rivers and seas, some fire stations used an alarm bell and the DeQuincy Masonic Lodge had a bell to remind the members of the meeting time. Each of these bells had an ordinary every day use depending on its location. The farm bells were used to call the field workers to and from the fields and for emergency alarm purposes. The church bells were used to remind the members of church services and were sometimes tolled for funerals and some were rung happily for weddings. When Miss Mary Douglas, daughter of R.L. Douglas and the late Mrs. Douglas, was passing the DeQuincy Methodist Church on the way to the All Saints Episcopal Church to be married to Brad Hoffman the Methodist Church bell was rung as a way of saying, "Thank you and Best Wishes, Mary" for loving and faithful service as a teacher of small children of the Methodist Church before the Episcopal congregation had its own sanctuary. I believe that the bells from the Masonic Lodge and the Methodist Church can still be heard in DeQuincy as they were given to two of the Black congregations. The bell from the DeQuincy School was given to a Catholic congregation after the fire of 1943 when according to the terms of the contract it became the property of the contractor who built the new building. The old Starks School bell was bought with voluntary contributions raised by Postmaster Ernest Batchelor during the early thirties. The bell for the Baptist Church at Starks, bought from Mrs. Sharpe of Iowa, LA, had been used as a plantation bell at one time. The late Ernest Gilbert saw the advertisement of the bell for sale in the "Market Bulletin", the congregation raised the money among its members and Mrs. Ratliff and I drove over to Iowa and bought the bell for the church.

What does all this talk about bells have to do with New Year? Whatever use a bell had there was usually one time when all the bells in town rang together, at the stroke of midnight on December 31. This was called "ringing in the new year". The first distinct memory I have of New Year must have been about 1907 or 1908 when at midnight on December 31 our parents awakened my brothers, our sister and me to hear the bells ring in the new year. It was a custom in some communities that fireworks, gun fire, and steam whistles joined with the bells.

In some communities it is an old custom to hold a part or dance New Year's eve and then at the stroke of midnight to stop the festivities and drink a toast to the new year and sing Auld Lang Syne. Some churched hold "Watch Night" services at which the attendants listen to reading from the Bible, sing hymns, meditate over and pray for pardon for their shortcomings of the previous year and petition for help in the coming year. In some Roman Catholic congregations a midnight mass is said for the same general purpose.

Most people are familiar with the old custom of the New Year's Resolution. The theory behind them is that a person making the resolution resolves to leave off some undesirable habit of the past and substitute a new and more desirable habit or way of life. These resolutions were at one time taken very seriously and in many cases I suppose actually brought about noticeable changes in the person making the resolution. Today New Year's Resolutions are considered a subject of jokes and most of them are of humorous nature.

Another old custom was that of calling on friends to wish them a Happy New Year. The host sometimes served refreshments and if they were alcoholic, the frequently were, it was possible for the caller making his rounds to become somewhat intoxicated even to the extent of not being able to continue his calls.

Business men traditionally balanced their books on December 31, thus ending their fiscal year with the calendar year. Of recent years the custom has been to end the fiscal year on some more convenient date, June 30 is a common date for this. In farming areas churches used to end their fiscal year late in the fall after the crops were harvested and sold and people could pay the minister his annual salary. When America became less agricultural and more industrial in its economy this system was changed in some churches, for example the Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church usually meets about the first of June instead of the last of November at it once did. Some School Boards use July 1 as the beginning of a new fiscal year, but most of the teachers, in Calcasieu parish at least, think of September 1 as the beginning of a new scholastic and for them a new fiscal year. For some New Years Day means the day of the Annual Football Bowl games.

In those cultures and religions using the lunar calendar of thirteen months the beginning of a new year may vary from year to year. For example the Jewish New Year came on September 13 in 1969, and on October 2 in 1970. All calendars are inaccurate to some extent and corrections have to be made from time to time. Leap Year with its additional day of February 29 once in four years does not completely take up the slack in the solar calendar. When George Washington was born in 1732 the calendar was eleven days behind the sun in its orbit and he was actually born on February 11, Old Style. During his lifetime the calendar was brought up to date by advancing it eleven days and we now celebrate his birthday on February 22. When the calendar was “jumped ahead” those eleven days there were riots in some places, people considering that they had been cheated out of eleven days of their lives. The Aztecs of central Mexico are said to have had a more accurate calendar in 1521 than the Spanish conquerors. So whenever and by whatever means you observe the beginning of a new year-  
**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

## **SABINE RIVER, LOUISIANA – TEXAS BOUNDARY DISPUTE**

The hearing being held in Austin concerning the boundary between Louisiana and Texas is not only of local interest from a historical standpoint, but might possibly raise some questions about local land titles; the lawyers would know best about that. Texas land titles originate from the Spanish monarchy before 1821, the Republic of Mexico after that date until 1836, when they originated with the Republic of Texas until 1845 when the public lands in Texas became the property of the State of Texas. There are some land titles in Louisiana which have a French or Spanish grant origin, but locally they originate with the United States. This might make a big difference if a dispute over land titles arises along the Sabine River.

The question of the ownership of Texas goes back to 1685 when LaSalle landed on the Texas coast and built his ill-fated Fort St. Louis and gave France a shadowy claim to Texas. At the end of the French and Indian War the Treaty of Paris of 1763, gave all of the western side of the Mississippi basin, LaSalle's Louisiana, to Spain plus the gulf coast south of the thirty-first parallel of latitude. Since Spain now owned both banks of the Sabine, which they called El Rio de San Francisco de la Sabinas (The River of St. Francis of Cypress Trees), there was no dispute over the boundary between Louisiana and Texas until 1803 when Pres. Thomas Jefferson bought Louisiana which had been ceded to France (Napoleon) by Spain a short time before. Spain made a feeble but somewhat logical claim to land as far east as the Atchafalaya and the United States made an equally feeble attempt to claim Texas as part of the Louisiana Purchase.

When the Aaron Burr plot was exposed in 1805 Gen. James Wilkinson, in command of the United States forces in the Mississippi valley and at the same time a secret agent for Spain, met with Col. Simon de Herrera, the Spanish commander at Natchitoches, at the Block House Church west of Many on El Camino Real, now LA Highway 6, and made an agreement that the land between the Sabine and a now unidentifiable stream known as the Arroyo Honda would not be occupied by either side. Whatever stream the two officers may have had in mind for all practical purposes the Calcasieu River became the eastern boundary of the Neutral Ground. There is a stone marker on the bank of the lake at Lake Charles at the curve near the old cemetery which marks the site of Cantonment Atkinson which was an army post set up by the United States to guard the boundary and protect travelers across the rather dangerous Neutral Ground. The agreement between Wilkinson and Herrera was not a formal treaty, but a sort of "gentlemen's agreement" between them; however the two governments generally respected it.

This situation continued until Feb. 22, 1819, when the United States and Spain signed a formal treaty by which the United States received a clear title to the Florida territory and surrendered its claim to Texas, accepting the Sabine as the boundary. Article Three of the treaty reads:

"The boundary between the two countries, west of the Mississippi, shall begin at the mouth of the River Sabine, in the sea continuing north along the WESTERN BANK of that river to the 32 degree of latitude – etc."

The Louisiana State Constitution of 1812 gave the middle of the Sabine as the boundary as did the Act of Congress of 1848 establishing the boundary after the annexation of the Republic of Texas to the United States in 1845-46. The hearing being held in Austin concerns which of the documents concerning the boundary takes precedence. The United States Constitution says:

"This constitution and all laws of the United States --- and all treaties made or which shall be made shall be the supreme law of the land and judges in each state shall be bound thereby, anything in the constitution or laws of any state to the contrary notwithstanding."

The question of why the governors of the state of Louisiana prior to the action of former Gov. Sam H. Jones in 1941 did not raise the question earlier probably cannot be answered now. Gov. Jones has probably already answered the question, but I have not seen a copy of his answer.

In the event that Judge Robert Van Pelt of Nebraska, who is conducting the hearing for the Supreme Court Justices, renders a decision in favor of Louisiana making the west bank of the Sabine the boundary and the Supreme Court sustains the decision some rather interesting and complicated court actions could arise concerning ownership of the bed of the river. By Federal law the beds of the rivers belong to the state in which the river is located, but what about the various “old rivers” and cut off lakes which have been formed by changes in the channel of the Sabine since 1819? What about the islands in the river? Texas and Oklahoma had a long and complicated dispute over Greer County, now in the southwestern part of Oklahoma. The question was which of the two forks of the Red River crossing the 100<sup>th</sup> parallel of longitude was the main channel. Oklahoma won when the Supreme Court decided that the southern fork was the main channel. What about individual titles to land since as mentioned above Texas titles do not originate from the Federal government and those in Louisiana do?

Those questions provide those of my generation with another good excuse to stay alive just to see how it all turns out. It might be better than a TV Serial.

## STETSON HAT

The recent announcement that the John B. Stetson Hat Company will cease to produce hats early in 1971 brings a feeling of nostalgic regret to those of my age to whom a Stetson was more than a mere head covering; it was an institution and symbol of manhood. About the time we started shaving and “going with girls” we usually left off our cloth caps and received our first Stetson.

The felt hat industry in America goes back to the colonial days when it was discovered that American beaver fur produced a hat far superior to the English made felt hats, usually made of wool. The British hatters were so desperate over their lack of ability to meet American competition that in 1732 Parliament passed the Hat Act which prohibited the making of hats in the colonies, though beaver fur could be sent to England for manufacture into hats. After independence was won American felt hatters prospered until beaver fur became scarce and the silk top hat became the symbol of affluence and social standing in the East.

In 1865 John B. Stetson of Philadelphia went into the hat business and a few years later went west in search of health and by chance learned that his felt hats met the needs of westerners of all occupations.

A Stetson of the better grades was almost indestructible from use and served all sorts of unusual purposes. Every western movie viewer has seen the cowboy water his faithful horse from his Stetson and the cowboy himself used his hat as a drinking cup. What is seen less often is the Stetson being used as a water bucket in fighting a fire. Uses that I have never seen but have heard of were those of using the rugged Stetson as a baby's bath tub, a lady's lavatory or in an extreme emergency as a baptismal font. Then, how could a generation of western film viewers identify the “good boys” and the “bad guys” except by the color of their hats?

The early beaver fur felt hats were graded by the number of “X's” preceding the word “beaver”, six or seven X beaver was the top quality. When real beaver fur became rare other forms of fur were used, mostly Australian rabbit or South American nutria and Louisiana muskrat. Then the trade mark in the sweat band bore the words “beaver quality” following the “X's”. However, my present, and probably last, Stetson does not have the “X”.

The ownership of a good Stetson was a point of pride. They were used as awards for distinguished service or as a token of esteem. The late Pres. John F. Kennedy who was noted for appearing bare headed disappointed some of his Texas admirers when he failed to put on the western style hat presented to him on his tragic trip to Dallas in November of 1963. Election and other friendly bets used a “good Stetson hat” as the wager.

About 1920 I was visiting my Uncle Bert and Aunt Willie (To my former students they were the parents of “Cousin Bert” of helicopter fame whose prospective visit to DeQuincy was anticipated but never happened.) in Oklahoma and was taken by them to visit some friends on a ranch near Tishomingo. After dinner the subject of hats came into the talk and our host went over to a cedar wardrobe and carefully, almost reverently, removed a typical western type Stetson and remarked that it was a Seven X Stetson. Uncle Bert and I rode in the same car to attend a funeral and as we approached the church he wondered out loud if it would be safe to leave his hat in the car and said, “You know this is a Seven X Beaver and cost Bert, Jr. over a hundred dollars”.

When Clarice Ann Richard Jones was in my history class and we were talking about the colonial beaver trade, the Hat Act of 1732 and its influence on the American Revolution I asked the class if any of them had seen a



Six or Seven X Beaver hat and Clarice said that her father, the late Rudolph Richard, owned one which he wore on special occasions.

One reason for the decline in the hat industry and the closing of the Stetson Company is that young men no longer wear hats unless they are absolutely necessary as protection against the sun, then it is likely to be a straw hat. Indeed a felt hat has become almost the symbol of a “senior citizen” and it is increasingly difficult to find a hat rack or other place to hang a hat in churches, offices and other public places. John B. Stetson, like a great many of his nineteenth and early twentieth century contemporaries, devoted a part of his wealth to further the cause of education. John B. Stetson University was established at DeLand, Florida in 1883 as a co-educational college and is still in operation. Perhaps, when a generation who never wore a Stetson or saw one outside a western movie has grown up Stetson dollars may still be making a contribution to developing the brain under the American skull rather than protecting the top side of the skull.

## BLACKSMITH EXPERIENCES

One day last fall Phillip Bordelon and I were comparing our experiences working in an old fashioned “hand powered” blacksmith shop, he in Avoyelles Parish and I some 500 miles away at Decatur, Tex.

Though he was living and working on the banks of the Mississippi river where the shop received its supplies by steam boat and I on the chalk hills of north Texas, where everything was hauled by rail or wagon, our experiences were about the same.

For example, there was the matter of shrinking wagon and buggy tires. Whereas the modern tourist goes to the service station to have his tires “aired,” get a puncture repaired, have a new tire installed, the driver of a horse, mule, or ox-drawn vehicle never had a flat tire; he had another problem which was just as serious to him.

Buggy or wagon wheels were made almost entirely of wood, usually hickory, oak or ash. Except for the steel tire about the only metal in the wheel was around the hub, the amount of metal depending upon the type of wheel.

The wooden wheel rim had holes bored through it at regular intervals. One the end of each spoke was the tenon which fitted into the hole in the rim. On the outside of the rim of course was the steel tire, though some of the more elite buggies and carriages were beginning to use solid rubber tires which were held in place by a steel channel somewhat like the rim on a modern automobile wheel. Buggy and carriage tires were bolted to the rim but wagon tires usually were not.

Another difference between Phillip’s experience and mine was that in Avoyelles Parish the log wagons used wheels which were eight inches across the tread while in north Texas the farm wagon used a two-inch tread and freight wagons a four-inch tread. The log wagons were usually pulled by oxen where oxen were almost unknown in the hills of Wise County.

In dry weather the wood in the wheels would dry out and shrink with two results:, both bad. The tenon on the spoke would get loose and start vibrating in the rim socket, producing a rattling sound that could be heard before the vehicle came in sight.

Not only was the noise annoying, but in time the tenon would wear out and might even break off, ruining the spoke, and if enough of them wore off the wheel would collapse. Due to the bolts through the tire, a buggy tire would not fall off; but a wagon tire would fall off, and if the wagon was loaded the wheel was almost sure to collapse.

When the wheel dried out there were two courses open to the driver, one temporary and one permanent. The temporary one was to drive the vehicle into a stream or pond, we called a pond a tank, and leave it until the wood absorbed enough water to tighten the wheel. The other remedy was to take the vehicle to a blacksmith shop for permanent repairs.

The first step was to remove the bolts from a buggy wheel (this was one of my jobs in the shop) and with a narrow wood chisel split the end of the tenon on the spoke and then drive in a wooden wedge until the spoke was tight again. Phillip did this in his shop, but at Decatur one of the Morris brothers, Silas or Archie, did it. If the wheel had been neglected too long and the tenon was completely worn off the spoke had to be replaced.

The next step cannot be described adequately with words, it must have been seen to really understand it, I believe. There was a tool called a wheel gauge which was a small steel wheel about twenty four inches in circumference and marked off in inches and fraction of inches down to about one eighth of an inch. It was mounted on an axis and had a handle so that it could be rolled along somewhat like a child's toy or one of the modern measuring machines that some industries use today.

By running the small gauge around the outside of the wooden rim the circumference of the wheel could be measured to a rather accurate degree. Next the gauge was run around the inside of the steel tire and its circumference measured. By this process the blacksmiths or wheelwright learned how much too large the tire was and prepared to shrink it to the same size as the wheel.

Inside the tire the smith or wright with a center punch made three dots about eight or ten inches apart in line. The distance between the first two dots was immaterial, but the space between the second and third dots had to be the exact difference between the circumference of the wheel and the inside of the tire. Next a pair of steel compasses, also called dividers, was set with the points inside the first two dots.

Now the tire was placed in the forge and the space between the dots heated white hot. The next step was to place the tire in a machine called a tire shrinker and by pulling on a lever the hot part of the tire was compressed into a shorter length. When the points of the dividers rested in the two outside dots in the tire the worker knew that he had shrunk the tire to the proper size.

Next the tire was heated around its complete circumference and expanded so that it went around the wheel, after which the tire was quickly cooled by water. If the workman had done a good job the tire was now tight and all that remained was to replace the bolts, that is, in a buggy or carriage wheel. This was the "hot" process.

There was also a "cold" process but it was not generally used at first because there was too much muscle power required before the invention of the hydraulic shrinker. The objection to the older cold process was that the smith could not measure the exact amount the tire was shrunk and he could ruin a wheel if he shrunk the tire too much. Also, sometimes an unethical worker would try to shrink the tire without removing the tire and wedging the spokes. The hydraulic shrinker was accurate to one thirty-second of an inch which could be measured by the number of strokes on the pump.

To old timers this was routine. If the readers are interested in such sometimes Phillip and I will get together and shoe a horse for you, or perhaps sharpen a plow or do some old-fashioned forge welding, which was different from modern welding.

\*\*\*\* To the unidentified former student who called the other day: The hero of Edward Everett Hale's novel, "Man Without a Country", was Phillip Noland.

TJR

## THE PERKINS TRADITION

The sale of the Perkins Pharmacy to Mr. John Haga of Sulphur brings to a close another tradition in DeQuincy. It will take a little "getting used to" not to have some member of the Perkins family in the drug business and being able to say, "Perkins" and have anyone in this area know just what store you mean; nothing else was needed.

My memory of "Perkins" goes back to 1928, but there has been a Perkins Pharmacy in DeQuincy since 1910, which is pretty close to the date of the founding of the town and makes it just about the oldest business firm in DeQuincy, the Rainwater Hotel may be older and of course the Kansas City Southern established the town about 1897.

There are doubtless families in this area who have been customers of Perkins for four and five generations.

It would be presumptuous on my part to attempt to name all of the members of the Perkins family, and others not of the family, who have worked in the Perkins Pharmacy, but my memory goes back to the time that "Uncle Johnnie" and "Aunt Mag or Maggie," she was called by both names I think, ran the store with Pharmacist Clyde, "Doc" Walker, in charge of the prescription desk.

Somewhat later Carl and his late brother Pete served that department. Among the non-professionals who helped in the store at different times were: Welsh Miller, a nephew; Mrs. Smith, a daughter; the two Smith sons, Robert who is not Major General Smith of the USA; Billy, who according to the latest information I have is manager of the Chamber of Commerce at Alexandria.

There is no doubt a long list of DeQuincy citizens and former citizens who at some time worked behind the counters or made deliveries for "Perkins." It has been only in the past generation that ladies, to any great extent, worked in drug stores but of recent years Perkins had been staffed with a full complement of courteous and efficient lady employees.

Pharmacist W.T. Brown for years operated his own business in DeQuincy and then "retired," but like most people who have spent years in a business or profession that they enjoyed, find it difficult to remain "retired", Mr. Brown has been filling prescriptions at Perkins of recent years.

No doubt that Perkins has filled prescriptions written by every medical doctor, dentist or veterinarian who has practiced in this area. Heading that list of course would be Dr. George Lyons and followed by Dr. Sandeford, Dr. C.R. Price, Dr. A.E. Douglas, Dr. Howell, Dr. Cooper, Dr. Culpepper of Singer, Dr. Vines of Ragley, Dr. A.A. Kidd and Dr. W.G. Hart of Starks, Dr. E.L. Landry, Dr. Drez, Dr. Bishop, Dr. Witherington, Dr. James Lamberth, Dr. Snyder, Dr. Shaheen and more recently Dr. Sutton and Dr. Shaw.

Most of these dedicated doctors I knew or know personally and there were doubtless others whom I did not know.

Among the dentists were Dr. J.B. Robinson, Dr. Thomas, Dr. Rutledge, Dr. Baggett, and Dr. Howard Snyder.

I am sure that the prescription files of Perkins Pharmacy carry the names of some of the most distinguished medical practitioners in the whole Gulf Coast area, since DeQuincy people who have consulted

medical men in other cities they have generally brought their prescriptions back to DeQuincy to be filled and Perkins has filled its share of them.

When the late Mr. John Perkins first established his business the ingredients in some of the prescriptions were based on local herbs and “folk medicine” and were compounded by the pharmacist, using the familiar mortar and pestle. The sophisticated and complicated antibiotics, vaccines, vitamins so familiar today were unknown. Some time ago I saw a sign in a drug store which read something like this: “Ninety percent of the medicines we dispense were unknown twenty years ago.”

In the earlier days calomel and quinine were in wide use; as well as a long list of “patent medicines” that are rare or unknown today.

While it is not in the field of the pharmacist to diagnose illness or prescribe remedies the pharmacist is frequently able to render valuable service by suggesting a remedy for a temporary, recognizable ailment. Indeed, it is predicted that within the next generation or so that with the disappearance of the general practitioner from the field of medicine that the pharmacist will be trained to diagnose ailments and recommend the proper specialist.

Perkins, like most modern drug stores stocks a long list of products and goods which are not medical in their use. There are also some things which the modern drug store no longer handles; the soda fountain has disappeared from drug stores. I do not know if Perkins ever sold gasoline, but their contemporaries, Dr. W.W. Man and Mr. Bass, at Decatur, Texas did. They sold gasoline by the quart to users of gasoline blow torches, irons and stoves. They had the first gasoline pumps for automobiles.

Anyhow, Carl, we will miss you from the drugstore but expect to see you around catching up on your rest, and enjoying doing whatever you enjoy most, not the least at which will be with your family more.

I told Jan the other day that every teenage girl needs a careful mother and a rich grandfather to spoil her, but in her case a retired father will do very well in place of the rich grandfather.

Anyhow, “Happy Days Ahead,” Carl, Hazel and Jan, with some of them spent enjoying visiting with Ada Margaret and her family as well as the “Blue” Watsons.

## BANGS DISEASE RECALLED

Previous to about 1940 the bane of the beef cattle and dairy industries in this area was brucellosis or Bang's disease among cattle and its counterpart among people, undulant fever. The insidious thing about brucellosis was that a cow could appear perfectly healthy in every way except that her calves were born prematurely and usually died, thus the beef cattleman lost his profit for that year from that cow. The cow continued to live and spread the disease to other members of the herd, or even among people who came into contact with the diseased animal.

People who used raw milk from infected cows or handled the raw meat were liable to acquire undulant fever. This was a sort of occupational disease among dairy and packing house workers. Several people in this area contracted the disease without knowing that they had been exposed. The symptoms were a fever that lasted a day or so, and then disappeared only to reappear in a short time. In time the patient might become more or less disabled. There was no specific cure, but some doctors prescribed generous drinks of apple brandy (apple jack) to relieve the condition. One friend, who had the disease, said that it appeared the he was faced with the choice of having the fever or becoming an alcoholic and he did not care for either alternative.

It was known that after several years a cow might recover from the disease and be able to produce a living calf and cease to be a menace to the other members of the herd and human beings, after having been a menace for some time.

One day I suggested to a medical doctor friend, not a DeQuincy doctor, that it seemed to me that it might be possible to use the blood from a cow which had recovered from the disease and prepare a vaccine that might be used either with cattle or people. He scorned the ideas as that of a layman who thought that just because such an idea had worked with smallpox it would work with everything else.

The Bureau of Animal Industry of the United States Department of Agriculture became interested in stamping out the disease in this area by using the only then known method; the test and slaughter method. A USDA veterinary, Dr. George Young, came into this area and started the program. All animals to be tested were brought to a central point, here at DeQuincy it was the Hardy Jone's Barn at the end of Third Street, ear tagged and then Dr. Young and his assistant drew some blood from the animal. The blood was sent to a central laboratory to be tested and if the animal reacted positively, it was branded on the left jaw with a capital "B." The animal was condemned to be destroyed, but the government had to pay the owner a certain percentage of the appraised value of the animal, as appraised by Dr. Young. The condemned animals from this area were sent to the Swift plant at Lake Charles for sale at whatever price the Swift Company would pay. The owner of the animals received both payments. What use the Swift Company made of the carcasses I never knew.

After the government program was over in this area I, in my capacity as Local Leader for 4-H Clubs, acted as a sort of an "unofficial" drawer of blood for people who had a private milch cow they wanted tested. I did not have the syringe like the one Dr. Young used, so I used a razor blade and made a slash on the inside of the ear flap and drew the blood which was sent to Quilty Bros. Veterinary office in Lake Charles. If the test showed a positive reaction there was no indemnity paid to the owner to take whatever steps he saw fit, but at least he knew if it were safe to use the milk.

Now a system of vaccination is used and the careful beef cattle men and all public dairies vaccinate the young heifers at about one year old and the milk sold in the market comes from tested herds and is also pasteurized. As far as I know brucellosis among cattle and undulant fever among people are rare in this area

now, but constant vigilance must be maintained and the vaccination program continued or one infected animal in one herd can start a chain of disease that would undo the work of a generation of care.

The DeQuincy Journal, Reading and Remembering..., DeQuincy Louisiana, February 10, 1971

## THE ASTRONAUTS

The voyage of Apollo 14 Astronauts Shepard, Mitchell and Roosa ranks as one of man's most daring adventures in exploration, but man since the most primitive times has been motivated to explore the unknown which lies ahead, over the next hill, around the next bend in the river or across the sea or to the moon. History and literature are filled with such stories; to even name all of them would be impossible.

We might as well begin with the three sons of Noah; Shem, Japeth and Ham, when they left the Ark and each set out on his own way. Then Abraham leaving Ur of the Chaldees to go into an unknown land which God had promised to show and give to him. The twelve spies of Moses, cowards though ten of them proved to be, belong to his notable brotherhood.

Most anthropologists, though not all, accept the theory that America was first inhabited by people from Asia who crossed the Bering Sea into Alaska ten, twenty or even thirty thousand years ago and then fanned out over the two continents and the nearby islands to become the ancestors of the people we call the Indians.

Traditionally American schools have taught that an Italian navigator called in English, Christopher Columbus, discovered America on October 12, 1492. Now it is coming to be accepted that there were numerous previously unknown explorers who reached America before Columbus. Charles Mitcheal Boland, in his book, "They All Discovered America," recounts the stories of a long list of individuals and groups who reached America before Columbus; beginning with the above mentioned Asiatic groups and including the Phoenicians, the Romans, and the Chinese on the west coast, the Irish, various Scandinavians, and the Portuguese.

Following Columbus was a long line of hardy, adventurous souls and groups representing several eastern European states. Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese ship captain and navigator employed by the Spanish crown in August of 1519 set out with a fleet of five small ships westward over the Atlantic, going he knew not where.

He faced every sort of problem possible it seems; mutiny, desertion by two of his ships and crews, sickness, starvation, storms, hostile natives, plus material failures and shortages of all kinds. In spite of all of this the men worked their way through the Strait of Magellan and out across the Pacific to the Philippines where Magellan lost his life in a fight with natives. The last ship, the Victoria, with a crew of eighteen survivors finally reached Spain by way of the Indian Ocean and the southern tip of Africa in September of 1522, a few days more than three years after their departure from Spain. Theirs was the first circumnavigation of the globe. So far as is known, they were completely out of contact with all Europeans from the time they left Spain until the return of the immortal eighteen.

In 1528 Spain sent Panfilo de Narvaez with some 400 men and 42 horses to what is now Tampa Bay, Florida to explore-conquer and settle the Gulf Coast. Disaster followed disaster until a handful built some crude boats and attempted to reach Mexico by following the gulf coast. The final disaster came when the last boat was wrecked on the coast of Texas, leaving only four survivors. Two of them were Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca and a Negro slave, some say he was a Moor, named Estevanico (Little Steve). The four passed the next seven years among the Indians, occupying every status from that of a starved slave to adulated divine healers. They finally reached fellow Spaniards in Mexico.

Almost three hundred years later, in 1804, two American leaders, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, with about forty men left St. Louis, Missouri on an expedition up the Missouri River, across the western highlands, down the Columbia River, to the Oregon coast, there to spend the winter and return; all with the loss of only one man, a sergeant who died with what is now believed to have been appendicitis.

In May of 1927 Charles A. Lindbergh was to arouse the national pride and enthusiasm to the highest pitch when he flew his little Ryan monoplane the “Spirit of St. Louis” on the first solo flight across the Atlantic from New York to Paris, 3,600 miles in thirty-three hours. Gen. Lindbergh still lives and is still active in aviation circles; his plane the “Spirit of St. Louis” can still be seen in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

Men like Robert E. Perry and Richard E. Byrd, along with a number of others, have also made Americans proud with their often less spectacular but highly valuable work in north and south Polar explorations.

Today men and women from all over southwest Louisiana can be found working in every part of the world, civilized and not so civilized, exploring, discovering and developing the natural resources for the benefit not only of American industry but for the local people and the world in general.

All of those men, from the sons of Noah to Shepard, Mitchell and Roosa had and have certain qualities in common; courage, curiosity, the ability to endure, dedication and the will to survive. The predecessors of the Astronauts faced problems unknown to the later members of their fraternity; such handicaps as superstition, ignorance, scanty and faulty equipment, discouragement from their fellow men and frequently inadequate support and downright opposition from their own governments. Hernando Cortez, Gen. Billy Mitchell and Admiral Rickover experienced this last problem.

When Columbus and his fellow adventurers of later years left home they had no clear idea of where they were going and what they would find; if they arrived at all. Once clear of the port of departure these men were in most cases, completely out of touch with fellow Europeans until their return home, which might be years later.

No one will ever know the names and stories of the numerous adventurers who set out to discover, explore and settle distant regions who failed and did not return to ‘file a report’; they are the ‘UNKNOWN’ of the fellowship of those who were “THE FIRST TO SET FOOT UPON.....”!



## **WATER REALLY PRECIOUS**

A recent letter from a sister in west Texas mentioned the severe drought in that area and that some of the cattlemen were having to sell their cattle and that others were hauling water to their animals.

That matter of hauling water is rather complicated sometimes. First of all the farmer-stockman must locate a supply of water and have the necessary tank truck with which to do the hauling. For a large herd this is almost impossible.

Not only cattle water, but household water must also be hauled. I think the modern self-service laundry may have originated in a dry area where the only supply of water was in town.

I began my teaching career fifty years ago next fall in a community which had just about everything it needed – stores, churches, homes, a school, a bank, a doctor, a cotton gin, a blacksmith shop, two railroads with cattle loading pens and some very fine people, but there was a decided shortage of usable water.

True there were wells; Tom Clark was in the business of drilling wells, but Tom never knew if the wells he drilled would have water at all, or if they did whether or not the water would be “gyp” water.

In case the uninitiated would like to learn what “gyp” water is like I suggest that he pick a few crystals of the mineral from a piece of sheetrock, dissolve it in a glass of water and taste the solution. One taste will be enough.

Gyp water is frequently clear and sparkling, but is also heavily impregnated with gypsum that neither man nor beast can drink. As for washing with it; I doubt that even the best of the modern detergents would have much effect on gyp water.

Fifty years ago most homes in west Texas had guttering around the eaves of the house or barn to catch rainfall. Some of the larger towns had begun to build lakes for a water source and a few of them were fortunate enough to be located over a stratum of geological water that was reasonably free of minerals.

A great many families had their own windmills and elevated cisterns which supplied their needs. About 1931 I stood on the back porch of my parents’ home in Haskell and counted 17 windmills, all in operation.

The late Dr. Walter Prescott Webb of the University of Texas taught that the windmill, the six-shooter and barbed wire made the settlement of the west possible.

Some of the larger ranches had manmade lakes (tanks) which were large enough to permit schools and other public institutions to haul water from the lakes when the cisterns were dry.

The Swenson Flat-Top Mountain ranch did this for the Sagerton School. I remember a time or two when the school cistern was dry that pupils and teachers brought their own drinking water from home along with lunches.

The matter of bathing was a problem. As far as I know there was not a single bath tub with running water in Sagerton fifty years ago. In such towns as Rule, Haskell and Stamford the barber shops had bath tubs and for 25 cents a man could get a hot bath with soap and towels furnished.

At Sagerton we males talked Elmer Luck, the barber, into enclosing one corner of the shop and installing a kind of shower which consisted of a five gallon can, equipped with a spray nozzle and a drain under foot. The water was heated by a “banjo” type gasoline burner. For 25 cents we could get a shower. Where Luck found the water I never knew.

About 1922 at a Teacher Institute someone demonstrated a method of mass hand-washing for schools. The system was to start with two tubs of water a few feet apart and two empty tubs, one empty along side of each tub of water. There were to be four monitors, two at each end of the line, the other students were to file past the monitors and hold out their hands as they passed the first monitors who would pour a dipper of water over the students’ hands. The next monitor would squirt a few drops of liquid soap on the wet hands of the students, and then the student would walk a few steps, rubbing his hands together. When he arrived at the next monitor the monitor poured a dipper of rinse water over the hands of the “washee” who then received a paper towel from the fourth monitor.

All nice and easy up on the stage with a group of selected fourth graders. I never knew any one to try it out under actual conditions. Sounds like the beginnings of riot to me.

When the Doyle Penton family moved to DeQuincy about a generation ago the name sounded strangely familiar to me, yet I could not recall where I had heard it before. About that time a mass meeting was called in the old high school gymnasium to discuss the water situation here in DeQuincy. I remarked in a jesting manner to a small group, “You fellows don’t know anything about a water shortage. When I was teaching at Sagerton, Tex., I used to have to go to Rule, Haskell or Stamford on weekends just to take a bath.”

Mr. Penton, at that time unknown to me, was sitting just ahead of me and when he heard the names of those towns mentioned he identified himself and revealed that he had once lived at Haskell and knew the members of my family well.

After two years at Sagerton I moved to Rule because it was a bigger school and the salary was more. A friend asked me why I left Sagerton to come to Rule. My answer was, “Well I have to come to Rule to take a bath, so I decided it was easier to move closer (ten miles) to the bath tub.”

As was mentioned in an earlier column, I taught a one room school for a month in the spring of 1922. Our water supply was a pond (tank) across the road in a pasture from which both we and cattle drank. This was a common custom in those days and as far as I know no person or cow ever suffered any ill effects from it.

Down in Jones County my grandfather had two good wells on his farm, both equipped with windmills. He reserved one for his own use and his neighbors were welcome to use the other when it became water hauling time.

Today most towns have a water supply either from a city lake or wells, but farmers and ranchers still have a water problem. In spite of this the people of west Texas think it is the most wonderful place on earth and do not want to live anywhere else. However, it has been said that if two people meet, as soon as they have greeted each other, asked about mutual friends and members of their respective families, the next topic of conversation will be rain, expressing gratitude for the last rain or wishing that it would rain. Economic, political, social and even religious and educational life depends upon the rain.

## FLU EPIDEMIC OF 1918

A recent battle with some sort of “bug” which kept me in the house for about ten days served to recall the world-wide epidemic of Spanish influenza of the winter of 1918-1919. The disease came into America apparently from Western Europe (Spain?) and soon covered the entire continent. People in the United States had not known anything as severe since the yellow fever epidemics before 1900 and we were frightened.

The illness spared no one; the old, the middle-aged, and children. Farmers and others in isolated communities seemed to have a better chance of escaping but they were not spared, dwellers in towns and crowded cities stood little chance of avoiding the illness. A rumor, later found to be not true, went around that the men in the army camps were ‘dying like flies’ and being buried secretly to prevent their families at home from panicking. It was reported later that the rumor may have been spread by German agents. Like most rumors there was perhaps a certain amount of truth in it.

Public gatherings of all sorts were discouraged and in some communities the schools were closed for a time. Some churches suspended services for a time, but other congregations followed the opposite policy and begged people to meet together and pray for relief.

There was little that the doctors could do; hospitals existed only in the cities, so families and neighbors cared for each other the best they could. Mrs. Ratliff, who was in her middle teens, not only helped nurse the other members of her families but milked three cows, one belonging to her own immediate family, but also her grandmother’s and her uncle’s cows. She ordinarily did not do the milking. In one family that I knew the entire family was ill at the same time except a teenage boy who was recovering. The neighbors prepared food and placed it on a table outside a window on the front porch and after the neighbors were at what was considered a safe distance the boy raised the window and took the food inside. All of his family recovered.

A great many people depended upon Vick’s Vaporub and aspirin for relief. Aspirin was considered the ‘miracle drug’ of that time. Old timers of my grandfather’s generation depended largely upon ‘hot toddies’ for treatment. They believed that anything a hot toddy would not cure probably could not be cured anyhow. It was during this time probably that the late Dr. George Lyons started prescribing his famous ‘flu medicine’. What the ingredients for this villainous looking and tasting concoction were is known only to such pharmacists as “Doc” Walker, Carl Perkins, W.T. Brown and D.M. Norment.

One of the most pitiable groups I have ever known was that of about two hundred Mexican contract laborers who had been brought from central Mexico to work at relaying the tracks of the Fort Worth and Denver Railway. Far from home and their families, faced with a language barrier and an unknown and frightening illness, living in bunk cars on a railway siding they could only plead to Dr. L.H. Reeves, ‘El Hospital de San Jose’ (St. Joseph’s infirmary at Fort Worth). Several of these men died in spite of the devoted efforts of the medical and nursing staff of St. Josephs.

I do not suppose that anyone knows how many doctors and nurses sacrificed their health and lives in an effort to relieve the suffering. It has been estimated that on a world-wide basis more than twenty million people died within a few months. In India twelve and one-half million are said to have died from the ailment, while in the United States the death toll was placed at five hundred and forty-eight thousand. By comparison, one set of figures says that in all the wars that the United States has engaged in beginning with the American Revolution and through the Korean War, 557,874 men have died in battle. It should be borne in mind that in all the earlier wars that more men died from non-battle deaths than from enemy action. That seems to be true of Viet Nam at this writing.

Decatur, Texas, a town about the size of DeQuincy, lost two men in battle during World War I but in the same town at the same time, two brothers, both grown and married, died the same week from 'flu'. In another family both parents died within a short time and left the children to be reared by their grandparents. There were several families who lost one member.

The Encyclopedia Britannica says: "The 1918 epidemic was the most destructive in history; in fact it ranks with the Plague of Justinian (circa 500 A.D.) and the Black Death (circa 1300 A.D.) as one of the most severe holocausts of disease ever encountered". Those who escaped pneumonia and other complications stood a good chance of recovery, but these complications were almost certain death. For those of us who survived an attack there were generally two opposite reactions; we trembled at the mention of the word 'flu' or we were like it was said of men who survived the battle of Gettysburg; they were never scared of anything else afterward.

## HAMPTON FAMILY OF STARKS AND VINTON

This article will be pure remembering, no reading involved, it has to do with a shower given for a young expectant mother at Levinwood, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Levingston out in the Sam Houston State Park Area on the evening of February 18, 1971. If you are wondering what an "old senior citizen" was doing at an affair which is usually reserved for the ladies, the answer is simple but twofold. First of all I went along as chauffeur for Mrs. Ratliff but the second reason was to pay tribute to an old and dear friend.

The young honoree is the granddaughter of the late James R. (Jim) Hampton of Starks and Vinton and Mrs. Hampton, now of Lake Charles. Jim spent his working years with the Gulf Oil Corporation, several years at the old Starks Field and later in the fields around Vinton. Mrs. Hampton taught at the Vinton and Starks Schools and served as Postmaster at Starks for a short time and is now a member of the Supervisory Staff of the Calcasieu Parish School Board. Many people knew the Hamptons because of their camp on Old River, west of Starks. This was a private family camp, but a stranger might easily have mistaken it for a public camp because people from all over this area; from Houston to Baton Rouge, from Arkansas to Lake Charles knew the Hamptons and visited them, even strangers sometimes without an invitation. Houston oil men, ministers, politicians and local people all went out to the Hampton camp and Jim and Bobbie were always glad to give advice about fishing conditions, lend a boat and share the contents of the coffee pot or even a meal. In my case a chance to sit under the trees and just talk. Jim "loved his fellow man" regardless of the economic or social status of the other fellow.

The young lady mentioned is Mrs. Errye Ann Hampton Enault, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles P. (Jimbo) Hampton, and is the wife of Lt. James Enault now serving in Viet Nam. Most people who know her call her "Poki" because when she was born her grandfather (Jim) said she looked like Pocahontas with her black hair.

My time at the shower was spent in the company of Mr. Levingston and Mr. Henry Bordelon father of Mrs. Levingston; professionally she is Dr. Kathleen Levingston, Ph. D., we remembered local people and events going back to the years before World War I.

Mr. Bordelon recalled the famous "dummy line" street railway system in Lake Charles, a steam propelled system which operated between the shops of the old Watkins Railway, now the Missouri Pacific, shops south east of Lake Charles and Ryan Street. We talked about Arthur Stillwell and John W. (Bet-a-Million) Gates and the building of the KCS and the establishment of towns like DeRidder, DeQuincy and Port Arthur.

Somehow the talk drifted around to some of the noted criminal trials which took place in Lake Charles years ago and how the death penalty was inflicted more often and with more certainty than now. Mention of these cases brought up the names of some of the famous "lawmen" of earlier years such as; Sheriff Henry Reid, Sr. and his father Kinney Reid and the former's son the present Sheriff Henry Reid, Jr. and some old time deputies such as the late Jerry Carruthers, Bill Buxton and Bill Perkins of Starks and Jim Collins of DeQuincy. We did not overlook Horace Lyons, who accomplished the seemingly impossible feat of defeating Sheriff Henry Reid, Sr. for one term during the twenties and was later Postmaster of Lake Charles. We did not overlook another early sheriff, the late John Al Perkins, who spent his later years in DeQuincy keeping the office for his old friend Dr. George Lyons.

From sheriffs it was just a step to recall the District Judges of these earlier times; the older Judge Miller of Jennings, Judge Thomas E. Porter and Judge Jerry Cline, uncle of C.E. Cline of DeQuincy.

As Mr. Bordelon and I “remembered” and Mr. Livingston, who is a generation younger, mostly listened, it seemed but last year that Griffin T. Hawkins was District Attorney and later to be a noted trial defense attorney, he to be followed by John J. Robira as District Attorney who had as his First Assistant a keen minded young lawyer from DeRidder who as a very young man had helped write the Louisiana State Constitution of 1921 but known now as Gov. Sam Jones of Lake Charles. He had also accomplished the seemingly impossible by defeating Gov. Earl K. Long for the governorship in 1940. A talk about these times and places could not leave out the Long’s, Huey P. and Share-the-Wealth and his brother Earl K. Long, who served more years as governor of Louisiana than any man who has held the office.

Mr. Bordelon, a cousin of some degree to Phillip of DeQuincy, goes back to 1903 in his memory of Calcasieu people and events. One of the earliest things he recalls is the laying of the cornerstone for the building of the Baptist Orphanage in Lake Charles; the building which was later to be a part of the Landry High School on Seventh Street.

When we drifted over into the field of education it was just impossible to mention all of the early day school people, but we did mention a few such as Mr. Carson, principal of the Lake Charles High School, Mr. Ward Anderson one of the early day teachers in Imperial Calcasieu under John McNeese and later for many years Superintendent of the Lake Charles City Schools. We mentioned Mr. Funderburk who was a science teacher at Lake Charles High and invented an electric bell ringing clock and an electric automatic fire alarm system. Somehow, before I realized it, three hours had passed, the party was over and it was time to come home. This was real “remembering.”

P.S. A letter from A.R. Morris, the Archie of the Blacksmith story, now 81, recalls the account of the tire shrinking process as well as that the Morris Shop never disposed of worn out shoes. A metal pole, usually a discarded buggy axle, was driven into the ground and the shoes stacked around it; forming a stack the size of a barrel about five feet high. When the shop closed in the twenties there were five or six of the stacks of shoes. I do not know what became of the shoes, probably sold for scrap.

“Curly” Hodges has a collection of old-fashioned “Blacksmith Tools,” including a tire shrinker.

## HOG KILLING ON THE FARM

This was written on the morning of Tuesday, February 9, a clear bright morning with the temperature down in the low thirties with one of the heaviest frosts of the winter; the kind of day that the old timers referred to as a “hog killin’!” day. Farmers, and some town people, who kept their own hogs waited for just such a day to butcher them.

At daybreak an iron wash pot was filled with water which was heated to near boiling; there was considerable skill and judgment involved in knowing when the temperature of the water was just right, too hot and the hair would set on the carcass and would not “slip,” then the carcass might have to be skinned. Too cold and the hair would not slip at all. The hot water was usually poured into an oak barrel which was braced at about a forty-five degree angle with the ground. Some people added a small amount of hard wood ashes to the water.

There were various ways of killing the hog, some which seem rather brutal to me today, but after the animal was dead the carcass was plunged head or tail first into the hot water. After the carcass had been soaked from both ends and the hair tested to see if it would slip the carcass was removed from the barrel and placed on a table or platform of some kind and scraped free of hair. There was also a certain amount of skill involved in this process. The hair was sometimes saved and used for padding of different kinds; my father said that in Tennessee they saved it to be used as the binder for mixing with clay to daub the cracks in long buildings. South Louisiana people might use Spanish moss or pine needles for this purpose.

After the scraping was over a slit was made in the skin on the back side of the ankle of the rear feet, exposing the leaders. A stout stick 18 to 24 inches long, called a gambrel, and was placed with an end under the leaders of each leg. Some people used a plow single tree for this purpose. Then the carcass was pulled up and hung at the right height for a man standing on the ground to complete the dressing process. The carcass was then split on the ventral (belly) side from tail to chin and the internal organs removed. The organs considered edible, usually the heart and liver, though sometimes the lungs (called “lights”) and the blood, were saved. Some people also used the kidneys as food.

After the carcass was washed down it was left to cool; if the second night was cool and clear the carcass might be left to hang out all night; provided it was thought to be safe from marauders, both human and otherwise. After the cooling process, the next step was cutting it up. There were at least two methods of doing this; packing house style and country style. Farmers seldom used the packing house style which involved sawing the carcass lengthwise down the middle of the spine. This system produced pork chops but no backbone and spare ribs. In the country style the ribs were cut loose from the backbone and then peeled loose from the sides, producing the delectable back bone and spare ribs. These last cuts, along with the organs mentioned above, were eaten fresh; that is, not cured to be eaten later. The brains were mixed with eggs and scrambled, considered delectable and served at breakfast. After I grew up to the size to do the cutting up at our house I usually claimed this dish as my reward.

The lean trimmings, and sometimes the shoulders, were ground into sausage. South Louisiana people, I believe tended to make more of the carcass into sausage than did the people farther north. This may have been because south Louisianans seem to prefer sausage or because of the warm, damp winters it was more difficult to preserve pork with the salt and smoke process. The head and feet were usually made into hogshead cheese or souse. All of these customs and processes varied from section to section and family to family.

Under the salt and smoke system the hams, shoulders and sides were buried in fresh salt in a barrel or box. Salt was not used more than one year “lest it should lose its savor,” and be good for nothing. At the home of former President Andrew Jackson, the Hermitage near Nashville, Tennessee, the visitors can still see the salt trough in the smoke house. After a time the meat was removed from the salt and hung up in the smoke house to be smoked over a slow, smoldering fire. Usually hickory or pecan chips were used for this fire but I have known people to use dry corn cobs if the chips were not available. My grandfather, the late Marguis Lafayette Ratliff of Tennessee and Texas, was an expert in producing the famous Tennessee smoked hams as was his son, Uncle Charlie.

The surplus fat was made into lard of which there were grades; “leaf lard” made from kidney or loin fat and “middling lard” made from the fat trimmed from the side shoulders and hams and “gut lard” made from the fat stripped from the intestines. Lard connoisseurs did not willingly mix the three kinds of fat. A by-product of the lard making process was “cracklins” which were used in making a number of delectable dishes, not the least of which was “crackling” corn bread. Another by-product was homemade lye soap, made from the skin and the last remnants of the butchering process.

Previous to about 1920, hogs were raised for lard and farmers boasted about a hog producing a large amount of lard and hogs were bred to produce lard and the animals were referred to as “lard type” or “bacon type” breeds. Since hog lard has been largely supplanted by vegetable fats in the kitchen the hog breeders have by selective breeding completely changed the body type of the old lard type Poland-China, Duroc Jersey and Chester White (O.I.C.) into a meat type hog. Newer breeds such as the Landrace have become popular.

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Another letter from the sister in Haskell – says that the citizens of the adjoining county of Stonewall entered into an agreement with a professional “rain maker” that for a fee of ten thousand dollars he would produce five inches of rain over the entire county sometime during the month of February. No rain was produce and no fee was paid.



## KROGER FAMILY IN MEXICO

It has been said that whenever anything unusual happened anywhere in the world a close examination would reveal that someone from DeQuincy was present or concerned with it in some way. The statement was not without factual basis.

When President Porfirio Diaz (known as Don Porfirio to most Mexicans) was president of Mexico during the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century he started a program of railway building in Mexico. He called up men from the United States and Europe who were skilled in the building, operation and maintenance of railways to come to Mexico and assist him; part of their responsibility was to train Mexican nationals to assume the task of operating the railways. Among these men were several who were to make their homes in DeQuincy as employees of the Missouri Pacific lines. At least four of them were the late Henry Kroger, Sr., Charles Willrich, a Mr. Pfoetner and John C. Irwin, ancestor of the present Irwin family of DeQuincy. Of these four men I knew Mr. Kroger and Mr. Willrich best. Mr. Kroger worked with the railways in the United States and Mexico for fifty years; retiring in 1938 and dying in 1940.

Mr. Kroger was a native of south Texas and of German ancestry and, as I recall, spoke English with a slight German accent. Just what year he went to Mexico I do not recall hearing him say, but he was a young, unmarried man at the time and while in Mexico he met and married a young lady from that country and they became the parents of four children: Henry, Jr., Peter, John and Sophia, now Mrs. Bobbit and all residents of DeQuincy except Henry.

Mr. Kroger told me that during his stay in Mexico he came to know a great many of the men who were leaders of Mexico at that time or to be leaders later. Among them were President Diaz, Pancho Villa and I think Francisco Madero who was to lead the revolution that overthrew Diaz and became president of the Republic, only to be overthrown and murdered by the Huerta regime. Mrs. Bobbit told me several years ago that she recalled that as a small girl her father held her up and she looked into the casket and saw the body of some prominent man and that there was a large crowd of mourners who were weeping. She said that she did not remember who the man was, but from the circumstances and the time it could have been the body of the former President Madero. Mr. Kroger knew Pancho Villa, then known by his legal name of Dorodeo Ortego, when Villa was a guard for a pack train transporting silver bullion from the smelter to the railway. Villa, Mr. Kroger said, used to entertain and impress the bystanders by tossing small pebbles into the air and hitting them with the bullets from his revolvers. I have seen some official documents of different kinds issued to Mr. Kroger signed by President Diaz; some of which at least were Masonic certificates signed by President Diaz in his capacity as Grand Master of the Masonic Lodges of Mexico.

In the summer of 1927 I took a course in Mexican History taught by Professor J. B. Durand of the National University of Mexico of Mexico City. In the course of his lectures Professor Durand related the following incident; when President Diaz was overthrown in 1911 by the Madero forces he was given permission to go into exile in France and was preparing to leave Mexico City for Tampico to take the ship, he became worried for fear that the train may have been tampered with, "booby trapped" might be the modern term. The former president asked three American railway men whom he trusted to check the train for such a possibility. Professor Durand did not mention the names of the three men. Several years later, I was talking with Mr. Willrich and was about half through telling him the story that Professor Durand had told when Mr. Willrich interrupted to say, "Sure, Henry Kroger and I were two of the men." He did not mention the third man, but from a conversation with Arthur Irwin, I am of the opinion that the third man could have been his father, J.C. Irwin.

Former Postmaster M.A. Kent told me the following: When Mr. Kent was a young man he was employed by the Calcasieu National Bank in DeQuincy and about 1914, shortly after the Kroger family arrived in DeQuincy. Mr. Kroger came into the bank wearing a money belt filled with what appeared to be United States five dollar gold pieces and asked to deposit them. Mr. Kent counted the coins and was preparing to give Mr. Kroger credit for five United States dollars for each coin when Mr. Kroger spoke up and reminded him that the coins were Mexican pieces and might not be worth five dollars in our money. All that he wanted was for the bank to accept the coins, find out their value in United States money and give him credit for that amount. Mr. Kent said that if Mr. Kroger had not spoken up at the time he would have issued him a deposit slip for the full amount in United States money and the bank might have been responsible for the full amount. The transaction was carried out as Mr. Kroger wished.

Mr. Kent spoke highly of the honor and integrity of Mr. Kroger in this matter and mentioned that Mr. Kroger was that sort of person in all of his dealings. It was these qualities of honor and integrity that caused Henry Kroger, Sr. to be trusted by people ranging from humble Mexican peons to a young bank teller in DeQuincy all the way up to Don Profirio Diaz, President of the Republic of Mexico.

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Somehow, in my conversation with Mr. Henry Bordelon of Lake Charles concerning the early day peace officers of Calcasieu Parish, mentioned in an earlier column, we failed to mention the name of R.M. Rainwater. I do not know if Mr. Bordelon knew "Uncle Bob" or not, but "Uncle Bob" probably served more years as a peace officer than any other man in Calcasieu Parish.

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Mr. B.D. Hammons called to ask if I knew about the old fashioned way of making home-made lye to be used in soap making. The hard wood ashes were saved, placed in a sort of wooden vat or ash hopper. Water was poured through the ashes, leaching out the lye (potassium hydroxide). When the Mississippi Valley was being cleared for settlement, potash was an important export to Europe.

## **HAYES SCHOOL TO BE ABANDONED**

This is written with a feeling of nostalgic regret; the old red brick school at Hayes is to be wrecked. It has not been used for over a year now. A news dispatch from the office of the Calcasieu School Board dated March 7 states that a contract has been awarded to a wrecking firm to remove the building.

If you have never seen the Hayes building but have seen the original Bell City High School building you will know how the Hayes building looks; they are duplicates, built at the same time from the same blueprints by the same contractor well over fifty years ago.

Bell City and Hayes are just two miles apart on Louisiana Highway 14 and the Lake Arthur branch of the Southern Pacific. There has been a rivalry between the two communities dating back, so some say, to the time over sixty years ago when the railway agency was located at Hayes. Partly as a result of this, Hayes grew into a larger village than Bell City.

Previous to World War I there was a rural type school in each community but no high school in Ward 2. Sometime about the time of World War I a move was started to call a bond election and build such a high school. Immediately the old rivalry sprang up again, this time over the location of the high school.

Hayes said that since it was the larger village the high school should be built in Hayes; Bell City argued that their village was nearer the center of the ward and the school should be built in Bell City.

The late M.J. Kaufman of Vinton, who was the president of the School Board at that time, told me this story. The argument between the citizens of the two communities became so warm that the Board was on the point of dropping the whole plan for the new school. Mr. Kaufman then yielded the "chair" to the Vice President of the Board and took the floor in his capacity as a Board Member and made a motion that the Board continue with its efforts to reach an agreement between the two factions and build the school, which he said was badly needed.

To pass the bond issue would require the support of the Hayes voters which might not be forthcoming if the school was located anywhere besides Hayes.

A compromise was reached in which it was agreed that duplicate buildings be built, one in each community, with the big school to be at Bell City; but Hayes was to offer the first two years of high school work, then the eighth and ninth grades for Hayes students. It was done that way.

The buildings were two story red brick, both facing to the east. On the first floor to the right and left of the entrance hall were two class rooms and the office of the principal.

Beyond that on the west, occupying the remainder of the first floor was the auditorium. On the second floor were two more class rooms, a small science laboratory and rooms designed for a Home Economics department; this last was never used as such at Hayes since Home Economics was not offered.

During the twenties Hayes was a four-teacher school with an enrollment of about eight pupils in the entire school. One teacher taught the first and second grades with nearly half the school enrolled in her room.

Another teacher taught the third, fourth and fifth grades and another teacher the sixth and seventh grades. The principal taught the eighth and ninth grades with the classes combined and alternated from year to

year. For example: one year both grades studied high school arithmetic and then first year algebra the following year. Other lower high school classes were arranged in such a way that there were about five classes taught with a combined enrollment of about ten.

The last year I was there, 1927-28, at the suggestion of Mr. Cooley, the principal of Bell City High School, first year French was offered. Most of the students spoke French to some degree but could not read and write it; I could read and write it but could not speak it very well, so most of the time I taught the students to read and write French and they taught me to speak it for some extent. It was fun and worked out very well, from my standpoint at least.

One of the teachers of the sixth and seventh grades was Miss Necie Hebert, later Mrs. Fred Clark of Beauregard Parish, who taught at Starks, also in Beauregard Parish and later in Cameron Parish.

Mr. I.D. Bayne, later principal of the Sulphur schools for more than a generation, was the first principal of the Bell City High School and the late T.S. Cooley, later of the Bell City High School, then principal of the DeQuincy Schools and assistant superintendent of the Calcasieu Parish Schools from 1934 until his death in 1942, was principal of the Hayes School.

In 1925 J.J. Vincent, who was principal of the Sulphur Schools, moved to Beaumont to join the administrative staff of the South Park Schools and Mr. Cooley became principal of the Bell City School, and I came to Hayes to assume the vacancy created by these moves.

Several years later Mr. Vincent was the speaker at a meeting of the Southwest Louisiana Historical Society and in introducing him the chairman of the meeting mentioned that Mr. Vincent was a native of Louisiana who had been "traded to Texas." At the end of the program I stood up and invited the audience to have a look at what Louisiana got in exchange for Mr. Vincent in the "trade."

During my first year at Hayes I suggested that it might be a good plan to permit the high school students at Hayes to go on to Bell City and then I could drop down to the sixth and seventh grades and allow that teacher in turn to drop down and relieve the crowded situation in the first two grades. In my ignorance I almost started a civil war and my "stock" fell almost to zero. I dropped the idea at once.

Now, all of that is over, there is no Hayes School at any time and all of the Hayes students attend the Bell City School. Somehow the town of Hayes will not look the same without the red brick school building which was the most conspicuous sight in town. I for one, will miss it when I go back to Hayes to visit.

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We were very happy to receive a letter from Mrs. Lurline Batchelor Casey of Sacramento, California, recalling the days when she was a student at Starks school where she was a classmate of our daughter Dorothy. Lurline is the daughter of the late Ernest D. Batchelor and Mrs. Batchelor of Starks.

Mrs. Casey is employed by the Legislature of the State of California in the Bill Room and was recently selected by her chief, Ray Lenau, to explain to a group from The American Association of University Women the workings of the Legislature. Mr. Lenau said in an interview with Tom Arden, columnist for the Sacramento Bee, on Feb. 10, 1972, "In the two years in that Bill Room she has acquired more knowledge of the legislative process than those who have been around the Capital for years."

Congratulations Lurline, we are all proud of you.

## RAILROADING IN MEXICO II

No soon had the story of the late Henry Kroger, Sr. appeared in the papers than I received a phone call from Arthur Irwin giving me some more information about the railroad men who worked in Mexico and later various railways in the United States, including the Missouri Pacific lines in Texas and Louisiana.

There was an error in the above-mentioned story in that John C. Irwin was not the “original” Irwin in DeQuincy and founder of the family by that name. The first of the line in DeQuincy was William L. Irwin, father of John C. Irwin and grandfather of Arthur, Tucker, Pat and the others. AT this point I am going to do a little “historical guessing” and say that the first American of the family may have migrated from Ireland to the United States about 1850 when so many thousands of the “sons of the Ould sod” came over to escape the potato famine in Ireland and found work in the canal and railroad construction and operations at that time.

William L. Irwin learned the car builders craft in the United States and then went to Mexico where he was a Master Car Builder and there he was associated with Mr. Kroger, who was the Master Mechanic. I think I am correct in saying they were both employed by the government owned National Railways of Mexico. During the administrations of President Porfirio Diaz the Mexican railways bought an enormous amount of equipment of all kinds from American companies, including the Pullman Company. According to Prof. Durand, the Pullman Company gave Pres. Diaz a completely equipped Pullman train which because of its color, became known as El Tren Amarillo (The Yellow Train). This was the train, as Prof. Durand said, which the three American railroad men, Messrs. Kroger, Willrich and Irwin, were asked to check before its departure from Mexico City bearing the Diaz party to the coast from whence they took ship for France.

Arthur Irwin told me that in the course of some of the political disturbances in Mexico, William L. Irwin was shot through the stomach and for several years he wore a drainage tube leading from the abdomen. About 1920, Mr. Irwin became a Christian Science Practitioner and, despite the warnings and protests of his family and friends, removed the tube. In spite of the warnings of a horrible death, he lived to the age of 93.

John C. Irwin, the son of William L., became an apprentice machinist at Laredo, Texas, in his early teens. He “jumped” his apprenticeship and went to Mexico and, under an assumed name, started work as a machinist under Mr. Kroger, who did not recognize him under his new name. William L. Irwin passed through the shops, recognized his son and told Mr. Kroger that the young man was his son and asked that he be discharged and returned to the United States. This was done. He was only fifteen years old at that time.

The young man became an Itinerate (boomer in railroadese) machinist and worked in 39 different railroad shops in the world (*and?*) at Paducah, Kentucky. During the days of the construction of the Panama Canal, he started to Panama but on the way, like so many other young boomers, he met “her” and his wanderings came to an end. From then on his main object in life was to car for “her and them.” During the process he gained work in Kingsville, again with Mr. Kroger and still later in DeQuincy with Mr. Kroger and L.L. Allen of the Missouri Pacific Lines.

Arthur Irwin told me that during the Depression of the 1930’s when employment with the railroads was at a low ebb and only those men at the head of the seniority roster were called to work, Peter (Pete) Kroger outranked John C. Irwin by one name and would be called first, but since Pete was single and Mr. Irwin had a family to provide for, Pete would pass up his chance to work and allow Mr. Irwin to work. From this and similar stories I am convinced that railroad men are almost a breed apart when it comes to looking out for each other. Each man is his brother’s keeper.

If John C. Irwin did not make it to the Panama Canal area, tow of his sons did; J.L. in the Canal Zone and Arthur in the Republic of Panama. Arthur has recently returned from a tour of work in Britain.

Again referring to the construction of railways in Mexico; in 1918, I met a man by the name of Williams who was the foreman of the gang of Mexican laborers who were working on the Fort Worth and Denver railway tracks in north Texas. Mr. Williams told me this story shortly after the turn of the century. Williams was in charge of a construction job on the National Railways of Mexico, being responsible for building the grade. They were in part of the country where even the wheel barrow was unknown to the Mexican Indian workers. (Why the American Indians never got around to discovering and using the wheel is a matter of argument and the student has his choice of several theories.) According to Mr. Williams this particular tribe had never used a wheeled vehicle and tried to carry the loaded wheel barrows on their backs; the handles projecting out over the shoulders and grasped one in each hand. He said that he finally taught them the proper way to use a wheel barrow, but in spite of his efforts when they were returning to the barrow pit with the empty wheel barrow, they would attempt to carry the wheel barrow back. It should be remembered that this incident occurred more than sixty years ago and perhaps today these same people would be using trucks, tractors, bulldozers and all sorts of heavy equipment to do the same job.

The late Charles Willrich told me that he might have known this man Williams in Mexico under the name of "Slue Foot" Williams.

A letter from Ray and Peggy (Douglas) Dixon from Midland, Texas enclosing some newspaper clippings from that area related to the drought. One of the clippings said that the Prairie dogs were forced to carry canteens from one windmill to another and that mothers were advised to tie rocks to the feet of small children before letting them venture out into the high wind.

## RABIES STORY

The recent “horror” script on Bonanza depicting the deaths of two people from rabies served to recall an event that occurred in Wise County, Texas sometime in the “teens” of this century. There lived in the county a family which consisted of the parents and several children, two boys older than I and some younger. The father combined the careers of farming and serving as a Baptist minister. At the time referred to, the family lived near Paradise, Tex., and the father pastured one or more churches in that area.

Like most farm families of the time, they kept one or more dogs and since rabies inoculation was not generally practiced their dog had not received the rabies shots. Unknown apparently to the family their dog had been bitten by a rabid animal, developed rabies and bit one of the younger children.

At the time the procedure was for a person who had been bitten by a suspected rabid animal to go to Austin to a state operated clinic known as the Pasteur Institute for treatment. As I understood it, the procedure at the institute was to prepare a serum from the brain or spinal cord of the suspected animal, if the animal was available, which was injected into a rabbit. If the rabbit showed symptoms of rabies within a short time the bitten person was given the Pasteur shots, a painful and expensive process.

In this case the mother took the child to Austin and remained with it. In the meantime, at the home things were normal until some member of the family looked and saw a horse standing at the water trough apparently trying to drink but not succeeding. Assuming the trough was empty one of the younger boys went out to look and to turn on the hydrant to fill the trough. When the horse tried to drink it went into a spasm and bit the boy on the chin. Unknown to the family, the horse had also been bitten by the rabid animal. The boy was also sent to Austin for treatment. The horse was killed.

At that time I had tentative plans to study veterinary medicine and sometimes went with the local veterinarian, Dr. J.M. Farrel, on his calls. He and I went to the farm, removed the horse’s head and sent the upper part of the skull containing the brain to Austin for diagnosis. We packed it in a fifty pound lard can filled with crushed ice and shipped it by express. I presume the diagnosis was positive for rabies. Two or three years later I saw the bitten boy with the scar tissue on his chin.

People of earlier times feared rabies almost beyond any other ailment, since it was regarded as certain death in a most horrible form and a patient was regarded as dangerous to other people. The cry of, “mad dog,” sent parents scurrying to gather their children into a safe place and all domestic animals, especially dogs and cats were shunned and sometimes destroyed. A few years ago I read of a case wherein a family milch cow was destroyed because she was suspected of rabies. From the description of the circumstances I believe that the sole trouble was that the cow had been staked out in the hot sun all day with no shade or water and was frantic from thirst with the typical “slobbering” which was usually considered as a symptom of rabies. Experienced cattle men would have recognized the probable true situation.

One of the early day cases of a person receiving the Pasteur treatment was that of a cowboy from one of the south Texas ranches who, being bitten by a coyote suspected of rabies, was sent all the way to Paris to receive treatment from Dr. Pasteur himself. The cowboy did not develop rabies; either the coyote was not rabid or the man arrived in Paris in time for the treatment to be successful. Time was and still is an important element in the treatment.

Another story, which may be just a folk tale, is one concerning a man who lived out in the “cedar breaks” of central Texas in the days before the Pasteur treatment was available. The man had been bitten by an

animal which was thought to be rabid and believing that if he developed rabies that death was certain and that he might be dangerous to those around him, the man took with him some bedding, food, water, a trace chain and a padlock. He went out into the hills and after chaining himself to a tree threw the key out into the brush, to await whatever happened. There are two variations to the outcome; one happy and the other tragic. The first is that he did not develop rabies and was released in time by others; the other version is that he died a horrible death from rabies but was able to protect his family and friends from the disease. I do not know if the story is really true and if true which outcome is the true one.

There were at one time, may be still, certain individuals who declare that there is no such disease as rabies and who quotes an old adage which says, "Rabies is a type of madness which attacks people, impelling them to kill dogs." Medical science has long proven that rabies does exist and is highly fatal, even sometimes after the treatment.

If I may be permitted to do so, I wish to urge every dog owner, and cat owners not excluded, to see that your animals are inoculated, do not attempt to pet stray or strange animals and if bitten, secure the animal for observation if possible and consult a physician promptly.



## **HATCHERY BUSINESS**

During a recent visit to the Baker Feed and Hardware Store I saw some starting and holding brooders filled with baby chicks which recalled another experience of World War II days.

At that time the store was known as the Holbrook Feed and Hardware Store and was operated by the late W.E. Holbrook and Mr. and Mrs. John D. Cranor. Mrs. Holbrook was the mother of Mrs. Cranor.

The Cranors were principally occupied with the operation of the store, but Mr. Holbrook, whose main interest in life always seemed to me to be concerned with livestock of some sort rather than merchandise, spent most of his time operating a chicken hatchery in connection with the store.

In the fall of 1944, if my memory of the date is correct, Mr. Holbrook became ill and asked me to take over the operation of the hatchery until his health improved; the work to be done in the afternoons after school and on weekends. With the consent of the School Board and the Parish Superintendent I undertook it. I knew something of the theory of hatchery operation from studying and teaching elementary agriculture some years before, but I had no real experience operating a state-approved hatchery. I soon learned that the theory I knew was sound, but that there were some problems which were not mentioned in the text books; including some plain hard and dirty manual labor.

For one thing, hatchery operation requires something more than a group of incubators, a steady supply of eggs, starting and holding brooders and shipping boxes. In addition, there must be a reliable source of electricity and running water which does not freeze in cold weather.

The eggs used in a hatchery must come from flocks of pure bred fowls of popular breeds or from flocks of specific cross breeds following a definite pattern of cross breeding to produce fowls having certain desirable characteristics. The flocks producing these eggs, if the hatchery is to be state approved, must be inspected and culled by a certified agent of the State Department of Agriculture or some other state agency. Each year each member of the flock must be tested for Pullorum Disease and if found free of the disease, a leg band bearing a serial number and a symbol identifying the bird as free from Pullorum must be sealed on the leg of the bird by the tester. No doubt today there are other tests and requirements.

The purchase of baby chicks for future egg production would usually want to know the R.O. P. (record of production) of the flock from which the eggs came. This meant that the producer of the eggs must keep a trap nest record of each hen in his flock and also the records of the mothers of the males of the flock. These males must bear a leg band giving that number and the flock owner must keep his records open to the agents of the ROP association.

A generation ago a ROP of two hundred or more eggs per year was expected of the heavy breeds of fowls such as Rhode Island Reds, Plymouth Rocks and other so-called American-type breeds. For Leghorns and other light weight egg type breeds the ROP was expected to run over three hundred eggs per year. The hen who laid every day in the year is a myth. There were certain other qualities the eggs must have such as size, shape, color and quality of shell.

The incubators were preheated to 99 degrees Fahrenheit and eggs were placed in the trays and the temperature maintained at that level. Daily during the 21-day incubation period the eggs were turned; in commercial incubators this was done by pulling a lever attached to each tray of eggs. The incubators were equipped to maintain the proper humidity if there was water available in the machine. At about the end of the

second weeks the eggs were “candled”, that is, a special type of electric light was shown into each egg; if the egg was clear that egg was judged infertile and removed.

At about the twentieth day the eggs began to be “pipped”; that is, the chick inside would peck a small hole in the shell. Through this hole he would be able to obtain enough oxygen to give him strength to peck a seam completely around the shell and kick his way free of the shell. Chicks that did not hatch until the 22nd or 23<sup>rd</sup> day were usually too weak to survive and were usually not sold. A few never did develop enough strength to get beyond the pipping stage and these also were destroyed. It was a waste of time and useless to try to help these weak chicks from the shell; they always died.

Sometime after World War I a method of determining the sex of the chick at one day old was discovered. The sex ratio for chicks is normally about fifty percent and previous to the discovery of the sexing process the buyer who wanted all females for egg production had to buy twice as many chicks as he really wanted to obtain the desired number of pullets. Broiler producers usually preferred males and also had to buy twice the number of chicks wanted. With the sexing process the buyer could have his choice of pullets or cockerels within 95 percent accuracy.

Day old cockerels of the smaller, egg-laying breeds, Leghorns, etc., became a drag on the market and large hatcheries sometimes give them away. I have bought them for as low as one dollar and sixty cents per hundred, postpaid from the hatchery in Missouri or Texas. If the buyer preferred all pullets he usually paid nearly double the price for straight run chicks. He could afford to do this because of the saving in brooder equipment, labor, feed and fuel needs to raise cockerels that he could not use.

We tried to run the Holbrook Hatchery straight through the winter of 1944-45 in order to keep the supply of eggs, from Missouri and Arkansas, coming. January of 1945 was cold and wet and there was little demand for baby chicks. Losses were heavy and finally Mr. Holbrook instructed me to give the chicks to 4-H Club members and other students. This was done. At the end of January my share of the profits for the month was exactly twenty-five cents. By the spring of 1945 Mr. Holbrook felt equal to resuming the operation of the hatchery and that ended my connection with it.

In spite of the rise in the cost of feed and labor costs generally, with new methods and mass production, dressed poultry is far more available on the market and at prices lower than the “depression” prices.

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Why is the top of the front wall of the Hammond Building made of a different color brick from the rest of the building? Was the top of the wall blown off in the 1918 storm and repaired from different brick? I have heard two different stories; let me hear from you.

## **APRIL WEATHER AND MEMORIES OF SECOND STREET IN DEQUINCY, LOUISIANA**

It is April again, the pecans are budding, the azaleas have passed their peak and the roses and wisteria are just burst into bloom, along with the singing birds, say that it is spring again,

It was in April of 1938, thirty-three springs past that the Ratliff family decided to buy our present home from the Calcasieu Savings and Loan Association, then known as the Calcasieu Building and Loan Association, for one thousand dollars, one hundred and fifty dollars down and thirteen dollars and fifty cents per month for eight and one-half years. The late W.W. (Bill) Perkins was the DeQuincy representative of the Association and it was through him that the arrangements were made. I went out to the Perkins home on West Fourth Street, where the new Canal filling station is being built, late one afternoon to tell Mr. Perkins that we would buy the place, not knowing until later that I was just minutes ahead of another person who was also "ready, willing and able" to buy the place. Sometime during that week, I asked Mertz Hanberry if anyone ever lived long enough to pay out a house under those long time payments. He smiled in his way and assured me that a few people did. I marvel at the courage of these young families of today who assume mortgage payments of twenty years or more and apparently think little about the length of the term of the payments.

During the intervening years several changes have taken place along Second Street; for one thing the street has been paved and gutters and storm sewers have taken the place of the ditches that carried the rain fall down to Buxton. The old city map shows a creek running right across the lot where our house stands and there are DeQuincy residents no older than I who say that as boys they fished for perch right where the house now stands. Some new homes have been built, one or two houses have been moved in from other sites, some, like ours, have been remodeled to the extent they no longer resemble the original house; there has been one total fire, the George Black house at the corner of McNeese and Second and one total demolition, the old Ramsey home across the street from us. Trees that had not been planted or were mere saplings in 1938 are now full grown. There have been two school fires which wiped out the Elementary School. What began in the thirties as Bro. Walker's Tabernacle Baptist Church, which literally was a tabernacle, has become the Bible Baptist Church with a modern plant, a home for the minister, an Education Building as well as a modern sanctuary.

There are the changes; some things remain the same; the mocking birds, the cardinals, the blue jays and the several species of sparrows still continue to sing and twitter the same notes but have been joined in recent years by the grackles, the brown thrashers, the robins and an occasional visitor of a more rare species. The shrubs still have to be trimmed, the weeds pulled and the grass mowed, this last we now do with a gasoline or electric mower rather than the old style hand powered type.

Definitely two and perhaps three-generations from the same families I have seen go down Second Street on the way to school. The little girls tend to skip as they walk, why little girls skip and little boys do not I have never been able to decide. The boys sometimes tend, to paraphrase Shakespeare's school boy to "creep like a snail unwilling to school". Sometimes the family pup tries to follow his youthful master and does not understand the scolding admonition to "go home" or the occasional gravel tossed at him. "After all, hasn't he always gone where his human family goes and why the sudden change?"

For the past twelve years the high school students have not walked down Second Street except perhaps to catch the bus to ride across town to the "new" high school campus. This year, 1970-71, since the school fire and the unification of the DeQuincy schools only grades one through four have attended the school on McNeese Street, but next year when the new Elementary School building is completed, I understand the fifth grade sections from the old Ward School on the west side of town will be re-united with their fellow elementary students.

Whether you are seven, seventeen or seventy and I have experienced all three ages, spring, school, and schoolmates who grow into old friends are all wonderful experiences, too wonderful to fail to enjoy as we pass through Mr. Shakespeare's Seven Ages of Man.

## **MRS. RISTOM – RETIREMENT PARTY IN STARKS**

A trip to Starks on April 10 served a double purpose; to help honor an old friend of more than forty years, Mrs. Susie Ristom, who is retiring as postmaster at Starks after serving for 28 years, and to revisit the campus of the Starks school after an absence of too many years.

We first met George, Suzie, Anthony, Theresa, Ouida Sue, and Juanita when the family came to Starks in 1929 to operate a logging and sawmill business as well as a store. Mr. Ristom was a partner in the firm of Ristom and Pridgen. The contributions of George and Susie Ristom to the Starks community have been told in an earlier column but some of them will bear repetition; such things as, along with Mr. Pridgen, bringing electric power to Starks, the building of the Catholic Church at Starks, serving as Police Juror from Ward Five for several years, operating the store which Mrs. Ristom still operates, as well as supporting any project for the benefit and development of the community.

On the personal side there is one courtesy which I shall never forget which was the fish fry that Mr. and Mrs. Ristom gave for the teachers of the Starks school at the end of the session of 1933-34. This was held in the woods not far from the present Ristom home.

An old-fashioned iron wash kettle was filled with the melted contents of three 3-pound packages of vegetable shortening and the fish deep-fried therein. Delicious is not a strong enough word to describe the results.

The younger Ristoms I knew as students in school and I personally taught Anthony and Theresa while Ouida Sue and Juanita were in the elementary grades. Now, they are all grown and are making their own contributions to society in the family tradition.

It would be unforgiveable not to mention the recent accomplishment of Ouida Sue, now Mrs. Gerald M. Davis, who in spite of an illness that would have caused most people to give up in despair, has completed the requirements for a Doctorate of Philosophy and is now Mrs. Ouida Sue Ristom Davis, Ph. D. This took more courage and dedication than most of us have.

One of the third generation of the Ristoms whom I have not met before is Tony, the daughter of Anthony. Tony is a graduate of Stark High School of Orange, Tex., and is now enrolled as a freshman at Lamar Tech in Beaumont. If Tony is not elected queen of something or another while at Lamar, then all of the young Texans at Lamar have suddenly gone blind. This last contingency, as Anthony remembers one of my expressions of disbelief is "horse feathers!"

When I left Louisiana Highway 12 to drive down the main street of Starks, the changes since 1934 were startling. The old frame building of the First Baptist Church has been replaced with a modern brick structure much larger than the old one and in addition another structure which is evidently the Education Building and perhaps a Fellowship Hall; these and the pastor's home.

This would be almost unbelievable to the members of the church of the twenties and thirties who struggled so hard to raise the salary of Bro. Jap Nelson and the other pastors who served the church on a part-time basis.

While I did not see it on this trip, I know that the Starks Pentecostal Church, which was also struggling to get started forty years ago, has a modern church structure complete in every detail.

To me the school plant was completely unrecognizable except for the white, frame, two-story Teacherage on the north side of the campus. It has been moved to make room for some of the other new buildings and some of the porches have been enclosed to make room, otherwise, it is the same. Among my collection of old pictures is one of our two daughters, Dorothy and Doris, at the ages of eight and six, respectively, sitting on the front steps holding an newly-acquired pet, "Paddy," a wire haired terrier.

Dorothy, now is Mrs. John C. Ricketts of Long Beach, Calif., and is a grandmother in her own right and Doris, now Mrs. Clifford A. Blackwell of Shreveport, has a married daughter, Claire, who is Mrs. W.L. McNease of Fort Rucker, Ala., and a son Brian, who is six feet tall. Our baby daughter, Eleanor Ruth, who was born in the Teacherage in 1931, has slept in the Miller Cemetery at Starks since a few weeks after her birth.

The old wooden grade school building which was built sometime before World War I and was for some time The Starks School and the old brick high school building which was built in the early 20's have been replaced by a modern school plant which would seem like an impossible dream to the senior class of 1929, the first class to graduate after Starks was made an Approved High School by the State Department of Education.

For those younger students and new teachers of the Starks High and Elementary Schools, this high school building consisted of two class rooms, a small office and an auditorium on the first floor, two class rooms, a science laboratory and the Home Economics department on the second floor. The sixth and seventh grades used the two lower class rooms and the high school was upstairs.

The high school enrollment in 1928-29 was about 35 pupils, taught by the principal and two additional teachers. The first five grades were taught in the old wooden building which consisted of five rooms. There were ten teachers on the entire faculty. There was no cafeteria or gymnasium.

Off the campus the building that I noticed which date back to those times are the W.C. Davis store and home across the street from the school, the Honeycutt Hotel building, the Roy Batchelor filling station and the building where Elmer Beird operated his garage. There are doubtless others but time did not permit looking them up.

I hesitate to try to name the old friends and former pupils whom I saw for fear of leaving out someone but among them were Mrs. Gus Honeycutt, Mrs. Evelyn Schultz, who for many years operated the dining room for the teachers in the Teacherage and later the school cafeteria.

Among the former pupils were Herman Pridgen, two ladies whom I knew as Caggie Honeycutt and Althea Clark and Carlton Gibson, now a member of the Calcasieu Parish School Board from Ward Five. Samuel Ray Johnson, who is the Rural Mail Carrier from Starks, is not a former pupil of mine; he is the son of Mitch Johnson, a former pupil. Needless to say, I enjoyed seeing all of these people.

## HOME LAUNDRY DONE IN THE OLD FASHIONED WAY

The different brands and types of detergents, soap and laundry equipment are a far cry from the home laundries of the past. One of my earliest memories is that of seeing my mother washing with a tub and rub-board and singing an old hymn entitled, "Are you Washed in the Blood of the Lamb." Since my father's name was Lemuel and was called Lem, I confused his name with the word Lamb and was troubled by it. We soon had a woman to come in and do this.

THE OLD HOME laundry started with some way to heat water; either a round cast iron kettle or tub, in which case the water was heated outside the house. There was also an elliptical shaped kettle, usually of sheet iron or copper that fitted across the top of the wood or coal burning cook stove.

My mother at one time owned a cast iron kettle of this shape which is designed to fit down into the top of the stove if the two lids and the "I" were removed. The first step in doing the wash was, of course, heating the water.

SOMETIMES THE WATER had to be drawn by hand from a well or if a creek or spring was handy water might be used from it. In some "hard water" areas lye or hard wood ashes was used to "break" the water. Soap chips, from homemade soap, were also put in the water. The clothes were usually rubbed on the board and then the white clothes were boiled in the pot, colored clothes were usually not boiled, for fear of fading the colors.

I SEEM TO REMEMBER seeing someone boil the clothes before they were rubbed, but the steps may have varied according to the person and conditions. In some areas the clothes were placed on a block of wood or a table and pounded with a sort of paddle called a batting (battering) board rather than rubbed, but I never saw this done.

AT FIRST the soap was homemade from refuse pork fat and skins mixed with lye and water. The soap was usually yellow and if too much lye had been used, it would roughen the skin of the person washing. One of the early brands of factory made soap was Clairette brand which was not much different from the homemade soap. There was another popular brand called Fels-Naptha, which judging from the name may have contained naptha or some other petroleum derivative. It was supposed to do a better job of cleaning. Later some of the packing houses began to produce a white soap which was milder and did not irritate the skin of the user. There were several brands of this type and the older yellow soap disappeared from the market. There followed several brands of "washing powder" which were supposed to make washing easier. One of the popular brands was Gold Dust.

AFTER THE RUBBING and boiling processes were over the clothes were rinsed in clear water and then in a third rinse which contained bluing. The blue color counteracted the yellow color left by the washing and gave white clothes especially the white appearance which was so desirable. After the final rinse the clothes were wrung by hand and then hung out to dry with the hope that they would be dry before nightfall or a shower of rain. This work was drudgery of the worst type and the Union General W.T. Sherman of the Civil War days was greatly hated in the South because he was quoted as saying that he hoped to see every southern white woman brought to the wash tub. Later Gen. Sherman denied making that statement as well as the "War is Hell" statement. Some of the most pitiable people I can remember were women, both black and white, who were widows or had husbands who could or would not support their families, and having no skills of any sort were reduced to "taking in washing".

IT WAS ABOUT 1907 that my father bought the first washing machine that I ever saw. My mother got very little from it, however, because she was not strong enough to operate it and neither were my brothers and I. The hand powered roller type wringer similar to the ones still seen at filling stations, was a long step toward easing the labor of doing the family wash. The first power washers were just the old style hand powered type with an electric or gasoline motor added. They still used the roller type wringers. Ironing was done with a set of three cast iron sadirons which were heated on the stove or on a special type of charcoal furnace. There were three of these irons so that two of them could be heating while one was in use. Some of the sets of irons were numbered so that the user could keep track of which one was used last. There was a way of testing the heat by touching the iron with a moistened finger tip, if the iron “sizzled” it was hot enough for use. Fifty years ago there were a few brave souls who dared try one of the “new fangled” gasoline or electric irons but they were in the minority.

YOUNG HOMEMAKERS of 1971, congratulations! It is a long jump from your great-grandmother’s day to the drip-dry and perma-press when sometimes the most difficult task you face in doing the wash is lifting the clothes from the automatic washer to the automatic dryer.



## **IMMIGRATION TO SOUTHWESTERN LOUISIANA FROM THE MID-WEST BY RAILWAY CARS...**

Beginning in the “eighties” and ending about the time of World War I there was a heavy migration of mid-western to south Louisiana, a small fraction of which was brought about by Union soldiers who had served in Louisiana during the Civil War and liked the climate or had married a south Louisiana lady and decided to make their homes in “The Italy of America.” It was discovered that the coastal prairies to the south of us, practically paralleling the Southern Pacific railway, was suited to raising rice and with the development of irrigation systems and some modification of the equipment wheat farmers easily became rice farmers and a movement was started to develop the business. Whole towns and communities were founded with rice culture, the basic industry; two of these in Calcasieu parish are Iowa and Vinton. Vinton was named for Vinton, Iowa by a group of former residents of the latter towns led by Dr. Seaman A. Knapp. The story of the life and services of Dr. Knapp is a story of just local interest but is worldwide in its scope.

In our immediate area and to the north of us the vast stands of long leaf pine were rapidly being cut and the land left practically bare. During this time Arthur Stilwell and his associates were building the Kansas City, Pittsburg and Gulf Railway, now the KCS, and some enterprising souls conceived the idea of persuading mid-western farmers that these cut over pine lands represented the last chance of the American farmer to obtain cheap land where there was enough rainfall to make farming successful. Whole pages of space in mid-western newspapers were about fertile soil and delightful climate of south Louisiana.

Expressions such as “The Italy of America-Where it never snows – Expensive barns are unnecessary, live stock graze outside the year around” were common in these newspapers. There was a story to the effect that Oretta was laid out to become a model farm community where the happy farmer and his family would live and commute out to his outlying farm. He would be able to do this because the roads would never be blocked by snow and if a person would only buy a farm he would be given a lot in Orreta as premium.

How many families actually accepted this offer I have no idea, but the records of the DeQuincy Methodist Church for the year 1919 show more than forty members who lived just south of DeRidder. The DeQuincy church at that time was a Methodist Episcopal Church (Northern Methodist) while the DeRidder church was Methodist Episcopal, South. One man expressed it recently, “The memories and traditions of the Civil War were still strong in the minds of both Northerners and Southerners to permit these transplanted Yankees to join with a Southern church. Over the façade of the DeRidder church one can still read carved in the stonework, “M.E. Church, South””.

Most of the immigrants came in chartered railway cars, usually over the KCS, in which the household goods, farm equipment and live stock were loaded. A care taker rode along with the car to care for the animals and protect the goods as the car was not closed or sealed. My own experience riding as the care taker on such a car in 1921 will be related at another time.

The late Eli Hill of Oretta told me that he arrived on the scene “the day of the 1918 storm.” I remarked that had I been he I think I would have returned to Missouri. He replied that he would have except that he had sold out in Missouri and all that he had was invested in the Oretta experiment. In general, the farming experiment was a failure. The lack of fertility in the soil, the problem of the pine stumps, (The Newport Company was still in the future.) and the lack of a staple crop as well as other conditions brought it to an end. Some of the disillusioned ones returned to their former homes or moved elsewhere and some found other occupations in the final phases of the lumber industry, some in the Newport plant, and some with the railways and or the newly developing oil business or went into business of one of the service occupations.

As the story has been told to me Mr. Buhler bought a large tract of land near the KCS siding called by his name and built the large white house which is occupied by Mrs. Koonce and her family. Mr. Buhler soon sold out to the Fasitz family. The elder Mr. Fasitz and his sons Elmer and John did not depend upon farming for a livelihood, the father and John worked in the railway shops and Elmer operated a plumbing business. When John Fasitz, Jr., now of Oakdale, was in my American History class and we were discussing the Federal land system with its Townships, Ranges, Sections, and "forties" John spoke up and told us that he understood the system because his grandmother owned eleven "forties" at Buhler.

Although the farmer-immigration was not a complete success, except in the rice area, the contribution of these transplanted mid-westerners to the progress and culture of Louisiana cannot be over estimated.

In the spring of 1921 my father and older brother, Dennis, formed a law partnership with the late Judge H.G. McConnell of Haskell, Texas and in September the family moved to Haskell. Dennis had already joined the firm at Haskell; my younger brother, Roy, drove the family Model T across country and it was my duty to ride the immigrant car with the household and office furniture, the family cow and the chickens. Armed with a kerosene lantern, a single barrel shot gun and a box of food I left Decatur about ten p.m. headed for Haskell via Wichita Falls. I rode in the caboose with the train crew until we reached Wichita Falls about two a.m. The rest of the night was spent in the car, being bumped around all over the Fort Worth and Denver yard until about daylight the Wichita Valley train to Haskell was made up ready to go. About seven o'clock I milked the cow and gave the milk to "Aunt" Laura, who was for more than a generation the Matron of the passenger station at Wichita Falls. She was known and respected by every person who ever used the union station at Wichita Falls. Her story would fill a separate column. We spent all the September day making the 97 mile run to Haskell, stopping at every station or siding to drop off or pick up freight, sometimes switching whole cars. The train crew unloaded the cow and the next day my brothers and I with the aid of another fellow and a wagon and team unloaded the rest of the freight from our car. And that is why I have told my students, my children and grandchildren that when I came to Haskell I rode a freight train.

## **CATTLE BARON, SALES, DRIVES**

The recent record sale of 2,587 head of cattle at the DeQuincy Livestock Commission Company sale barn brings to mind the changes which have come about in cattle marketing conditions in the generations past. The English-American colonist raised their cattle in small herds and sales were usually for local consumption. These sales might be held at local fairs or at local market days somewhat like our "trade days."

The French people of southwest Louisiana combined to some extent the small herd system with the open range system for larger herds. The Spanish colonists used the open range system and the 'roundup' (rodeo) when the calves were branded and the cattle sorted for different reasons. The Spanish and French settlers of Louisiana who used the open range system followed somewhat the same methods except the Louisiana "cowboy" tended to use a whip in handling cattle whereas the Mexican "vaquero" used a lariat (la reata).

AS THE MEXICAN herds increased in size they spread up into Texas. The Texas cowboy adapted the methods and vocabulary of the vaquero, modified in use and pronunciation. At first there was no large and dependable market for the Mexican-Texas cattle.

As the plantations in the South and the industries in the Northeast began to develop, there was a demand for more beef and men began to drive cattle from Texas eastward over several well-defined routes, which depended upon the crossing of the Sabine and other gulf streams. Mr. Joe Combs, the writer of Farm Corner in the Beaumont Enterprise is an authority on these old trails and crossings and has mentioned several of them from time to time in his column.

Several years ago the Mentholatum Company published a map showing most of these old trails and crossings. One of the crossings was at Merryville and Salem and thence along the Opelousas Cattle Trail. Then there was, of course El Camino Real between Nacogdoches, Texas and Natchitoches, Louisiana. There were others, but this is the general idea. It is interesting to note that John McNeese the first Superintendent of Public Education in old Imperial Calcasieu parish and for whom McNeese State University was named, came to Louisiana in 1872 driving a herd of his cattle from Menard County, Texas, crossing at Merryville.

HIS FULL STORY will be the subject of a later column. His brand was the "Cross Three" with the cross above the figure three (or he may have called it +3).

It was not until after the Civil War that Texans were told that there was a growing market for beef in the booming industrial cities of the northeast, if a way could be found to deliver the cattle to the market. At first the Texans tried driving the cattle through Arkansas and Missouri, but the lack of open trails and grazing grounds, and the opposition of the farmers of those two states who feared the introduction of Texas cattle fever among their cattle, caused the trail drivers to move more westward.

With the building of the railroad from Kansas City and St. Louis with one line passing through Abilene, Kansas and the other through Dodge City cattle were trailed northward to these and other shipping points and then on to the eastern markets. After it was discovered that cattle could survive the winter cold on the ranges of Wyoming and Montana a demand for breeding stock arose in those territories. This brought about the trailing of cattle to those places. In one of the old trail songs are these words:

"It's your misfortune and  
None of my own that  
Wyoming is your new

Home.”

After the Plains Indians were placed on the Reservations, The Bureau of Indian Affairs bought beef to issue to the Indians in place of the almost extinct buffalo. This was the heyday of the trail drivers and in 1871 it is estimated that 600,000 head of cattle crossed the Red River on the way north.

WITH THE SETTLEMENT of the Plains by the homesteaders trail driving came to a virtual end. For a time it seemed that the cattle industry in the southwest was ended, then two or three new developments revived it. The building of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railway, (The Katy) from St. Louis to Fort Worth, the discovery of a practical way to produce ice in large quantities and the subsequent development of the refrigerated railway car made it possible for the Swift and Armour Packing companies, as well as some smaller concerns, to build packing plants in North Fort Worth just across a narrow drive way from each other. Then the drives started to Fort Worth and the commission houses and the stockyards came into being.

In time other railways such as the Fort Worth and Denver which ran across the ranges of the Texas panhandle, the Texas Pacific ran toward El Paso and the Santa Fe and others to the south were built. The Fort Worth and Denver built a branch, The Wichita Valley, from Wichita Falls to Abilene and a branch from the latter line from Stamford to Spur, Texas. It was built primarily to handle the stock from two of the great Swenson ranches (the SMS brand). About 1910 I saw what I believe was one of the last big trail herds on the way to Fort Worth pass through Decatur with “regulation” suntanned, wide brimmed Stetson hatted cowboys, the remuda and the chuck wagon all evident.

AA THAT IS largely changed now, the branch railways are almost all gone, cattlemen now truck their cattle to sale barns such as “ours” at DeQuincy, it really belongs to Jim Miller and his partners but we in DeQuincy call it “ours”. On Friday night the loaded truck from Texas and north Louisiana start passing our house accompanied with empty trucks of the prospective buyers or truckers. On Saturday afternoon and continuing all through the night and until Monday the loaded trucks start the trip back north and west. Some of these trucks are three deckers. If a truck hits that rough spot in the street in front of our house the plaintive wail of the calves can be heard, they seem to say,

“Ma-a-a, I want to go home.  
I don’t want to go to Texas.”

AT LEAST THEY get to ride in a rubber tired truck and are assured of food and water on the way as they hasten to whatever fate holds for them. A century ago their predecessors had to walk and were frequently hungry and thirsty on the way.

## FAISZT FAMILY

Following the publication of the story of the mid-western immigrants to Louisiana, a conversation with Mrs. Nell Jeghers Faiszt Jarrell revealed more details of the experiences of the Faiszt family and the history of the Buhler Community. Mrs. Jarrell was born in Lake Charles to Eugene Jeghers and the former Rosalie Royer. Mr. Jeghers was a native of Charleville, France. Mrs. Jarrell was married to the late John F. Faiszt. They were the parents of one son, John (Johnny) Faiszt of Oakdale.

MRS. JARRELL RECALLS that as a small girl she rode the old "Pee Gee" train, now the KCS, from Westlake to Buhler for ten cents. The late Paul Johnson of DeQuincy was the conductor on this train for many years. One time, as he was helping Johnny onto the train, he remembered that he had helped Mrs. Jarrell onto the train when she was a small child.

Mrs. Jarrell says that the siding at Buhler was originally called Turner, although she does not know why. It may have been a log loading siding for the old Calcasieu, Vernon and Shreveport tram line. This was the original name of the corporation later named the Edgewood Land and Logging Company. The tram and the right of way were sold to Arthur Stillwell and his associates of the "Pee Gee" (Kansas City, Pittsburg and Gulf Railway) and extended to DeQuincy to connect with the mail line.

AGAIN ACCORDING to Mrs. Jarrell, the present Koonce home was built by a Mr. Pennington, who operated a store and post office in his home. Mr. Pennington sold out to Ike Royer. Mr. Royer sold out to Mr. Buhler and the siding and community were named for him. Mr. Buhler, who lived in Lake Charles, was interested in the oil possibilities of the area and bought an immense tract of land. He had scientific tests made of the soil to see if there was a possibility of oil being found below the surface. He may have abandoned the idea of oil production because he sold a large tract of his holdings, including the house, to the Faiszt family.

To continue with Mrs. Jarrell's reminiscences: the Faiszt family, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. George Faiszt and their two sons, John and Elmer, had lived in Illinois and later in Missouri. In 1913 they moved to the DeQuincy area. The Faiszt men were pipe and steam fitters by occupation and operated a business of that type in Missouri. They probably read the glowing descriptions of the land agents concerning this area and decided to migrate to it.

MRS. GEORGE FAISZT later known affectionately as "Grandma" to at least four generations of DeQuincy people brought with her some 200 fruit jars. She proposed to fill these jars with the fruit and vegetables which, according to the land salesmen, grew almost by themselves. When the Faiszt car spotted the siding, Mrs. Faiszt asked about a house. The present Koonce home was pointed out to her. At the time there were no porches and the house was unpainted and unpapered. It was not until Mrs. Faiszt planted some beans, which only grew to about six inches tall without producing a crop that she began to suspect something was wrong. Later, when some of her new neighbors told her that the land had to be fertilized to produce a crop, she knew that all of the talk about "The Italy of America" was less than the truth.

If I have my facts in order, all three of the Faiszt men helped build the Newport plant, doing the pipe and steam fitting work and later operating the machine shop. John Faiszt also did the same work for the neighboring ice plant. The father, George Faiszt, later operated the farm at Buhler while his sons worked for the Missouri Pacific shops. Later Elmer became a plumbing contractor. I first met Elmer Faiszt about 1930 when he and his young son, Jimmy, came to Starks to do some plumbing work at the school. I recall that I was impressed by the warm relationship between father and son. Mr. Faiszt would say something like this, "Now, Jimmy, this is the way this is done and it must be done right or it is no good".

MRS. JARRELL RECALLS that, as a young wife and mother, she lived for some years in the house at Buhler, when the surrounding land was still covered by waist high stumps and pine knots on the ground between. They used the rich pine knots to burn out the stumps. There was no worry about air pollution in those days. Cattleman used the area for a roundup site and the Faiszt lot as a holding pen for their horses. When Johnny was in his early high school years, he had one of the first motor scooters in DeQuincy. He built it himself, using a gasoline motor from a washing machine. Now, I understand that Jimmy and his wife, the former Joy Bishop, daughter of W.W. Bishop and the late Mrs. Bishop, fly their own plane. As Mrs. Jarrell said, "Those of us who have grown up with the twentieth century in this area have seen three different phases of local history and development".

## **DRAFT DODGERS, DESERTERS**

Sometimes when we hear about some of our young men running off to Canada or Sweden and using subterfuges to escape military service we are angry, contemptuous, or even sad and even consider them at traitors to our country, but if we think that this conduct is unique with this generation, we are mistaken. It is not.

John Adams, second president of the United States, said that American independence was won by one third of the people, one third remained neutral and took little part in the Revolution and the other third were pro-British in their sentiments. Whole regiments of Americans, called Tories, served against their fellow Americans, fighting on the British side. After the war some of the Tories moved to Canada or other parts of the British Empire while others remained in the United States, in spite of the hatred and contempt of their neighbors, their descendants became good Americans.

During the Second War with England, known to Americans as the War of 1812, the New England Federalists were pro-British in their sentiments for various reasons – commercial relations and on the grounds that the war was merely an extension of the war in Europe between the British and the French under Napoleon and was really none of our business. If it was our concern we should have been fighting on the British side. These New Englanders continued to trade with the British across the Canadian border and talked of secession from the Union if the war did not end. The movement ended in the Hartford Convention of December 1814 which demanded among other things the immediate end of the war, but when the news of Andrew Jackson's victory at New Orleans in January of 1815 swept over the nation and the story of what the Federalists had proposed at Hartford the Federalist party was finished as a force in American Politics.

The Mexican War of 1846-48 was fought almost entirely by the Regular Army and Volunteer regiments from the South and West. The war was condemned in the North and East as immoral and unjust; as being a part of the westward expansion and slavery movements. The reasons for this opposition are long and complicated and space does not permit going into them. The New England poet, James Russell Lowell, wrote his Biglow Papers ridiculing the army and the army leaders to such an extent that some said that if he had done so during World War I he would have been tried for treason. One American congressman is reported to have said that he hoped that "every American soldier who went to Mexico got all of the land that he needed, a space six feet by three feet"

During the Civil War both sides had problems with those who opposed the war or took advantage of the situation to carry on criminal activities. Under the Union conscription laws, a draftee could hire a substitute if he had the money, usually five hundred dollars. If he could find someone, usually an alien who was himself not subject to the draft, which was willing to serve. This brought about the practice of "bounty jumping" wherein a man would accept payment either to serve as a substitute or to help some county fill its quota and then desert at the first opportunity, move a few miles away and then repeat the process. A regiment of soldiers who had fought at Gettysburg had to be sent to New York City to help put down the draft riots. In the states north of the Ohio River there sprung up the so called "Copper Head" movement composed of those who were opposed to the war, and refused to support it.

The Confederacy also had its problems; there were those who opposed the war and secession as a matter of principle, Sam Houston of Texas was one; there were others who raised the cry of "Rich man's war and poor man's fight" but the most despicable were the "Jayhawkers" and "bushwhackers". These were men of the criminal type who claimed to be Union supporters when the Union forces were in control and Confederates when the Confederates were in control. They went in gangs and robbed, tortured and murdered anyone who

had anything worth stealing. There was a band of them in Calcasieu parish and over at new Abbeville led by a so-called “doctor”. Eleven of them were caught and hanged by Confederate soldiers at home on leave. At Gainesville, Texas there were 39 hanged and at Decatur five were hanged.

During World War I men who avoided the draft, sometimes with perfectly legal and justifiable reasons, were viewed with contempt by their neighbors and called “slackers”, sometimes with a prefix that indicated Divine wrath. Grover Cleveland Bergdoll ran away to Germany to escape the draft but after the rise of Hitler to power he returned to the United States and, I believe, served a term in a federal prison.

During World War II the term was “draft dodger” and there were men who were just that, but I also knew men who were unjustifiably called draft dodgers who were rejected by the Selective Service System for physical, mental, emotional, or religious reasons or because the work they were doing was considered more worthy to the “war effort” than the man would have been worth in the armed services.

Personally, I should like to see the war in Viet Nam end today if it were possible and every American service man brought home, but until that time comes, I think Americans should give the servicemen over there all the support possible. The Viet Nam flag wavers, the obscenity shouting, flag burning Communists sympathizers are, in my opinion guilty of treason as I understand Section 3-Article III of the Federal Constitution which reads “Treason against the United States shall consist ‘only in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort” and I should like to see some of the “aid and comfort givers” tried for treason. The foregoing is my personal opinion and not necessarily that of the paper in which you read this statement.

I cite these examples from history to point out that the United States has survived these conditions before and if Americans will continue to remain loyal, hard working Americans we shall, God willing, survive for many generations to come.

*Correction Note: In last week’s column I mentioned that Jimmy Faiszt was married to Joy Bishop. The correct name is Johnny Faiszt. Apologies.*



## GRADUATION FOR CLASS OF 1971

By the time this column appears in print, the classes of 1971 from DeQuincy, Starks, Singer, South Beauregard, Fields and other area high schools will have graduated and the former students will have moved on to become members of the younger adult world. This is an opportunity to offer my congratulations and best wishes to these young people, many of whom are the children and grandchildren of my former pupils or old friends and neighbors.

Last August the people of the DeQuincy school area faced the opening of school with a severe handicap due to the fire which had just destroyed the major part of the Elementary School on McNeese street. In addition to the physical handicap, there was the emotional problem created by the Federal court order requiring that the traditional separate schools for black and white citizens be abandoned. I believe that most people realized that the unifying of the schools was a necessity for several reasons. However, there was still the emotional and mental block that existed and must be taken into consideration by everyone concerned.

There was no doubt, parents and students of the Grand Avenue High and Elementary Schools, with their inevitable and proud record of achievement in the class room and on the athletic field, who would have liked to remain their separate status, just as there were parents and students of the DeQuincy High and Elementary Schools who did not wish to see the school unified. No one could predict, with certainty, what the result would be; but most of us from both schools faced the problem with faith, prayers and courage and the determination to make the best of the new conditions.

Beginning with the session of 1966-67 we were operating under the Freedom of Choice plan. I shall never forget that bright September morning I was on bus duty in front of the DeQuincy High School building when the first former student of Grand Avenue High School, Edwin Lewis, accompanied by his aunt, came to enroll in the DeQuincy High School. It was my responsibility to meet them and conduct them to the office where Edwin was enrolled. I was not in a position to know to what extent the Freedom of Choice plan was in use at the DeQuincy Elementary and Junior High Schools on McNeese Street; but I believe it was in operation.

The DeCalla, the DeQuincy High School annual, for 1968 shows pictures of eight former Grand Avenue students enrolled in the DeQuincy High School. Among them were three seniors – the late Leon Cole, Jr., Donnie Jordan and Edwin Lewis. The DeCalla for 1969 shows pictures of three students from Grand Avenue enrolled in DeQuincy High School, but none in the senior class.

The school year of 1969-70 marked one step farther on the road to unified school in DeQuincy when Mr. Percy Brown and Mrs. Mae Vella Kyles, formerly of the Grand Avenue High School faculty were assigned to DeQuincy High School. Mr. Brown taught mathematics and science and Mrs. Kyles taught English. The DeCalla for 1970 shows thirty-six former students of Grand Avenue enrolled in DeQuincy High School – three of them members of the graduating class.

The session of 1970-71 began with the complete unification of the DeQuincy schools with the McNeese Street campus, plus the temporary use of the old west side Ward School – as the Elementary School grades 1 through 5 with Mr. C.E. Adcock as Principal. The former Grand Avenue School was now the DeQuincy Junior High School with Grades 6 through 8 and the temporary housing of the Kindergarten with Mr. C.E. Coney, former Principal of the Grand Avenue School, as Principal. The DeQuincy High School was at its permanent campus on Overton Street with Mr. C.L. Moon as Principal.

The first year of the DeQuincy schools as a unified system both in student body and faculty has come to a close in spite of the fears and misgivings on the part of some of us.

DeQuincy students, teachers, parents and administrators have demonstrated that we can make a unified school system work. Certainly there have been problems and sometimes irritating situations and incidents, but I have never seen a school year where these things did not exist in one form or another. In scholastic achievements, the winning of the Sweepstake Trophy at the Rally, winning first place in the state for choral music, and an upturn on the athletic field have demonstrated what Americans can do working together. Let us continue in well doing.

Since I have reached the traditional three score and ten, I am no longer eligible to serve even as a Relief Teacher (I never did like the term “substitute teacher”). I probably will not enter a classroom again, except as an invited guest teacher or on special occasions. I can only say to the Class of 1971, “Congratulations, best wishes and God bless you”!

## PHONOGRAPHS

Recently I saw in the home of C.E. (Tallboy) and Juanita Glasgow an old fashioned Edison cylinder record, "morning glory" horned (speaker) phonograph which was made before 1900 and some records like those which I saw and heard over sixty years ago. Juanita told me that the "talking machine" originally belonged to the Edison McChristians of Lake Charles, who for several years lived east of DeQuincy at what is now the home of Bill and Pauline Managan and their children.

In these days it seems that almost every family has some sort of hi-fi or stereo record player and more people are acquiring tape records for home and car use. These modern transistorized devices are a vast improvement over the "talking machine" invented by Thomas A. Edison. It must have been about 1907 that I first heard music and voices coming from the "Morning glory" horn of the machine which derived its power from a hand wound spring similar to a clock spring. It was about 1910 that my father bought the first phonograph for our home. This machine, an Edison, played either two minute or four minute records by changing the needle assembly, called the reproducer.

On the records was the band music of John Phillip Sousa, Arthur Pryor and other noted band leaders. These bands played a great deal of military type marches. Sousa, a composer as well as conductor, was called the march king. A popular vocal duo was composed of Ada Jones and Billy Murray. The Glasgows have one of their recordings. Henry Burr, whose records were in demand, was a baritone soloist.

My father was very cosmopolitan in his tastes and bought records of every type, ranging from hymns, classical music, Broadway hits, orations and comedy. I heard some numbers from Flo Zigfield and others without realizing what they were. One I recall was "Look For the Silver Lining", from "Sally". The hymns of Fanny Crosby and other sacred music composers were recorded by various artists. On the lighter side was, "Come Take a Trip in My Airship", sung by Ada Jones and Billy Murray. It was from these records that I heard such old time favorites as "Red Wing", "Silver Threads Among the Gold", "When You and I Were Young, Maggie" and "Just Before the Battle, Mother". I can still recite some of these songs, though "I can't carry a tune in a bucket". I have been known to recite the words of some of these old songs to history classes to illustrate a point of history. The songs of Stephen Collins Foster were useful for this purpose.

Among the non-musical records were some comics by a person known as Uncle Josh and his wife Aunt Nancy. I never knew who portrayed these two rustic characters but some of the recordings I heard were "Uncle Josh Goes to the Circus" and "Uncle Josh at the Camp Meeting". Another popular oration was "War and Peace", a lecture in which he sketched the career of Napoleon in a section beginning, "A little while ago I stood at the tomb of the old Napoleon". I never knew if the voice coming from the machine was actually the voice of Ingersoll, but it was among my favorites. I soon memorized the words and have been known to recite them to captive audiences of high school students who were studying the story of Napoleon. Several years ago while I was serving on an Evaluation Committee for the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools at Bolton High School at Alexandria, I sat in on a class that was studying Napoleon. The teacher asked the students what they thought of Napoleon. After several had expressed their opinions, I, with the permission of the teacher, gave them Ingersoll's opinion. Neither that teacher nor another teacher on the Committee had ever heard the oration and asked for a copy of it. I was able to supply this copy.

A little over fifty years ago the Edison Company brought out the diamond disc reproducer. This machine did not use a needle, but used "diamond" discs which did not have to be renewed. The records were about a quarter of an inch thick and could not be played on any other type or make of record player successfully. This machine was the hi-fi of its time and the company would put in demonstrations to

demonstrate that the listener could not distinguish the record from the living voice. As I recall, the local Edison dealer would arrange for one of the vocalists to come to town with some special records and invite the public to a recital in some public auditorium. At Decatur, they used the District Courtroom in the Wise County courthouse. As I understood it, the record was cut with the vocalist singing part of the time on the record while at times the vocalist merely mimicked the words as the accompanists played on. The audience was challenged to detect the real voice from the record. It was claimed that only a trained musician with a sensitive ear could detect the difference. One of my brothers still has the machine and some of the records which our father bought just after World War I.

When the Edison patent expired, (or through some legal arrangement) other companies such as Columbia and Victor began manufacturing phonographs and producing records. What American of that period can ever forget the Victor trademark, the little Fox Terrier with his head turned to one side listening to “His Master’s Voice” from a Victor machine? In time the electric motor replaced the old hand wound spring motor. After this came the vacuum tube machine and finally the portable transistor record player and tape recorder with which the owner can make or copy his own recordings.

Preceding the tape recorder was the wire recorder which was developed during World War II. I still have one of those wire machines and some older recordings. One of my most prized records is the actual voice of President Woodrow Wilson (1913-1921) delivering a campaign speech in 1912. I recorded it from a radio program produced in 1956 to observe the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of President Wilson, who was born in December 1856.

## TELEPHONES AND THEIR SYSTEMS IN EARLY DAYS

The recent discussion over the local telephone rates and service may remind some of us older citizens of the so called “good old days” of telephone service. Forty years ago there was only one telephone in Starks which was at the service of the general public. *(There was)* A long distance line from Lake Charles, Vinton, or DeQuincy, I am not sure which. The old time wall tie phone was in a café which was closed at night, which meant that Starks was isolated as far as the telephone service was concerned when the café was closed. The late Dr. C.R. Price had a telephone in his home at Lunita and there may have been phones in the offices of the Lutchter-Moore Lumber Company at Lunita and the Long Bell office at Cupples and the Ristom-Pridgen mill or store. If these last phones existed they were not for public use. The KCS and Western Union had had telegraph operators on duty around-the-clock; so many times we made use of their services when the telephone was not available. I recall wiring the School Board office in Lake Charles to send a plumber to make some emergency repairs at the Starks School.

THE 1970 ISSUE OF the DeQuincy-Starks, Ragley Telephone Directory lists 345 telephones at Starks. One interesting item is that of the 17 telephones at Starks listed under the letter “J”, all of them are Johnsons. The letters “N” and “U” have only one name each. At Ragley the Directory lists 387 telephones with the letter “B” the most common with 55 listings under it, with “I” and “Y” having only one listing each. There were too many DeQuincy listings to count.

These old style phones of forty years ago were the dry cell, hand powered generator type. We turned the crank until “central” answered. “Central” was a local woman whom we knew by name whose voice we recognized and we addressed her by name. There were telephone directories and we were asked to call by number, but we generally did not. For local calls we just said, “Ring, Perkins Drug, Dr. Lyons, Dr. Douglas, The Bank, Richards, or just whomever we wished to call. For a long time the school and the Post Office did not have telephones.

A LONG DISTANCE call was a tedious and uncertain procedure and sometimes not a very satisfactory experience. Individuals and families used long distance calls usually for emergencies and a long distance call, especially after a “bad time” meant only one thing; trouble or tragedy. Under those circumstances if the family being called did not have a phone, the local operator would know a neighbor who had a phone and the neighbor would call the person wanted. Nearly every family had this experience some time or another.

“Party” lines were that in more than one sense. When someone called on a party line, all of the phones on that line rang, so a code system was in use; the John Doe family ring might be “two longs and a short” and Richard Roe might have “three longs” on the same line. Each family had to listen for its “ring” and errors were common due to faulty rings or failure to listen carefully. One “long ring” was for “central” or in some communities an emergency such as a fire. People on the same line could call each other without calling “central” by using the proper “ring” or code.

IT WAS NOT considered “bad manners” especially to cut in on other people’s conversations on a party line and a lot of “visiting” was done that way. The late Walter Prescott Webb, professor of western history at the University of Texas said that insanity and nervous breakdowns due to isolation and loneliness declined fifty percent among farm and ranch women after the installation of party line ‘phones. Radio and later TV, “soap operas” superseded the old party line visits which relieved the loneliness. In one of the older high school literature books there was a play named “Window To the South” which dealt with this problem of loneliness among the women of a prairie farm.

Fifty years ago some towns had two telephone systems, the Bell System and a locally owned “independent” system. The Bell System handled all of the long distance calls as well as local calls. The “independent” system handled local calls only and their monthly rates were much cheaper. This created a problem in that business and professional people had to have both phones and doctors, especially, had to have both phones in their offices and at home. They tried to get the same number for both phones, for example, Mr. Dallas’s Pure Food Store advertised “Both Phones No. 17”.

IN TIME, the common battery system was installed which eliminated the hand crank but still depended upon calling the operator to make even local calls. This in turn gave way to the dial system, locally there was some objection to the dial system for fear that it would cause the operators, who were our friends and neighbors, to lose their jobs. In time I suppose that we shall in this area have direct dialing for long distance calls.

AS LATE AS fifteen years ago long distance calls from DeQuincy to the west coast were relayed via Baton Rouge, thence to Dallas and to the coast. Delays were frequent due to the shortage of lines. Today the highly efficient operators seem to start the first digits of the number called before the complete number is given. I have never seen a modern switch board operate and they may not even have to dial digit by digit. In comparison of my younger days it seems like “black magic”.

## OLD MAID SCHOOL TEACHERS

Some readers may recall that from time to time I have mentioned Miss Bell Ford of Decatur, Texas who began teaching the third grade in the Decatur Public School in the fall of 1910 and taught in the same school for 45 years, the fourth grade the latter part of her career until her retirement in 1955. When I saw her last in June of 1970 she was still active in community affairs of all sorts and showed no evidence of having “retired” from life. Miss Bell (she was never called Miss Ford by pupils or anyone else that I ever knew of) grew up in Decatur and had never lived anywhere else or wanted to.

Miss Bell represents a type of personality and teacher which was as much a part of the American scene as the American flag itself, the “old maid school teacher.” I use the term as it was used years ago, a term of affection and respect for those dedicated and devoted souls who spent their lives teaching American children. They staffed the classrooms of the elementary schools almost exclusively as men teachers were rare below high school and until World War II the Calcasieu Parish School Board had a written rule which stated, “The Calcasieu Parish School Board does not employ married women as teachers.” In high school they tended to concentrate on English, Literature, Latin and other foreign languages, social studies with an occasional case of one who taught mathematics or science.

Domestic science, now called Home Economics, fifty years ago was a new subject and not often taught in the smaller high schools. Commercial subjects were still in the future for high schools.

DeQuincy and other area schools were taught by a long list of these ladies and it would be impossible to name all of them but there are a few names that always come to mind when I think about the “good old days.” Among them would be Miss Pearl Jones, Misses Ruth and Elzie Fair below high school and Miss Marie Crosby who was THE English Teacher in DeQuincy High School for years. Every student who attended school before 1950 will call to mind the names and faces of those teachers who he remembers best.

Most of these teachers started out as young ladies in their late teens or early twenties and some of the earlier ones never saw the inside of a college classroom before they started teaching. They completed the work at the local high school or academy, attended a “summer normal” for a few weeks and then took the teachers’ examination to qualify for a certificate. With the establishment of the Teacher Colleges, then called Normals, beginning teachers had at least two years of training before beginning their teaching careers. Now they have at least a four year college course and many have advanced degrees. During the school year of 1968-69 there were more teachers with Masters Degrees on the second floor of DeQuincy High School than there were in the Junior College from which I graduated on May 31, 1921.

WHEN LOUISIANA STATE NORMAL, now Northwestern State University, was established in 1884 it provided an opportunity for young men and women to obtain two years of college training which qualified them to teach in the public schools. Man of the young women who enrolled were the older daughters of the farmers, laborers and small businessmen of the state and it was often understood in the family, if the family could not find the money to send Sister to school that she would help pay for the education of the younger children from her teacher’s salary. At one time the towns of America were filled with doctors, lawyers, ministers and other professional and businessmen who owed their education to an older sister or aunt who paid their expenses from her rather meager salary as a teacher. In many cases these older sisters had to forego marriage and children of her own until she educated the younger members of the family, for many of them this meant no marriage at all. There were no pension plans in the earliest days and when the “old maid school teacher” became too old to teach, she frequently made her home with a younger brother or sister, niece or nephew. I have known of cases where she shared her small saving with the family in time of need.

Sometimes these young women went out to teach in a one room, rural school where some of the pupils might be as old as or older than she and discipline might be a major problem.

Sometimes the problem was too great and the teacher resigned and returned home or found other work. The late Miss Pearl Jones told me that she first taught in a one-room school near Elizabeth which had a bad record for “running the teacher off,” but that she could not afford to be “run off” as she had to have a job and had no other place to go. From the first she adopted a strict and rather severe attitude for which she became noted in later years. It took an unusually “hard nut” in the seventh grade not to crack under Miss Jones and there were not many of them who did not.

MISS JONES WAS REPUTED to be cold and callous in her attitude and only those of us who knew her best realized that, like many others of her type, she was a very warm-hearted person who would fight for her “kids” against all comers; the principal, other teachers, parents and the entire community if necessary. It was noticeable that when one of her “boys” had been out of school for some time, especially in the military service during World War II, came back to visit the school, the first person he usually went to see was Miss Jones.

During World War II and as these older single women retired they were replaced by younger women who were married, had been married or soon married and had children of their own. In the spring of 1969 when we retiring teachers attended a meeting of the Calcasieu Parish School Board to be officially retired and to receive our retirement certificates, one grandmother teacher remarked, “It is we grandmothers who have kept the schools going while the younger married women were having their babies.”

The times and conditions have changed, but America owes a debt of gratitude she can never fully repay to the Miss Bells and the Miss Joneses, whatever their real names were, who taught young America for several generations.



## TOBACCO

Recently in one of the local stores I got into a conversation with an old gentleman who was buying himself a supply of Brown Mule chewing tobacco. He told me that he had been “chewing” for eighty years, since he was three years old and that he was a native of West Virginia in the tobacco growing area, where practically everyone used tobacco in some form or another. This lead me to thinking about “the weed” and the several ways it has been and is still used.

According to the history books, when Columbus reached the East Indies in 1492 he found the natives smoking tobacco in more than one way one of which was rolled up leaves which later evolved into the modern cigar and another sort of pipe with a “y” shaped tip which was placed one tip in each nostril. Sir Walter Raleigh, the English explorer, is said to have introduced tobacco into England. There is a legend that one day one of his servants saw Raleigh smoking and thinking that his master was on fire threw a bucket of water over him. Tradition says that Queen Elizabeth I of England tried smoking a pipe, but later tried to outlaw the use of tobacco in her realm.

James Rolfe of Jamestown, the husband of the Indian princess Pocohontas, is credited with inventing the flue method of curing tobacco which made the growing of the plant profitable in the southern colonies and greatly influenced the history of the United States.

During World War I, I heard a travelling specialty salesman say that he sold the oldest manufactured product produced in America – snuff, which was at one time called tobacco flour. In the early days people actually “snuffed” the product into the nostrils which induced sneezing which was supposed to “purge the brain”. Wealthy men and women carried jeweled snuff boxes and it was the custom in polite society to exchange pinches of snuff. Later the custom of “dipping” arose with the use of a homemade wooden tooth brush, the use of which was supposed to aid in preservation of the teeth. It is a wonder that some enterprising manufacturer of tooth paste or powder has not tried introducing a little snuff into his product. Throughout the years two popular brands of snuff have been Honest and Levi Garrett, both of which were in two sizes of small tin cans and a larger size glass bottle.

Chewing tobacco, sometimes called “chawin’ tobacco” seems to have been introduced early. Within my memory there are several different brands and types of chewing tobacco. Plug tobacco came in two thicknesses, thick and thin, and at least two types of curing, light and dark. Some of the popular brands were Tinsley in both thick and thin plug, Tinsley’s Premium, Star Navy, and Brown Mule, light and dark cure. Tinsley and Star Navy came in one pound plugs which were some ten or twelve inches long but were marked off into five and ten cent “cuts” (These are pre-World War I prices?) and on the tobacco counter was a cutter to be used in cutting off the desired amount. I recall one man who came by the store every morning on the way to work and bought a ten cent cut, with an extra cut on Saturday to carry him over Sunday.

There were two popular brands of twist tobacco: Granger Twist and Cotton Boll that I knew about which could be used for pipe or chewing tobacco. About thirty years ago Captain Kern, a retired Merchant Marine captain who lived down on Houston River raised his own tobacco and made his own twists. Some student brought me a twist of Captain Kern’s tobacco which I kept in my desk for years as a sort of historical exhibit. There were also a number of brands of shredded tobacco which could be used either as pipe tobacco or chewed, one of the popular brands was Honest Scrap and there were several other brands, all came in a tinfoil lined pouch. My father was a noted pipe smoker and was made the subject of a newspaper special story over thirty years ago. I still have one of his pipes. Men who worked where there was danger from fire caused by smoking satisfied their tobacco appetite by either “chewing” or dipping snuff.

Several companies produced fine cut or shredded tobacco which could be smoked in “roll your own” cigarettes or pipes. All dealers carried the familiar red cans of Prince Albert and the cloth bags of Bull Durham, Duke’s Mixture, and R.J.R. (Sometimes called Run-Johnny-Run.) named for the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company. There were several other brands but these are the ones I knew most about.

At first cigarette smokers rolled their own, sometimes using dried corn shucks and later the papers which came with the tobacco; the papers were of two colors, white and brown. These small folders of paper were free but there was a package which sold for five cents. One brand of these last were sold under the brand name of Riz La Croix and were made in France. The public commonly believed that they were made from rice straw and they well might have been since the word “riz” is rice in French. Lately I have noticed that some of the tobacco companies in their advertising are advocating a return to “rolling your own”. Who knows, the younger generation may live to see the bill boards featuring the life sized roan Bull Durham, once so well known to their fathers and grandfathers, lifting his head and defying all comers, bovine and otherwise.

At first only the more affluent and sophisticated smoked “ready rolled” cigarettes. Young ladies were warned against “keeping company with” (“dating” to moderns) young men who smoked the deadly “ready rolls”. Such cigarettes were called “coffin nails” and there was a little jingle that went:

“Ashes to ashes, dust to dust,  
If the Camels don’t get you,  
Then the Fatimas must!”

## DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

It was the first week in July 1776, the committee, consisting of Jefferson, Franklin, John Adams, Sherman and Livingston, appointed by the Second Continental Congress to put into a formal statement the Resolution introduced some weeks earlier by Richard Henry Lee stating that “these United Colonies are and of a right ought to be free and independent states” made its report. Jefferson, who was almost the sole author of the Report, now the immortal Declaration of Independence, used these words: “We hold these truths to be self evident; that all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.”

The Declaration was soon to be read and studied throughout Western Europe and the other Americas as far as it could be translated and printed. The Declaration was to influence several other nations and people in framing their own Declarations.

The French Revolutionists were not fighting an alien power for independence but, against their own tyrannical monarchy for their rights as Frenchmen. So their Declaration was issued in August 1789 and was called “Declaration of the Rights of Man” in which they declared: “Men are born and remain equal in rights”, that “law is an expression of the general will, every citizen has a right to participate personally through his representatives in its formation. It must be the same for all; no one shall be accused, arrested, or imprisoned except according to law. Every citizen is guaranteed freedom of speech, of the press and of religion. Taxes are to be imposed and used according to wishes of the nation’s representatives.”

Thomas Jefferson was known and admired by the French people and was in France during most of the Revolution and either in person or through the Declaration of Independence greatly influenced the wording and style of the French Declaration.

The Latin American states to the south of us faced a still different situation. They were being ruled from Spain by a system of Viceroy's appointed by the Spanish king. The chief officials were born in Spain and of pure Spanish blood, no Jewish or Moorish blood. Shortly after 1800 there were mutterings of discontent from the Spanish colonists, the Spaniards born in America, called criollos, the mestizo, mixed Indian and Spanish.

IN THE VILLAGE of Delores in Mexico the local priest, Father Hidalgo, and a small group were planning a revolt, which the Spanish officials got wind of several days before Father Hidalgo and his followers had completed their plans. There was nothing to do but proclaim the revolt and on September 16, 1810 Father Hidalgo rang the Church bell as a signal to begin the revolt and his famous “cry” of the Virgin of Guadalupe and Death to the Spaniards. The Mexican struggle was to continue for ten years and Father Hidalgo was not to live to see the final independence but his “cry” is sometimes considered as the Mexican Declaration of Independence and on September 16 is observed as the national birthday.

South American states soon started their own wars of independence and it would take several books to tell the whole story and to mention the heroes of several Spanish American nations who won independence for their “patria” (fatherland). I always get a lift of spirit when a young Latin American stands his tallest and says “mi patria.”

The Venezuelan patriots met in Caracas and on the night of July 5, 1811 issued the Venezuelan Declaration. Fr. Miguel Peña was the principal author. It is much longer than Jefferson’s document, but the style is generally the same and shows evidence of familiarity with our own declaration.

Then, on March 2, 1836 a little group of patriots, rebels, outlaws and renegades (they were all called these by different people) met in a country blacksmith shop at Washington on the Brazos, Texas and signed a Declaration of Independence for the Republic of Texas. This was four days before the fall of the Alamo and nearly three months before San Jacinto on April 21, 1836.

There have been numerous other nations who have declared themselves independent but space does not permit mentioning them. Most “sensible” people did not take part in these moves for freedom, but neither are their names mentioned in the history books nor are their names enrolled with such men as Washington, Jefferson, Bolivar, San Martin, Sucre, Hidalgo, Morelos, Stephen F. Austin and Sam Houston.

## **STORM OF JULY 5, 1971**

The rather severe thunderstorm which struck the DeQuincy area about 6:30 P.M. Monday, July 5, knocking out the electric power in several parts of town was an inconvenience to those of us who depend on electric power for so many things which make life more comfortable and pleasurable. It was also somewhat frightening since one never knows how long these unpredictable storms will be or how severe they will be. This one was over in a short time but it left Second Street and the yards full of broken tree branches and other debris. It was remarkable after it was over that one benefit at least was that it brought out the old American spirit of neighborly cooperation and mutual aid. Parents, teen-agers and sub-teenagers, both boys and girls, worked together to clear the street and unchoke the two storm sewer inlets. I was not personally able to participate because I arrived home just ahead of the storm from a stay in the hospital. I am indebted to my next door neighbors, Charles and Annie Jane, Sonny and Sister Smith for clearing up my yard and driveway of tree branches. The Cleco crew was at work almost before they had service restored and I understand that they worked all night to maintain service.

To me, however, sentimental as I am about trees, the lack of electric power was a minor concern and soon remedied. The major loss was the damage to the oak trees on the Elementary School campus on McNeese Street. At first from my point of view it looked as if several of these trees had been blown down and the noise of the power saws used by the Cleco men convinced me of it; later I was happy to learn that the trees had been damaged but not completely lost.

I do not know how many of these trees there were originally or when they were planted and by whom; I first saw them in 1928 when they were just saplings about 3 or 4 inches in diameter measured about a foot from the ground. They could have been planted in 1910 when the DeQuincy School was first located on the present campus, but I believe it more likely that they were planted in either 1914 when the old original High School building (known before the 1948 fire at the Middle Building) or in 1924 when the two story building was built, it would depend I suppose on the size of the seedlings when they were planted. They could have been planted as an Arbor Day project which we used to observe by planting trees. Whoever planned the program arranged the trees so that oaks alternated with sycamores, presumably with the thought that the faster growing sycamores would provide shade while the slower growing oaks were still small, and that in time the sycamores would be removed as the oaks grew up. At least, that was the way it was done.

Doubtless there are DeQuincy families three generations of which have seen these oaks and sat or played under them while attending school.

Before the days of the cafeteria many students brought lunches from home and during the hour long lunch period the students sat under the trees to eat lunch and play. The little girls liked to jump rope. To the Elementary School boys, marbles was a popular game. It must have been in the late "thirties" that I was assigned the responsibility of organizing a marble tournament to find the champion marble player. This was done in an effort to find a substitute for playing for "keeps" which was regarded as a form of gambling which led to quarrels and fights among the players. I became convinced that marbles is a game of skill rather than chance because the same boys who had been winning most of the other boy's marbles at "keeps" emerged as the winners of the tournament. The high school boys and girls sat in couples or small groups and talked about subjects that are of interest to high school boys and girls the world over. Attempts were made a couple of times to provide wooden benches under some of the trees, but in a few years they disappeared under the knives of whittlers. With the establishment of the cafeteria and the abandonment of the long noon hour recess most of this came to an end.

Someone recently quoted from a DeQuincy Principal and now retired Parish Superintendent C.W. Hanchey as saying that DeQuincy High School probably had more graduated who had distinguished themselves in several lines of endeavor than any school of its size in the state. I am in agreement with that idea. Among those men and women who walked, sat and played under the DeQuincy School oaks are the veterans of World War II, the Korean War and in Vietnam a tragic list of whom gave their lives in these conflicts. I would not attempt to make a list of the ever increasing number of these distinguished graduates and ex-students but the list is long.

The remaining DeQuincy School oaks have survived two school fires, one in 1943 and one in 1970, and some of them were so damaged that the heart wood decayed, leaving the sap wood which has not completely closed over the hollow trunk, how these trees survived the storm I do not understand, perhaps they have been cut down to make room for the new Elementary Building. Perhaps we might paraphrase a sentence from the ritual of a lodge to which I belonged many years ago and say, "The trees are standing."

I recently received a very interesting letter from James Puerta relating to his experiences and the experiences of others in the cattle business in south Texas and Old Mexico. Very shortly we hope to print the letter so that the readers may enjoy it. I believe you will.

## REVEREND JOE SHAW

The Faulkner County Historical Society of Conway, Arkansas publishes a quarterly called Faulkner Facts and Fiddlings which is devoted to the printing of Faulkner county history and fancy, sometimes. Until his death in April of this year the editor of FCFF was none other than Joe C. Shaw retired professor of Sociology at Arkansas State College at Conway but older DeQuincy area people may recall him as the young pastor of the DeQuincy Methodist Episcopal Church during the early thirties.

I first met Joe, or Brother Shaw as we called him when more formality was in order, when he brought a group of high school and older young people to Starks and produced a play in our school auditorium. The only member of the cast I can definitely remember was Frances Grimes, daughter of Mrs. W.W. Grimes and the late Mr. Grimes, but no doubt there are several members of the cast still around who recall the production of the play.

Bro. Shaw was the more modern type of minister who came along at least a full generation ahead of his times. He had been a high school teacher at Welsh, Louisiana before he decided to follow his father, Dr. Arthur Madison Shaw, into the ministry and always liked to be around and work with young people. He believed in the old adages that "an idle brain is the Devil's workshop" and that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." The schools had not developed a full scale extra-curricular program, the decline in home chores and the Depression a lack of outside jobs gave the high school students more idle time than they had been accustomed to.

In an attempt to carry out his philosophy Shaw suggested or innovated some projects devoted to providing wholesome recreation for young people. One of these was to attempt to establish a park about where the present Jameson Park is now, another was the organization of a youth baseball program similar to some of the modern Youth Leagues. The games were played on the vacant lots of the block south of the Methodist church.

One of these games resulted in a sort of minor personal tragedy for Shaw, one day he was kneeling down holding his small son in his arms while coaching the team. The batter lost control of the bat, letting it fly out of his hands, striking Shaw in the mouth either loosening or completely knocking out some of his teeth (I am not exactly sure which). The late Dr. J.B. Robinson, DeQuincy's only dentist at that time was able to make repairs at that time but later he lost the teeth and had a partial plate made. Later (1970) one of his small grandchildren was asking to see his "click in front teeth".

It was during these years that the old original "Annex", or Fellowship Hall as the term now is, was added to the old wooden church and a belfry was added to make it "look more like a church". Shaw and some of the Sanders boys, Ralph Jr. Tommy and Bruce made a trip to the eastern part of the state and obtained a bell from an abandoned Methodist academy and hung it in the bell tower where it remained until 1965. I mentioned in an earlier column, this bell can still be heard from time to time as it now hangs in the belfry of one of the local Negro churches. The late W.W. Grimes, while not a Methodist was of invaluable help in this project, contributing his services as a carpenter in the building of the annex and the tower.

Another project was the establishment of a loan library in the church annex (mentioned in an earlier column). As I recall a small fee was charged for the loan of the books, the money being used to pay expenses and to buy additional books. When Shaw was transferred to another charge the DeQuincy Study Club assumed management of the library until the present DeQuincy Branch of the Parish Library was established.

Younger readers might assume that all of these programs would be received and supported with enthusiasm by everyone, but not all. Older and more conservative citizens, including fellow ministers of several faiths including Methodist, condemned the whole program especially the sports program. One Denunciation from another pulpit was something like this, "What young people need is more chores and more trips to the woodshed and not recreation programs".

It was during these depression days that the Mo. Pac. Line announced a ten percent pay cut for its employees, many of whom were members of Shaw's congregation. In spite of the fact that his salary was rather meager for a family of five and that he did not always receive all of it he called the Board together and offered to accept an equal reduction in salary. The Board accepted the offer, no doubt relieved that they would not have the problem of raising the money from the already struggling members of the congregation.

Shaw mentioned in a letter to me some months ago that he, like most men of his background of time and place, was inclined to be a racist and to be intolerant of religions other than Christianity until he served as a chaplain in India and came in contact with other beliefs and races. He also told me about his contacts with the followers of Zoroaster, a religion that originated in ancient Persia centuries before Christ, but with some beliefs and practices that were very much like those of the Hebrews and the Christians.

He said that he had more or less subconsciously regarded the dark races, both Mongoloids and Negroid, as a people apart from the so called white race. Once there was an air raid and some wounded were brought into the hospital where he was serving as a chaplain. Among the wounded were men of all three racial groups, including black, American servicemen, and his arms were soon covered with the blood of all three groups. Then Shaw said he realized that shed blood is all the same color regardless of the ethnic background of the wounded man. He felt that he was a better Christian and a better American after this experience.

(The original rough draft of this column was written several weeks ago before I knew of Mr. Shaw's death and there have been some minor changes, mainly in the tense of the text.)



## DR. JOHN R. RICE

Recently I received through the courtesy of Miss Bell Ford a copy of a weekly religious paper called "The Sword of the Lord" which is edited by Dr. John R. Rice of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, the eminent preacher, author and lecturer of the Fundamental Baptist Church. I met Dr. Rice well over fifty years ago when he was a student at Decatur Baptist College and I was still a student in one of the upper grades of Decatur Public School and spending most of my out of school hours with the late Silas L. Morris at his blacksmith shop.

It was, as I recall, a rather chilly, rainy afternoon in December, just as the college was closing for the Christmas holidays and the dormitory students were on their way home by whatever means available, when a rather stalwart young man rode up to the shop and introduced himself as John R. Rice, a student at the college and a grandson of Mr. Bellah a widely known and respected merchant of Decatur. Young Rice said that he was preparing to ride his horse the forty or so miles across the country to his home in Cooke county and that his horse needed shoeing before he started the trip. He asked Morris if he would shoe his horse and wait to be paid after Rice returned from his visit home. Morris, being a man who was always ready to help a young man with his problems, went to work at once to shoe the horse. It took nearly an hour to trim, and level the hooves of all four feet, heat and fit the shoes, nail them in place and finish off the outside of each hoof. The total charge was (pre-World War I prices) one dollar, but people worked at skilled trades all day long, ten hours, for one dollar and fifty cents. I have never seen Dr. Rice since but I know that he kept his promise and paid the bill on his return. I have followed his career to some extent through the paper and mutual acquaintances.

At the time of my meeting with Dr. Rice he as a student in Bible and theology under the late Dr. J.L. Ward who for more than a generation was President of Decatur Baptist College as well as a well known Bible scholar and Southern Baptist preacher. Many of the pulpits of the Southern Baptist churches in the southwest were at one time, and to some extent still are, filled by men who were former students of Dr. Ward. It was regrettable, at least from my non-Baptist viewpoint that these theologians and preachers, Dr. Ward and Dr. Rice "came to the parting of the ways" theologically, but I suppose that it is inevitable that two profound students of the Bible and sincere preachers might differ in their interpretations of certain passages of the Scriptures.

I suppose that some modern college students might have some difficulty in understanding and appreciating the aims and ideals of the small church related colleges which existed all over the South until competition with state schools, changing concepts of education and the depression forced most of them to close. Dr. Rodney Cline of LSU (brother of our own C.E. Cline) has written a history of these schools in Louisiana and the late Dr. B.F. Ledlow of the University of Texas did the same for the Texas church related colleges.

Frequently these schools were centered around the ideals and philosophies of one or two people and were sponsored by some church group who had similar ideals and purposes. These schools had special requirements for enrollment which were printed in the catalogue and prospective students were warned in no uncertain terms that if he could not conform to these rules not to enroll or to prepare to face disciplinary action. For example to Dr. Ward, most people called him Bro. Ward, card playing and dancing were SIN and would not be tolerated on the campus. Even the United States Army, as represented by a young lieutenant in command of the Student's Army Training Corps in 1918 had to back down before Bro. Ward's rule about dancing. Bro. Jesse P. Sewell, President of Abilene Christian College at the same time, might have disagreed with Bro. Ward in certain theological points but would have agreed with him about dancing and card playing.

In recent years I have wondered if we seventeen year olds of the era did not harbor a hidden feeling that when Bro. Ward stood up in the daily chapel service (attendance was required of all students and a faculty member sat on the stage and checked for vacant seats) and frequently referred to "the omnipotent, omnipresent,

omniscient God” he was in direct contact with the Devine Power and that if we dared disobey or show any disrespect for Bro. Ward he might call on the Omnipotent Being and we would be struck by lightning on the spot. As far as I know few of us younger students dared take the risk.

One older student, probably a “city slicker smart Alec” from Fort Worth, proposed in Miss Bernice Neel’s English class to write a theme on “One Man Rule in DBC.” I do not recall just what happened to him but he did not write the theme and probably lived to regret that he ever had the idea.

So in a way I suppose it was not surprising that two strongly opinionated men like Dr. Ward and Dr. Rice did come to a parting of the ways theologically.

## **DR. ELEANOR COOKE AND DR. KARAT AND DIPHTHERIA PROGRAM AT HAYES 1927-1928**

A brief visit with Dr. Eleanor Cooke, beloved and respected pediatrician of Lake Charles who has cared for at least three generations of area babies and small children was most enjoyable. Dr. Cooke pioneered in at least two fields of medical practice in this area, being one of the first female doctors in southwest Louisiana and one of the early pediatricians. She still maintains her office and practice in the Medical Arts building in Lake Charles.

Within the next few weeks children who are enrolling in school for the first time in Louisiana and Texas will be receiving immunization from a number of diseases that at one time were considered unavoidable and having them was a necessary and sometimes dangerous part of being a child. It was in connection with one of these earlier immunization programs that I first met Dr. Cooke.

Young adults and older people will recall the dread of polio which was prevalent until a few years ago when the Saulk vaccine was made available. Those of us who are older will recall when diphtheria was dreaded by every parent and others who had the care of small children.

It was during the school session of 1927-28 that the late Dr. R.R. Arceniaux and the late Dr. Claude E. Martia of Welsh, Louisiana both of whom practiced in the Hayes-Bell City area reported to the writer, who was then Principal of Hayes School, that they suspected that there was a diphtheria carrier in the school; there were too many cases of severe throat and border line diphtheria in the Hayes School. At the suggestion of both of the doctors and with the assistance of the late Mrs. A.T. Carmouche of Hayes the State Department of Health was contacted and arrangements were made for tests to be made of the entire school personnel; pupils, teachers, bus drivers, janitors plus any one else in the community who wished to be tested for diphtheria. Hayes people in general seemed to have a respect for and fear of diphtheria, there were the graves of three children in the Hayes cemetery who had died of diphtheria in the same week a few years before, being all of one family. A similar situation existed in the Starks community.

In November of 1927 the State Department of Health sent Dr. Karst, a woman doctor and a nurse. Mrs. Dickson, to Hayes and they took cultures from the throats of each of the people in the groups named above and sent the cultures to the state Laboratory for diagnosis. After the Christmas holidays, Dr. Karst a recent bride so we were told, did not return to Hayes and was succeeded by Dr. Cooke. In a recent conversation Dr. Cooke told me that Dr. Karst, now retired from practice, is the mother of Mr. Ed Karst, the present mayor of Alexandria.

After all the tests were completed it was revealed that two small brothers whose family had recently returned to Hayes after living in California were carriers of the diphtheria.

The parents were rather indignant at the diagnosis declaring that the boys had never had diphtheria and the whole thing was part of a scheme to strike back at them because of a political feud dating back several years. A short time later it was revealed that the boys had been playing with a stray cat which appeared to be not in the best of health. As far as I know no test was made of the cat but the doctors were of the opinion that the cat could have been a carrier and infected the boys.

Following the testing program Dr. Cooke and Mrs. Dickson started the immunization program for all who would accept it. The immunization of the children in the Hayes community was almost one hundred percent. A few years later at Starks I was again to have the privilege of working with Dr. Cooke in another program. By this time we were in the depths of the depression and the Calcasieu-Cameron Anti-Tuberculosis Society became concerned lest the students in the schools became so weakened due to lack of proper food that

they might develop tuberculosis. Dr. Cooke was employed by the Society to make physical examinations of the pupils. At Starks it was found that pupils whose basic diet was sweet potatoes were in reasonably good physical condition. Some of the experts in nutrition said that sweet potatoes contained some of the same nutrients found in milk while the historians recalled that during the American Revolution the so-called idlers in the southern colonies (Marion's men) lived on sweet potatoes as a basic food and later during the Civil War the Confederate soldiers and the southern people did the same thing in many cases.

Today immunization of children against a long list of diseases is routine in most countries and states and Louisiana and Texas have laws requiring immunization and the recent experience of the people of San Antonio, Texas reveals what can happen if immunization against diphtheria and other diseases is neglected. As the population increases and people live more and more in close contact with each other immunization will become an absolute necessity if we are to survive, so say the doctors and other authorities.

## REUNION IN WISE COUNTY

For how many years no one seems to know exactly, the people of Wise County, Texas, have maintained a permanent park or “reunion ground” where each year during the last week in July the residents and former residents meet, camp out and enjoy renewing old friendships and just visiting.

It is something like an old-fashioned religious camp meeting except for the religious services. Some families have permanent camp houses and there is a pavilion of tabernacle for group meetings and programs. It has been over fifty years since I attended “the reunion” so my memory may be a little hazy in some respects.

Some say that the Confederate Veterans began the reunion in 1896 but others say that it began earlier. I first knew about it around 1910 and remember seeing a sign over the main gate of the “reunion grounds” which read:

“Ben McCulloch Camp No. 30, United Confederate Veterans, Joe Wheeler Park”

Ben McCulloch was a Confederate General from Texas so the origin of the name of the camp is obvious. Joe Wheeler was also a Confederate General but not a Texan. In his later years he was a General in the United States Army during the Spanish-American War of 1898, so I wonder if the Spanish-American War veterans, few in number in comparison with the Civil War veterans, may have had part in the Reunion.

As a small boy and teenager I remember seeing the Confederate Veterans and one Union Veteran, Mr. Stokes, on the streets and various occupations around town. Two of the Confederates, “Uncle Jack” Shepherd and John Gilland, were blacksmiths. Mr. Massey had the contract to haul the mail between the depot and the post office. He and his bay horse Bullet were familiar figures on the streets of Decatur. “Uncle John” Wasson served as a Peace Officer part of the time and in his later years was night watchman at the flour mill. Most of the rest of the Veterans were or had been farmers or cowboys. General George Short operated a stock farm where he raised Shorthorn cattle which he advertised as Short’s Shorthorns. His title of General was derived from his elective position in the United Confederate Veterans organization rather than rank in the actual Confederate Army.

Most of the Veterans wore a Maltese Cross-shaped bronze badge with the letters U.V.C. and perhaps other wording on it. Some of these badges were said to have been made from bronze cannons which were melted up after the War. Mr. Gilland wore his badge every day in his blacksmith shop.

Most of the men were proud of their status as Confederate veterans and I have heard a few men who appeared to be of the proper age to have served in the CSA explain somewhat apologetically why they were not Confederate veterans. Some authorities say that three out of four of the proper age in the South served in the CSA at one time or another for varying lengths of time.

Some history books mention the black Americans who served in the Union Army during the Civil War but do not mention the black Confederates who served the CSA. The late Walter Beard of DeQuincy told me about twenty years ago that his father served in the CSA and went through the siege of Vicksburg. After the war he operated a cabinet making shop, was a member of the United Confederate Veterans and attended the reunions. There is one story of two men, one black and one white, named Valentine from Montgomery, Ala., who served together in the CSA. The story of the black Valentine family down to the present day is worth a whole column and more; at a later time we shall try to tell it. There is also the story of Jim Strother, orderly for

General Richard E. Taylor, CSA, who was cited by General “Stonewall” Jackson as the “bravest man he had ever seen on the battlefield that day,” this following one of the major battles of the war.

A picture of a group of Confederate Veterans, published in the current issue of The Wise County Messenger made in 1906 shows a group of UCVs 42 years after the war when most of them were in their sixties. The picture makes them appear much older than modern men of the same age. This appearance may be due to the white beards and mustaches which most of them wore, but I believe that it was due in part to the hardships of the War and the hard labor and life most of them experienced after the War.

Before the development of modern machinery most farm work and even skilled labor was hard and men and women broke down physically at much younger ages than now. Robert E. Lee died at the age of 63 but the pictures of him make him appear much older than his actual years. The late Douglas Southhall Freeman, the biographer of Lee and other Confederate Generals, says this was true of all the Confederate veterans.

## THE JOHN D. ALSTON PAPERS AND ALSTON GOLD STORY

About twenty years ago Brown Royer showed me an old wooden chest-like box about eighteen inches long and about eight inches wide and deep with a hinged lid. This box is said to have been used as a ballot box in the first election held in this part of the state. How long ago this election was held, no one seems to know, but as interesting as the box itself was, it was the old papers which it contained were much more interesting to me. I have since referred to them as the John D. Alston Papers because the late Mr. Alston's name occurs most frequently in the papers. I doubt that this John D. Alston is the same name who is buried in the "pole pen" grave in the Alston cemetery east of DeQuincy, but it could be his father, perhaps some member of the Alston family may know about this. There are people still living who knew the Mr. Alston buried as mentioned above and the earliest papers go back too far for it to have been, in my opinion, the late Mr. Alston. I have not seen these papers in about twenty years and my memory may be somewhat hazy as to details in certain spots.

The earliest document is a tax receipt dated at Opelousas in 1827 when all of southwest Louisiana was part of St. Landry parish and Opelousas was the parish seat and people in this area who had business, such as taxes to pay, went all the way to Opelousas to attend to the matter. Mr. Alston's state and parish taxes for the year were less than three dollars. The receipt is interesting in that it reveals what Mr. Alston and his neighbors did not receive for their taxes rather than what they received. For example there is not mention of school taxes, none were levied because there were no public schools.

Another document is an agreement signed by the citizens in which they agree to meet Mr. Alston on a certain date at the Escoubas Ferry with their axes, saws and other tools to cut a road to connect with the Lake Charles road. The best I could determine from talking with Brown Royer and others, the ferry may have been about where the bridge crosses Houston River on Highway 27 and the road which was cut could have been approximately the Westlake road, now Louisiana State Highway 3065. If anyone has information that will locate the ferry and the road more definitely, I should appreciate hearing from you.

One of the shorter documents is a Bill of Sale for a slave. I do not recall whether the Bill of Sale states that Mr. Alston was the buyer or seller of the slave, but since the document is among his papers it seems logical to me that he may have been the purchaser.

Another thing that Mr. Alston and his neighbors did not receive was police protection against law breakers. One of the longer documents reads about as follows:

Whereas: our corn cribs, our smoke houses and potato hills are being visited by night and the contents stolen and we believe that you (here follows the name of the person suspected) are doing the visiting. You are hereby ordered to leave your present residence within the next thirty days and not resettle within a radius of twenty-five miles of your present home. In the event that you find it impossible to relocate your home within thirty days, Mr. John D. Alston has the authority to grant you an extension of time.

Mr. Alston's signature heads a list of signatures which covers the balance of the page. Whether or not the man moved, I have no way of knowing, but from the way our pioneer ancestors handled such matters I suspect that he did.

There are several other documents in the box but I do not recall just what they were. A story which Brown Royer told me is not related in the box but goes back to the same era, the Civil War period. He said that his father, or perhaps his grandfather, and a brother each inherited ten thousand dollars in gold from their father. The brother took his share in gold and left for one of the eastern states and his family never heard from him

again. The gold belonging to Brown's father or grandfather, whichever it was, disappeared at the time of the Civil War and the family later assumed that it was either stolen or had been buried and the hiding place lost.

At the time Royer told me the story I asked him if he recalled whether or not he could remember seeing a considerable amount of Confederate paper money around the house when he was a boy. He told me that his mother, or perhaps his grandmother, had a whole trunk full of it. I suggested that the owner of the gold may have delivered it to the Confederate government in exchange for Confederate bonds or paper money at a highly inflated rate of exchange and that at the fall of the Confederacy the paper became valueless except as souvenirs. Some of these old Confederate bonds and paper bills are worth more as collector's items now than they were worth in purchasing power at the time they were issued. This means the original ones, not the replicas which are sold at souvenir shops in several places today.



## MEDICINE SHOWS AND PATENT MEDICINES

A recent issue of TV GUIDE carried a story relative to numerous “medicine shows” which have been on the air throughout the years, beginning with Jean Hersholt in the Dr. Christian series on radio down through Dr. Kildare and Marcus Welby M.D. and including the one-minute commercials in which we are urged to try some remedy for all of our ailments and discomforts from athlete’s feet down to dandruff and all the areas in between. These shows are a far cry from the “medicine shows” of my youth. Then on any occasion or special day which brought a larger than usual crowd to town, such as a Saturday during the cotton picking season or a First Monday or trader’s day a medicine show was likely to appear.

THE FIRST WE KNEW about a rather brightly painted enclosed wagon, like a panel truck of today, usually bearing a picture of the “doctor” and the name of the product he was promoting appeared on the main street. The sides of the wagon could be opened and made into a small platform or stage. The “doctor” was usually accompanied by one or more entertainers, sometimes a singer who accompanied himself on the banjo or other stringed instrument, sometimes a “black-faced” comedian who danced and told dialect jokes. One show that I remember had an “Indian Chief” or “medicine man” who, dressed in a full feathered headdress and beaded buckskins and sang some Indian chants and danced some Indian dances.

THE “DOCTOR” WAS usually dressed in a full Prince Albert style suit and wore a high top silk hat. He sometimes wore a full beard or at least a moustache. If he were a “cowboy doctor” he might dress in western costume.

Following the program the “doctor” launched into his “pitch” in which he described in horrible details the symptoms of the terrible illness which was likely to overtake his hearers unless they started taking or using the remedy he was selling. Sometimes these products were well-known patent medicines which could be bought at the local store, but the medicine show doctor would offer the product at one half the regular price for “the next fifteen minutes, at the end of which time the product would be sold for the printed price.” The “patients” were assured that after the “doctor” left town they could continue to buy the medicine at the local store for the regular price. Just what sort of an arrangement the manufacturers of the product had with the “doctor” of the medicine show, I have no idea. But I believe there must have been some sort of understanding between them.

I UNDERSTAND THAT some of the “doctors” were actually or had been licensed to practice in some state or territory of the United States. In the early days the frontier states or territories had no laws requiring a license to practice medicine and when the laws were finally passed they sometimes awarded a ‘grandfather’ clause in them providing that any person who had practiced in the state for so many years prior to the passage of the law or had been generally accepted as a doctor was granted an automatic license to practice. Such was the origin of the title Doctor for some very honored members of the profession as well as the medicine show doctors.

During the school year of 1926-27 as a result of a professional show that we had at the Hayes School I became acquainted with the widow of one of the old time medicine show doctors. She was never too tired to talk about “the doctor”; she never called him anything else, and what a wonderful person he was.

SOMETIMES A LICENSED doctor would develop a formula for a remedy of a certain type and patent it, and then it was sold over the counter without a prescription. Older people will remember the white moustache and benign countenance of Dr. Caldwell on the bottles of his Syrup of Pepsin which was an aid to digestion. The grandmotherly face of Lydia E. Pinkham adorned the bottles of her Begetable Compound, which

was a general tonic and specific for women. It was said that every country newspaper in the land had a cut of her picture which in time of emergency they used for everything from a picture of Queen Victoria of England to a picture of “the woman back east who poisoned her husband.” Few people recognized the deception or cared, it was just good old Lydia in any case. There was also the box of Smith Brothers cough drops with the pictures of the doctors Trade and Markd (Smith) at opposite ends of the package.

SOUTHERN YANKEES, who do not know about him, still use Dr. Tichenor’s Antiseptic, as a mouth wash and general antiseptic but gone from the label is the picture of the gallant Confederate soldier charging up a hill carrying the Confederate battle flag. Dr. Tichenor was a Louisiana pharmacist but he and the CSA soon discovered that he was a better doctor than a great many of the so-called doctors so he became a doctor. He practiced in Louisiana for a number of years after the war and patented his antiseptic which can still be bought in local stores as of last week. His surgical instruments and his gray United Confederate Veteran’s uniform can be seen in the museum on the Mansfield battle ground southeast of the town of Mansfield on Highway 175.

Mrs. Ratliff’s grandfather, Dr. George Washington Harvey, who practiced medicine at Valley City, North Dakota Territory, was a graduate of the University of Michigan in pharmacy and later in medicine. He died in 1892. He no doubt had some actual experiences similar to the fictional one of “Doc” Adams of Gunsmoke.

PERHAPS I should have mentioned above that some of the patent medicines were developed in the laboratories of the manufacturers and that the “doctor” whose name and picture appeared on the package may not have been as fictional as “Doc” Adams or Marcus Welby M.D.

I do not believe that our own Dr. George Lyons ever got around to patenting his famous “flu medicine.”

## DOG SITUATION IN DEQUINCY

LAST week an Anonymous writer wrote a letter to the editor of The Journal protesting against a condition which has existed in DeQuincy since 1934 to my knowledge; the apparently uncontrolled barking of dogs at all hours of the day and night and the pollution of the air and soil by dogs. To the anonymous writer I can offer my sympathy but little hope for relief unless his neighbors are willing to cooperate. DeQuincy has no ordinance that will help. The dog question is a touchy one and has been that way a long time and is universal, a former mayor of DeQuincy told me that at any meeting of municipal authorities the dog problem was always discussed with little hope of a solution satisfactory to everyone. Americans have a sentimental streak about dogs and anyone who attempts to come between "a boy and his dog" can find himself very unpopular.

Up to a few years ago when sheep in larger numbers than now were raised on the open range in the area the students in school were pretty well divided into "dog people" and "sheep people" and teachers soon learned to avoid the subject of sheep versus dogs in a classroom because actual fights between students might happen. At that time the dog poisoner was, like the bootlegger, regarded by some as a sort of necessary evil.

Asian, especially Hindus and Moslems accuse Americans of considering dogs as sacred and a visit to any food store will reveal that a considerable fraction of the business is dog food and supplies. Someone said that next to baby food that dog food was the biggest food item sold. T.V. advertising will also reveal that "anti-dog people" cannot expect much help from the business world. There is a story about an American visitor to India who suggested to a Hindu that Hindus could increase their food supply by eating a beef from their "sacred Brahma" cattle. The Hindu was horrified and asked the American why they did not eat their "sacred animals", the dogs. Of course in certain cultures dogs have been and still are raised as food animals.

The experience of my family as dog owners was never very satisfactory or happy. Once when I was about eight years old my two brothers, Dennis and Roy, and I were standing at our front gate when a boy passed by carrying a small puppy, he told us that the Renshaws on the next street were giving away pups. Without asking our parents' permission we ran on to the Renshaws and selected a small black and white puppy without realizing that Mollie, as she came to be called, was a female and would be the source of problems later, which she was. One day a man approached my father to sell him a Pointer pup with the understanding that the seller would take Mollie away and destroy her, which he did.

Don, the Pointer, was not much of a success either. There were no bird hunters in the family, Don refused to eat table scraps and soon redeveloped the habits of egg sucking and pulling at the clothes on the line. He was banished to the outlying community of Boonsville and it was later reported that he became a successful pointer of birds.

Except for a little black and tan Spaniel who died an early death, poisoned or run over I seem to recall, our next dog was a black and white shepherd type named Shep. Shep died of a disease called "black tongue." There was a remedy for the disease on the market and we tried it without success. Shep was followed by a common yellow cur called Dan who was also a failure as a pet or whatever he was intended to be. He was followed by Old Pup who was a Collie of sorts, a good farm dog in that he would drive up the cows at night by himself and drive off the hawks. He also died of "black tongue" which I understand now was a sort of deficiency disease akin to pellagra in people.

When we moved to Hayes we owned for a time a working type, distinguished from the show type, Collie called Bob whom we trained to chase cattle away from the house, since the yard was not fenced.

Unfortunately he developed the habit of chasing cattle anywhere, anytime which made him unpopular with open range cattlemen of Hayes. He died from “dumb rabies” which was believed to be a reaction from a rabies shot.

In 1933 we acquired Paddy, a “wire-haired” terrier as a pet for our two little girls. When we came to DeQuincy in 1934 we were told that dogs were not allowed to run out in DeQuincy so we gave her to the Jim Hamptons at Vinton. She was our last dog.

Right now we are surrounded by dogs of all breeds and types, all belonging to our neighbors, as we have been for the past thirty-odd years. Sometimes the experience has been enjoyable and sometimes not. When Tiger, the little Pekinese belonging to Melanie Wall, died there were tears shed on both sides of the fence. Later I had “an affair” with Rusty, a Brittany spaniel belonging to Charles Lee Smith, who would come up to the fence between our yards and put her head down to have me scratch behind her ears. Right now Calhoun, the little fox terrier pet of Cindy Howard, holds the stage in our esteem along with Rasin, the black poodle across the street whose “family” is that of the Ralph Mitchells. Duke, the companion of Calhoun, thinks he can make it stop raining by barking and Rex on the other side is afraid of the thunder and lightning and barks at them. They all bark and howl when the fire or ambulance sirens blow.

When the noise gets unbearable we scold them ourselves, though someone has said, “If you want to find out just how little influence you have, try controlling your neighbors barking dog.” Otherwise the only consolation I can offer to “Anonymous” is found in Revelation 22:15. (King James Version)

## **SCHOOL OPENING – SEPTEMBER 1971**

By the time this appears in print the majority of the school age people in this area who are physically able will be enrolled in either public or private schools. This is a far cry from the situation a little over a century ago when public schools were non-existent in what was then “Imperial Calcasieu” consisting of the modern parishes of Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu and Jefferson Davis.

The report of the State Superintendent of Education for the year 1868 shows no public schools in Calcasieu Parish. This situation was due to a number of conditions; the scant and widely scattered population, the poverty of the people due in part to the recent Civil War, the lack of interest in education on the part of a great many people and the lack of authority of the School Board, which was appointed by the governor.

True, the Constitution of 1868, later referred to as the “Carpet Bag” Constitution made provision at a state level for a school system, on paper at least, which was the equal of some of the best in the nation, but it specifically provided that not public schools could be established for the exclusive use of any one race, in other words segregated schools. However, it was left up to the local community or parish to activate this provision of the Constitution and since most white families preferred that their children not be educated rather than attend mixed schools no public schools were established in Calcasieu Parish.

In the areas where the population was sufficient and the interest great enough there were private schools for those who could afford them. Sometimes the father or some member of the family taught the children of the family and sometimes the neighbor children at the same time. Sometimes a family would be able to employ a private tutor and sometimes these private tutors might also teach neighboring children. I have a friend who is now in his nineties who was a warm supporter of Judge Guion in his race for governor because Judge Guion’s father had employed a tutor for his children and had allowed my old friend and his brothers to be taught by the tutor at no expense. My old friend said that if the Guions had not been so kind that he would have been totally illiterate as were thousands of his contemporaries. In some areas churches maintained schools, sometimes for blacks and whites together and sometimes separately. The Lake Charles parochial schools are older than the public schools of the city.

By 1872 the picture was a little brighter, the Report for that year shows that there were twenty-three public schools in the parish with a total enrollment of five hundred and twenty –three pupils. The School Board was still not much more than an appendage of the Police Jury without authority to levy taxes or even call elections to vote taxes for schools. The sole source of revenue was just whatever the Board could talk the Police Jury into appropriating for schools and the Police Jury itself was hard pressed for funds to operate the parish government.

No one foresaw that in 1873 a Texas cattleman on his way to New Orleans on a “trail drive” would stop off in Calcasieu Parish to establish a school system that was the beginning of the modern school system of southwest La. This cattleman was of course John McNeese. Later I plan to write an entire column just about Mr. McNeese.

Within my own memory the school system of modern Calcasieu Parish was administered from one room in the parish courthouse with staff of three consisting of the Parish Superintendent, who also supervised the high

school, an Assistant Superintendent who also served as Supervisor of Elementary schools and a combination secretary and book keeper, Miss Inez Alston of Lake Charles who served for more than fifty years in the School Board office. At one time there were probably less than two hundred teachers in the whole parish system who taught less than five thousand pupils. The School Board had an annual budget of less than three hundred thousand dollars. A few years ago Supt. H.A. Norton told me that the cafeteria budget alone was about one half million dollars per school session. Until sometime about the turn of the century the School Board did not employ janitors and it was not until a high school girl in the Kinder school staged a sort of one pupil against cleaning the school rooms that the Board started employing janitors. Bus drivers and cafeteria workers were, in the words of a Japanese comic strip character, in "the near distant future." At the end of the first day of this new session the enrollment for modern Calcasieu Parish schools was 36,700 pupils taught by over two thousand teachers. The figures for Jefferson Davis Parish were slightly under nine thousand pupils with no figures as to the number of teachers given. I have seen no statistics from Allen and Beauregard parishes.

The Calcasieu Parish School Board now occupies two parish owned office buildings with an Administrative, Supervisory and Clerical staff which is so numerous I have lost all track of them as to names, faces and numbers. There are also ware house men, maintenance crews, custodians, cafeteria workers and bus drivers numbered into the hundreds I estimate. The annual budget amounts into the millions and the Calcasieu Parish School board employs more people and has a larger payroll than any single industry in the parish. Education is indeed "big business!"

A lengthy letter from Richard D. (Bill) Suchanek from Sasolburg, Orange Free State, South Africa is so interesting I wish that I could share it with you. Bill works all over the world for the American Bridge Company and wherever he goes he takes an interest in the people of the country and writes about them in his letters.

Another letter from Mr. Joe B. Bogillio Sr., retired Mo. P. engineer, now of Houston tells about his early experience as a blacksmith. He enjoyed the story of Knot Head, the tame blue jay owned by the Beckwith family and tells about a tame mocking bird named Bossy which he and his family once owned.

Donald Blackburn, DeQuincy High School Class of '61 now of Houston wrote a very kind and much appreciated letter and also sent the writer a booklet, The Spirit of America which is a collection of the writings about the glory, strength and greatness of the U.S.A. I shall treasure the book greatly.

## **SILVERWARE PATTERNS OLD AND NEW FOR TABLES AND BRIDES**

A few Saturdays ago we had at our house a happy visit with our daughter Doris, her husband Clifford Blackwell, their son Brian and their daughter Claire (Mrs. Bill McNease) and her poodle Deiter. Claire, a bride of last September, is doing what millions and millions of wives have done since the beginning of history, waiting for her husband to “come home from the war” before establishing a permanent home.

While Claire was here she noticed an old fashioned flowered, semi-porcelain dinner plate hanging on the wall of the den-porch and she asked what it was and why it was there. I told her that it was perhaps the sole survivor of a set of dishes, four of each article as I recall, that her grandmother and I bought in September 1925 when we first arrived in Louisiana and started teaching at Hayes. The usual falls and crashes have accounted for the rest of the set.

From here the talk drifted around to bride’s silver, dishes and china such as modern brides usually receive as wedding gifts or buy for themselves. Before it was over we had managed to find one knife, one fork and one spoon of our original silver to give to Claire as a keepsake and then another set for each of the other granddaughters, Donna (Kelly) and Jane Ricketts. The silver is not the sterling which is considered almost a “must” for the modern bride but twenty five year Oneida Tudor plate. As the plating wore off the set was replaced with another fifty year set and some sterling.

All of this brought out that it has been since World War II that sterling has been seen to any great extent on the tables of anyone save the most affluent and to be “born with a silver spoon in the mouth” was a synonym for wealth.

In the long-established well-to-do families, usually the nobles, of Europe and later the well-to-do of the Atlantic coast states and a few other places such as some of the large plantations of the South the “family silver” was kept intact and passed down from generation to generation, usually to the oldest child with a son having precedence over a daughter. Only in the direst need was the “family silver” sold. In case of an invasion by an enemy the silver was considered a prime object of loot and steps were taken to hide it as carefully as possible.

I understand that in some families of the North there may be still seen some pieces of silver brought home by Union soldiers during the Civil War. Union General Butler was commonly called, among other things, “Spoons” Butler by the people of New Orleans because he was accused of looting the Louisiana homes of their silverware.

American western pioneers did not own or care about silverware; their needs were simple and things were valued for their practical use rather than decorative purposes. Spoons were sometimes made of cow or buffalo horn or pewter.

I can remember that over sixty years ago both pairs of my grandparents, who were north Texas farmers, owned and used sets of cocoa wood handled iron bladed and tined knives and forks with a knife and one fork to a “place setting.” There were no elaborate sets of special forks or spoons for such things as salads and desserts. I think this was customary in most farm homes of the time and place.

O. Henry, the American short story writer of the turn of the century, whose characters were frequently Texas ranchers and cowboys, had one of his characters of that background who was a guest in a New York City home remark something like this, “There was such a set of tools set out long side my plate that I thought I was expected to go out and burglarize a restaurant to get anything to eat.”

Sometime in my boyhood my father bought a set of six knives and forks made of solid silver; they are perfectly plain in pattern, made by the Yourex Company. They were in daily use for over fifty years and have acquired a few scratches and nicks but are still usable and one of my sisters, Mrs. Frances Pearson of Orange, now has them.

Several years ago one of the Shroll girls brought to school a set of one knife and one fork made of melted down silver coins. The workmanship looked as if they had been made by an amateur silversmith by the pieces were attractive. I do not remember if she said the family owned more than the place setting or not.

There used to be, and may still be, in the Sam Houston Museum of Huntsville, Texas, some silverware made from the silver decorations from the Mexican President-General Santa Anna's saddle with part of the booty taken by the Texans after the battle of San Jacinto.

Recently some of the young brides-to-be have been selecting stainless steel tableware which has somewhat the look and feel of sterling silver but is less expensive and in my opinion more practical for everyday use. A few years ago a gold colored electro-plated stainless steel type of tableware was popular for a short time but I have not noticed it lately. However, it may still be available and still in demand.

Sometimes when I know of a young bride-to-be selecting a certain pattern of sterling for HER silver and I know the pattern is different from that of her mother, mother-in-law or grandmother, I wonder what will become of the old custom of family silver or heirloom silver handed down from generation to generation. Being the sentimentalist that I am I hate to see another old tradition disappear.



## STARKS, LOUISIANA PEOPLE

One of the rewards for doing these weekly columns is that it brings an opportunity to meet and talk with old friends and acquaintances; in some cases a relationship that goes back over forty years. Recently in a DeQuincy store I met Mrs. Phillip Corry of Starks whom I once knew but had not seen since 1934. As we talked we recalled that her late husband, Phillip, had operated a garage in Starks in the late twenties and early thirties and later was a logging contractor.

With Mrs. Corry were two high school age girls whose features were rather familiar. A little conversation revealed that they were both students in the Starks High School and granddaughters of three families whom I knew in the old days at Starks. One of the girls is Cathy Corry, daughter of Raphael Corry whom I knew as a pupil in the first and second grades of the Starks Elementary School, and grand-daughter of the Phillip Corrys and the Levi Albrittons. The Albrittons lived on the loop made by the Green-Moore road and the Old River Road and Mr. Albritton drove a school bus from that section. I think I would have almost recognized Cathy from her resemblance to her Albritton "folks".

The other young lady was Susan Foster, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Phillip Foster and granddaughter of the A.M. (Mojean) Grangers. One of the things I enjoyed was being able to tell Susan some things about her grandfather Granger that she had never known or realized. For one thing I remember him as being one of the strongest men in his arms and shoulders I ever knew, having arms and shoulders that many a professional athlete or "strong man" would have envied. He used his muscle power and a high degree of skill as a carpenter and builder, using no power tools.

I first became aware of his strength and skill in 1928 when he, assisted by R.C. Drake and Earl (Dirty) Clark moved two old abandoned buildings which were on the school campus up near the Teacherage and converted them into a double garage which stood for many years.

The Starks School received its water from a deep well, over 600 feet deep I recall, which was equipped with an automatic electric pump which at first was powered by a 110-volt Delco generator. The water was pumped into a large steel cylindrical tank which lay on some concrete supports with its long axis parallel to the ground. The tank was first filled with air, all outlets closed and water, some 5,000 gallons, pumped into the tank thus compressing the air to a pressure of about 45 pounds per square inch. This was enough pressure to raise the water to the second floor of the Teacherage and the old High School building. There were two problems with this system; from time to time the tank became waterlogged and had to be drained and refilled with air. Until this process with the re-pumping took several hours and during this time there was no water pressure. We always tried to do this during the late hours at night when there would be as little inconvenience as possible. The other problem was that the heat of the sun heated the water in the tank to a point of where it was fine for bathing but too warm for palatable drinking for the students, which was the primary purpose of the water system.

As a solution to this latter problem the School Board in 1928 employed Mr. Granger to build a wooden shelter over the tank. The main sills of the shelter were made of pine beams either four by six inches or by eight inches. One beam alone was not long enough to reach the entire length of the tank, so they had to be spliced, end to end. Mr. Granger took his steel square to lay out and his saw to cut out a matching interlocking joint of a type which was new to me at that time. These joints fitted together so well that the top and bottom sides were perfectly level and so well locked together that no spikes were really required to hold them together. I found

out later that this was a ship carpenter's device and Mr. Granger and other ship carpenters have used it a countless number of times.

I understand that Mr. Granger has now retired after building for himself a home. I have not seen his new home but from my recollections of Mr. Granger's other work I would not be afraid to face the strongest storm I ever saw in it.

A few days after the conversation with Mrs. Corry and the young ladies I met at one of the local hospitals, Mrs. Curtis Johnson whose husband is the son of Mr. Jimmy Johnson and the late Mrs. Johnson. Mr. Johnson was a school bus driver at the same time that Levi Albritton, Bill Perkins, John Gillis and Byron Anding all drove buses to the Starks School. With Mrs. Curtis Johnson at the hospital were her son, Leslie, Earl (Dirty) Clark and Richard Watkins. Leslie, a Starks High School student, had stepped on a fish bone with his bare heel a few days before and had come to the hospital for treatment. Had this happened to one of his uncles forty years ago there were two doctors practicing at Starks, Dr. A.A. Kidd, Dr. C.R. Price and later Dr. W.G. Hart. These doctors were "company doctors" for Long-Bell and Lutch-Moore but they did private practice as well.

Later the same day at a DeQuincy store I saw Fred McLeod who recited for me a portion of a speech which "Stonewall" Jackson is said to have delivered to his men just before a major battle of the Civil War.

Thirty-seven years is a long time in the lifetime of one person, but I have not forgotten the years at Starks and my association with Starks people.

## THE ALAMO

Unless you grew up in Texas and breathed in stories of The Alamo and Travis, Bowie, Crockett, and Bonham with the Texas air, or are a history “buff” or a TV fan, you are excused from reading this column. On Saturday of September 18 and the following Monday night NBC broadcast John Wayne’s epic movie called “The Alamo.” The original movie was first shown in theaters about ten years ago, but I did not see it, so I was anxious to see it on TV to learn how John Wayne and his associates handled the story and the characterizations. It all brought back memories of nearly sixty years ago.

At that time Mr. W.A. Bunnell operated a photography studio in Decatur and evidently was above the average in skill and imagination. At least, he became interested in making a movie when the art was still young and somewhat crude. He, or someone, conceived the idea of making a movie to be called “The Siege of the Alamo” and did so. Who financed the project I have no idea, except that it was done in part by the sale of framed prints of a painting depicting the final attack on the Alamo. Along the bottom of the print were inserts of the portraits of the four leaders of the Texans, except that the picture of Travis was post mortem; there is no authentic picture of Travis in existence. My father bought one of the pictures and for fifty years it hung on the wall of my parents’ home and some member of the family still has it.

When the film was completed it was shown at the Majestic Theater in Decatur and a prominent young attorney, the late Judge French Spencer, stood up on the stage and narrated the story of the battle. Living in Decatur at this time was a young fellow some four or five years older than I known then as “Little Guinn” Williams to distinguish him from his father who had the same name. But “Little” was hardly the descriptive title, as is shown by the fact that the late Will Rogers of Hollywood renamed him “Big Boy” Williams. Guinn saw “The Siege of the Alamo” along with just about everyone else in town who could get there.

The show was a success and within a short time Mr. Bunnell sold out his studio and moved to California to go into fulltime movie production. About 1920 “Little Guinn” joined Mr. Bunnell in California. Evidently it was through Mr. Bunnell that Guinn was able to get into the movies as an actor, usually portraying western or cowboy roles. The older Mr. Williams was a banker who was also interested in livestock, owning a sort of ranch called The Seven Wire Pasture and a sale barn where he dealt in livestock, mostly mules. “Little Guinn” received considerable experience as a horseman and was good at it. He was also sort of a natural comedian and at one time owned and rode a mule that was so small that it was suggested that Guinn ought to carry the mule. Later in Hollywood he was to appear in a movie with Will Rogers called “The Jack Rider” in which he rode a small mule and repeated some of the stunts he had performed in real life at Decatur.

For the forty years after 1920 Williams appeared in all sorts of supporting roles in both movies and television, mostly westerns or frontier-type movies, but one an Army picture filmed at West Point called Flirtation Walk. In this one the leading role was played by Dick Powell. Williams was later to appear in a TV series called “Circus Boy.”

Now what does all of this have to do with “The Alamo?” To my surprise, when I read the list of characters with John Wayne and saw the show, there was Guinn Williams as big as life doing a characteristic supporting role as one of the men of the Alamo. If you saw the show, he was the fellow who came in and reported to Travis, played by Laurence Harvey, that the Mexican Army had a cannon far larger than any ever seen before in America. Later in the show when the women and children were being evacuated and farewells were being said, he came up to a wagonload of women and children and said something like this with his typical Texas drawl and accent: “I ain’t got no woman to tell ‘Goodbye,’ so I’ll tell you.” I believe that this was about Williams’ last role, as he died sometime in the middle sixties.

From a teenager watching Mr. Bunnell's rather crude version of the Alamo story to participating nearly fifty years later in the multimillion dollar John Wayne version of the story is at least somewhat unusual.

Walter Lord in his book "A Time to Stand, the Epic of the Alamo," lists the following men in the Alamo as having come from Louisiana: James Bowie, Charles Despallier, James W. Garrand, Joseph M. Hawkins, Joseph Kerr, Isaac Ryan, Samuel Burns, Robert Crowman, and Mial Scurlock. George W. Tumlinson of Missouri was an ancestor of Otie Tumlinson, graduate of DeQuincy High School in the class of 1963 and now on the staff of KPLC-TV at Lake Charles. During his senior year at DeQuincy Otie attended a meeting of the descendants of the men of the Alamo in Dallas.

As usual the authors of the John Wayne script took several liberties with the facts. For example: Crockett was a much smaller man than Wayne, was fifty years old at the time of the siege of the Alamo, had been married twice and left a wife and several children in Tennessee, some of the children already grown. Jim Bowie's wife Ursula and his two children died some time before the battle and Bowie already knew of their deaths. There were also several extra characters, mostly women and children, of which history holds no record. However, Mrs. Dickinson and the baby were real, though Mrs. Dickinson was only eighteen years old and her baby was an infant. Smitty (John W. Smith), the teenage courier, was real. These script licenses (also called poetic license) are common in movie and television scripts.

## PARISH BOUNDARY LINES

The question has been asked, “Why is DeQuincy in that square of land in Calcasieu Parish projecting into Beauregard Parish rather than in Beauregard Parish? Why was the boundary between Calcasieu and Beauregard parishes not drawn in a straight line?” I find that the answers vary a little, according to the memories of some of the older people who were around in 1913 when Imperial Calcasieu was divided into the modern parishes of Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, and Jefferson Davis. A glance at the map will show that towns such as Jennings, Oakdale, Kinder, and others were too far from the courthouse at Lake Charles for convenience, especially in view of the underdeveloped state of the highway system and that automobiles were still rare. John P. Vige told me that when he was a boy his father’s family and their neighbors in the Oakdale area sometimes found it more convenient to make a trip to Lake Charles by boat down the Calcasieu River. The Southern Pacific provided an east and west way of travel and the KCS north and south from DeRidder via DeQuincy. The M.O. P. was still in the process of construction. The best solution seemed to be to divide Calcasieu Parish and create three new parish seats more convenient to the growing areas.

The question then arose as to the location of the boundaries between the new parishes. A line along the northern boundaries of Townships 10 and 11 would be approximately half-way between DeRidder and Lake Charles, but it would put DeQuincy in Beauregard Parish, which DeQuincy people opposed for varying reasons. The question of dividing Calcasieu Parish was put to a popular vote, with most of the opposition centering in Lake Charles.

According to Mr. W.W. Bishop, who was a voter in the Merryville precinct then, the voters in what is now northern Beauregard Parish, the DeRidder area, were afraid that DeQuincy area voters would vote against dividing the parish if they were to be placed in Beauregard Parish, since Lake Charles was more convenient to DeQuincy people as a parish seat. According to Mr. Bishop, the DeRidder promoters of the plan to divide the parish promised that if DeQuincy people would vote for the division, the DeRidder people would agree for DeQuincy to remain in Calcasieu Parish. It was that simple.

According to Mr. Jay Meadows, also of Merryville at that time, the issue was a little more complicated. The location of the parish seat of Beauregard Parish was an issue. Again at a glance at the map will show that Singer is near the center of the proposed new parish, while DeRidder is near the northern edge of Beauregard Parish. Deridder had a greater voting strength than Singer, but the combined vote of Singer and DeQuincy was about equal to that of the DeRidder area. The DeRidder people were afraid that if DeQuincy were in Beauregard Parish the DeQuincy voters might vote later to locate the courthouse at Singer. Mr. Bishop does not recall that the location of the courthouse was an issue in the decision to make the offset in the parish line since the location of the courthouse did not arise until after the division was made. However, it seems logical to me, a “new-comer”, nearly sixty years later, that the DeRidder people might have easily have foreseen that the location of the courthouse might arise later and were haunted by the fear that DeQuincy would vote to locate the courthouse at Singer. Successful politicians have to think ahead and prepare for any contingency.

Some say that another factor in the location of the parish boundary was the personal influence of a DeQuincy businessman and political leader, the late Fleming Thomas (Tom) Smith, who in his later years operated a store and was postmaster at Fields. According to his daughters, Mrs. George Lemerise at DeQuincy and Mrs. Frank Henegan of DeRidder, Mr. Smith operated the first store in DeQuincy in a wooden building on the lot about where the National Department Store is and later built the brick building on that spot and the building where the Harold Nichols barber shop is, as well as the one on the corner where the Morris Store was until recently. There is a story to the effect that some people referred to DeQuincy as “Tom Smith’s town” and that he used his influence to keep DeQuincy in Calcasieu Parish.

Mr. W.T. Kent, who was also on the scene at the time and took part in the events, said in a conversation with H.L. Mack some two or three years ago that the location of the Beauregard parish courthouse was not especially an issue in locating the parish boundary. A mass meeting was held in DeQuincy at which the matter was discussed and it was decided that the arrangement of having the square block mentioned above remain in Calcasieu Parish and that the DeRidder people had no particular objection.

To me it seems likely that all of those factors and personalities and perhaps others had a part in locating the parish boundaries.

There is another projection of Calcasieu Parish about five miles north and south direction and same east and west on the southeast corner of Calcasieu Parish extending into Jefferson Davis Parish. I have never heard anyone say, nor have I read anything on the subject, but based on three years of residence at Hayes from 1925-28 and a study of the map makes the following logical to me. Bell City and Hayes were the only towns in that area and they were fairly well isolated from Jennings. There was no highway bridge crossing Laccassine Bayou and no direct road from the Bell City-Hayes area to Jennings. There were two or three ways to make the trip, each of them having serious disadvantages. The Mallard Junction and Lake Arthur Railway, part of the SP, runs from Lake Charles to Lake Arthur and it would have been possible to go from Bell City-Hayes to Lake Charles and then double back to Jennings via the SP main line, some thirty miles extra travel, or one could go to Lake Arthur by the M.J. and L.A. railway and travel overland over an unimproved road to Jennings, some twelve miles. The third alternative, if weather and road conditions permitted, was to go to Laccasine on the main line of the SP and then to Jennings, a highly uncertain business. It might have been possible to go by boat via Laccasine Bayou and the Mermentau to Lake Arthur and thence to Jennings. So if Bell City and Hayes had been placed in Jefferson Davis Parish they would have been rather isolated from the parish seats, which as far as the communities were concerned, would have defeated the whole reason for creating the new parishes.

## OLD ATLAS (ELMER FAISTZT)

A recent visit with Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Faiszt revealed some more stories about the Buhler community before World War I. The Faiszt family operated the Buhler commissary and sold goods on charge accounts, and sometimes they accepted "lighter pine" cord wood in payment of bills. The wood was loaded onto KCS freight cars and sent to Lake Charles where it was used as fuel under the boilers of the old paddle wheeled steam packet, the Borealis Rex, which plied between Lake Charles and Cameron. The Rex is a whole story in itself.

When World War I came, Mr. Elmer Faiszt wanted to enlist in the Army, but since he was postmaster at Buhler the postal authorities would not release him until finally an arrangement was made by which the younger Faiszt son, John, became postmaster and Elmer enlisted and served 33 months overseas.

One of the most interesting old books I have seen in some time is a copy of Cram's Unrivalled Family Atlas of the World, 1887 edition which the Faiszt family brought from Illinois. The Atlas was published by George F. Cram of Chicago and was copyrighted in 1883. It contains all kinds of useful information and statistics, as well as colorful maps of the different sections of the world, but I was mostly interested in the map of Louisiana and Calcasieu Parish. It was in 1887. This map is perhaps more interesting to modern readers for what it does not show as for what it does show.

To begin with, the parishes of Allen, Beauregard, and Jefferson Davis are not shown, but "Imperial Calcasieu," which was bounded on the north by Vernon Parish and a small section of Rapides Parish, on the east by St. Landry and a small section of Vermillion Parish, Bayou Nezpique being the boundary, Cameron Parish was the neighbor to the south and the Sabine was the boundary between Calcasieu and Texas. The population figures shown after each town and community listed are based on the Census of 1880 and where an "X" follows the name of the community the population figure was not known. The entire parish reported a population of 12, 484 people.

The KCS, MOP, and the Santa Fe railroads were not yet to be built, and the towns which later sprang up along these lines were not there. There were no such places as DeRidder, Singer, Oretta, DeQuincy, and Starks. On the map there is a place called Sulphur Mine, but no Sulphur. In the table of population, though, there is Sulphur City (pop. 90). There was no Vinton on the map or in the Census tables. There were several towns and communities in 1887 that do not appear on a modern map. The sawmill towns of the later date were not on the 1887 map.

In the northern section of the parish there were Sugartown (pop. 100), Dry Creek (pop. X), The Bay (pop. 25), and Merryville (pop. 25). South of Merryville a few miles was Meadows, spelled Meadour on the map but Meadows on the Census table (pop. 15). This was no doubt the home community of the pioneer Meadows family represented in DeQuincy by Mr. and Mrs. Jay Meadows. In the east central section were Hickory Flat (pop. X), Phillip's Bluff (pop. 25), and China (pop. 40). Not far from modern Starks was Pineburr, shown on the map as Pinchburg (pop. 15). Over on the Sabine was Niblets Bluff (pop. 30). One of the places not shown was Pine Hill north of Starks which was established by Dr. Mims, who operated a store, practiced medicine, was postmaster and justice of the peace all at the same time. Among his descendents are the families of Mazilly, Foster, Gillis, Pinder, and no doubt others. He and his wife are buried in the old Mims Cemetery north of Starks not far from the long vanished Pine Hill.

Along the main line of the Southern Pacific, the only railway in southwest Louisiana, the stations east to west were Jennings (pop. 30), Lacassine (pop. X), Welsh, spelled Welche on the map, (pop. 10), Lake Charles (pop. 1,225), Sulphur Mine (Sulphur City), (pop. 90), Edgerly (pop. 95), and Sabine (pop. X).

Edgerly was the shipping point for a great deal of northwestern Calcasieu Parish and when Kelly Hall in DeQuincy was being dedicated by the Missouri Pacific employees, one of the speakers was the late Senator Gilbert Henagan of Fields who mentioned that when he was twelve years old he made a trip from Merryville to Edgerly and when he returned home he bragged that he “had seen a train.” Several years ago the late Mr. Knight, father of the late Nathan Knight, Sr. and grandfather of Nathan (Nick) Knight Jr., told me that when he was a teenager he was the mail rider between Edgerly and Pine Hill, the home of the Dr. Mims mentioned above, and made the trip on horseback.

South of the Southern Pacific line the only towns shown are Lake Arthur (pop. 75), Rose Bluff (pop. 115), and Calcasieu (pop. 35) on the river near Calcasieu Lake. Cameron Parish had a population of 2, 416 with the only towns shown being Cameron (pop. 100), Grand Chenier (pop. 75), and Johnson’s Bay (pop. 100).

I would have assumed that the town of Cameron would have been known by its one-time name of Leesburg. In the twenties older people in the Hayes-Bell City area sometimes called it Leesburg. There may be a story about the change of names that I never heard, especially as to the years each name was used.

Later Mr. Faiszt called to tell about another old book he owns, an edition of Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary which probably dates back to the eighties, though the page with the year of publication is missing. Noah Webster was born in 1758 and graduated from Yale in 1778. His first dictionary was published in 1806 and has remained the basis for American dictionaries until this day.

Note: In my mention of some of the personalities of Starks of more than forty years ago I failed to mention the name of my old friend the late Robert (Bob) Clark, who was also a school bus driver at the same time as those mentioned. He was the father of Mrs. Althea Clark Poole, Starks postmaster, and her brothers and sisters.



## INFLATION

All the talk about inflation and the efforts to curb it is a reminder that at least twice in American history our ancestors really knew about inflation. Theoretically paper money must be supported by something tangible which has value within itself. By long-established custom gold and silver have served as the basis for the currency in most nations; the idea being to deposit the "hard money" in a central bank and issue paper notes against the hard money. The hope is that a few people will call for the "hard money" at any one time, therefore the government, or the bank, can issue far more paper dollars than there are metallic hard dollars to back up the paper money. If a considerable number of people lose confidence in the government's or the bank's ability to pay in "hard money" they may begin a sort of run on the treasury or the bank or refuse to accept the paper money for goods or services except at a discount. Paper money becomes "cheap" in the sense that it will not buy very much.

Since 1933 America has been off the gold standard, and United States paper money was not redeemable in silver except in small change, and even these coins have been debased; that is, the amount of silver in each coin has been reduced and other token metals used.

Newly established governments are like newly-married couples: they have no material resources with which to "set up housekeeping" and have to go in debt for the things they need. When a young government faces this situation the tendency is to issue paper money with the hope that it will be able to collect taxes or use some other resource to redeem the paper money at some time in the future.

Previous to and during the American Revolution, the colonies used several kinds of money: British, French, Dutch, Portuguese, and Spanish, and also each colony issued its own coinage, the famous "pine tree shillings" of Massachusetts being an example. Since the Continental Congress had no power to "lay and collect taxes" and the state frequently refused to contribute enough money to pay the expenses of the war and the central government, Congress authorized the issuing of paper bills which were called Continentals. Everyone knew that there was nothing back of these bills but hope and faith in the future of the new government, and since these "resources" were in short supply, people refused to accept the paper bills except at a high rate of discount. As the purchasing power of these bills fell more and more, the only answer Congress could find was to issue more bills, which only inflated the currency more and more. Congress issued more than \$240,000,000 in Continentals and the purchasing power of them fell until it took forty dollars in paper to equal one dollar in silver, and no one knows what the ratio would have been for a gold dollar; no gold was available. From this experience came the expression still heard, "not worth a Continental."

It was not until President Washington appointed Alexander Hamilton as Secretary of the Treasury and Hamilton instituted a plan for redeeming the paper money in bonds which bore interest and were payable in the future that things began to change. Congress was given power to levy taxes of different kinds so that the situation was remedied. It is encouraging to know that financial obligations of the United States have always been, since the time of Hamilton, payable at face value, but neither Congress nor anyone else can guarantee how much you will be able to buy with the proceeds of a bond when it is redeemed. The buyer must take that chance.

Skipping over all the arguments over the relative advantages of cheap and high money in the early middle 1800's and the experiences of the Republic of Texas, we come to the efforts of the Confederate States of America to finance their War for Independence. When the Southern states seceded from the Union in 1861 the leaders of the new Confederacy realized that they would need some base for their money, so they asked everyone who had either gold or silver to deliver it to the Confederate Treasury and receive back Confederate

paper money or bonds. Cotton, however, was to be the principal backing for the new paper money, since the South had a virtual monopoly on the production of upland cotton.

Some of the paper bills were really bonds, since they bore interest and were payable in the future. The facsimiles which I have range in value from one dollar to one thousand dollars. A fifty dollar bill dated February 17, 1864, reads:

“Two years after the ratification of a treaty of peace between the Confederate States and the United States the Confederate States will pay to the bearer on demand fifty dollars.”

One of the thousand dollar bills bore interest at the rate of ten cents per day.

It is estimated that the Confederacy issued two billion in this and the Federal government has been accused of issuing counterfeit Confederate bills in order to further depress the value of the Confederate money. Prices in Confederate money rose higher and higher and with the fall of the Confederate government in 1865 the Confederate money became worthless, except as souvenirs. Some of the original bills are said to be worth more as collector's items than they ever were as a medium of exchange.

It is said that when General Lee was negotiating for the purchase of his famous grey horse Traveler, he agreed to pay one hundred fifty dollars for the horse with the privilege of two weeks trial before closing the deal. At the end of the two weeks the purchasing price of Confederate money had declined to the extent that Lee insisted on paying one hundred seventy five dollars for the horse.

The problem with inflation is that prices tend to rise faster than wages and salaries, and when these last rise prices immediately rise again and the vicious cycle continues until controls such as the ones just established are used. If they are not we plunge into a crash such as that of 1929 when the Great Depression started.

NOTE: Mr. W.W. Bishop reminds me that Cameron Parish was also once a part of Imperial Calcasieu. This is true, but Cameron Parish was created in 1870, sixty three years earlier than Allen, Beauregard, and Jefferson Davis parishes.

## SCHOOL HOMECOMING

October means different things to different people. One of the poets put it this way:

“Oh suns and skies of June together  
You cannot rival for one hour  
October’s bright blue weather.”

To the farmer it means winding up the crop year and counting his profit or loss; to the hunter it means getting ready for a new season – even the bird dogs and hounds seem to sense it. To others it brings the close of the baseball season with the World Series; to the football fan there are high school and college or professional games to be attended or watched on TV; as a last resort a game listened to on the radio or read about in the sports pages of the papers. Schools which don not play football are well into the basketball season with tournaments and individual games to be played or watched.

To school people, administrators, teachers, and ex-students, October is Homecoming month. At school everyone is busy cleaning up the buildings and grounds, decorating the walls with pictures and posters, committees are appointed to register guests, organize a coffee or a tea – perhaps even a banquet. A ball game, either football or basketball, has been arranged for weeks or months in advance. Everyone hopes that it will not rain and that the home team will win, but alas! – sometimes it does rain and the home team loses.

Above all else there must be a queen and her maids with their escorts and a parade of decorated cars and float! (“If I am ever appointed dictator, I am going to issue an edict that every well-scrubbed clean-living high school girl will be elected queen of something at least once, and if she does not have a grandfather to brag about how pretty and smart she is, I will be his substitute.” Does that sound familiar, young lady graduates of DHS before 1970?)

To the ex-students it is a time to “go back.” (It really cannot be done, but it is fun to try.) It is also a time to meet old friends, former classmates, to introduce husbands and wives, to bring old friends up to date on children, jobs, etc. Time to wander down the once-familiar halls, knock at the door of classrooms, greet former teachers – but if you have been gone as long as five years, I hope you told them who you are. Remember that you have matured and changed and there are “so many of you” as the teachers grow older your face and name may have merged with others in the mists of time. It is a time to recall old jokes and stories that certain teachers were given to telling more than once to the same class. It is also a time to recall the stunts or tricks played on the principal, the coach, or one of the teachers; sometimes they worked and sometimes they did not. It is the time to recall the important game that “we” won or did not win; a time to inquire about old classmates that you have not seen in some time and to learn about those who are now enrolled in the Class of the Great Teacher. In short, it is a time to recall with nostalgic bitter-sweetness the days that passed beyond recall.

By the time this appears in print the DeQuincy High School, as well as most of the area high schools, Homecoming will be history. The Queen and her Court will have been on parade; old friends, ex-students, and teachers as well as others will have greeted each; remembrances will have been exchanged; the ball games will have been won or lost; and Home Coming will have become Home Going.

On October 16 the ex-students of Decatur Baptist College at Decatur, Tex., which moved to Dallas in 1965 and became Dallas Baptist College, held their Homecoming on the old campus, which is now used partly as an industrial site and partly as a museum. The Class of 1921, my class, was the honored class as we celebrated our fiftieth anniversary. For personal reasons I was unable to attend. A letter from Miss Bell Ford of

the Class of 1909 gives a part of the story. Of the fifty-three members of the class of 1921 at least nine have died as far as I know, and there are doubtless more than that number. According to Miss Bell (Ford) there were 17 of the Class of 1921 attending the Homecoming. If there was one person whom I would have loved to have seen, it was Miss Bernice Neel who taught English at the college just before and after World War I. Sometime in the 20's Miss Neel went to Brazil as a missionary teacher in a Baptist college in Brazil. It is my understanding that she taught for 35 years down there, but is now retired and lives in Dallas. I do not know, but I suspect that she was inspired to go to Brazil in part by Professor David L. Hamilton, himself a missionary in Brazil, who taught French and Spanish at Decatur Baptist College during the session of 1918-19, and was a colleague of Miss Neel at that time.

I did not know it at the time, but later found out that Prof. Hamilton was of the Hamilton family of this section of Louisiana and was a brother to Dr. Fuller Hamilton, who was Parish Superintendent of Education of Calcasieu Parish about 1913-1917 and later Dean of the School of Education at Southwestern Louisiana Institute, now the University of Southwestern Louisiana at Lafayette. Prof. David L. Hamilton's daughter, Mrs. Ruth Hamilton, taught Spanish at Louisiana College at Pineville for a number of years, having among her pupils the late M.M. (Mat) Walker, coach of the DeQuincy Tigers in the 30's and principal of the DeQuincy schools at the time of his death in 1945. I understand that Prof. David L. Hamilton is buried in Waco, Tex.

Miss Neel used a system of note-taking in her literature classes that I have never known any other teacher to use. The students brought sheets of thin notebook paper with adhesive along one edge, called "interleaving." The students wrote their notes on these sheets and pasted them into the textbook alongside the work of literature being studied. I still have three volumes of English poems with the interleaving notes still in them.

## **HAYES, LOUISIANA TRIP**

Last Wednesday we made a sort of “sentimental journey” to Hayes where we began our teaching career in Louisiana in September of 1925.

The primary purpose of the trip was to visit with Mrs. Alvin Hayes, “Aunt Maggie” to practically everyone in the Hayes-Bell City area.

Mrs. Hayes was born a Gibbs and is an aunt to Jack Gibbs of DeQuincy. She is 90 and is beginning to feel the effects of a lifetime of service and devoted work, not just to her own family, but to the entire community. Just three or four years ago she was teaching adults much younger than herself to read and write as part of the state’s adult education program, this in spite of the fact that she was not trained as a teacher in her younger years.

We first met Mrs. Hayes early in September of 1925, when we first arrived in Hayes and moved into the former Prosper Verret home and Mrs. Hayes’ home was back-to-back with ours. The T.S. Cooleys had just moved out of the Verret house to go to Bell City where Mr. Cooley had just been made principal of the Bell City School. The Cooley cow was still in Hayes and Mrs. Hayes was caring for her and milking her.

Mrs. Hayes had come across the fence to milk the cow and when I told her that we did not have a source of supply for milk and furthermore were expecting a baby in February, she immediately offered to share the milk with us. Fresh milk was not on sale in the stores in Hayes then. She also offered to help in any other way possible, including putting us in touch with the Welsh doctors, Drs. R.R. Arceneaux and Claude Martin, who practiced in the Hayes community.

Sure enough, when our two girls were born, one in 1926 and the other in 1928, Mrs. Hayes was on hand to assist, giving them their first baths and putting on their first clothes; kids were born at home then and not in hospitals.

Mrs. Hayes’ brother, Albert Gibbs, “Boog” to his friends, a bachelor of 85, a veteran of World War I, and a retired drawbridge tender for the Southern Pacific at the bridge over Bayou Lacassine east of Hayes, recalled how he taught our oldest daughter to crawl by putting a red Prince Albert tobacco can out in front of her and calling to her. Boog was an awfully good substitute uncle or grandpa for a lot of kids about that time.

Mrs. Hayes’ mother, who was born a Broussard and who was still alive at that time but bedfast, was one of the older generation French-speaking Creoles who had been convent-educated and read and wrote in French everyday and borrowed some French fictional books which I had used in college French classes. She admitted that they were rather “racy” for one of her age but she enjoyed them just the same. Her husband, the late Mr. Gibbs, had served in the Confederate Army.

Hayes is one rural community that has grown in the past generation but in some ways it has not changed, and in some ways a great deal. The streets are now asphalted, there are at least two new church buildings, Baptist and Catholic, the railway station is gone, the Hayes School building is still there with some additions since 1925 but is no longer, as of this year, used as a school, the Hayes students are all bused to Bell City as the high school students have been for some years. The discovery of oil and gas nearby has brought some new people and businesses to town, there is a lumber yard and repair shop specializing in trucks, tractors and other heavy equipment. Felix Hebert’s picture show is gone; Hayes at one time was mentioned in national “movie”

magazine as the smallest town in the United States having a “talking movie”. This was when the sound was on disc records which were synchronized with the film.

One of the familiar landmarks was the Thomas Hayes home which is still occupied by some of his descendants, the Desjardin family. Thomas Hayes, also a Confederate veteran who died about 1926, as I recall, was in his eighties, at the time of his death. It was said at that time that he was buried in sight of the spot where he was born and that he had never lived anywhere else except for the time that he was in the Confederate Army. I tried to find out how long the Hayes family had lived in the community but no one whom I asked knew. “Boog” said that it was an old family in that area when he came there when he was 13, more than 70 years ago.

Mrs. Alvin Hayes’ two surviving children are Louise (Mrs. Sanford) whose husband is a retired pipefitter formerly of Beaumont but now living in Hayes. Their daughter, Dr. Barbara Sanford, teaches at the San Antonio Medical School, a branch of the University of Texas. The younger Hayes daughter is Evelyn who is postmaster at Hayes.

I could not miss the opportunity to go by the old Verret filling station and fill up with gas. The proprietor, Bobbie Verret is, like his late father Dewey Verret, the wholesale agent for Esso in that area. I told the filling station attendant, Mr. Abshire that I bought gas from that station in 1927 when I drove a Model T Ford. The late Prosper Verret, father of Dewey and grandfather of Bobbie, operated a general merchandise business in a whole row of wooden store buildings which were built one at a time as the business grew. I have an idea that Mr. Verret started the business about 1903 when the Lake Arthur branch of the Southern Pacific, legally the Mallard Junction and Lake Arthur, was built.

Starks readers will remember Mr. Jesse Verret who was coach and later principal of the Starks High School, beginning in 1931 and extending into the forties. He is a native of the Hayes area, a cousin to Dewey. I first knew Jesse when he was a high school junior and came to Hayes School to take the bus on to Bell City.

The numbers of the years on the calendar creep upward with a steady and ever increasing velocity it seems, but the memories of Hayes people and their friendly kindness to, in the words of Mrs. Hayes in later years, “a couple of poor little lost lambs” named Ratliff, will never grow dim.

During the summer of 1963 our oldest daughter and her husband, John Ricketts, made a trip to Europe. While in some scenic spot they entered into a conversation with some American servicemen. Dorothy asked one of the young men where he was from. He replied, “From a place you never heard of, Bell City, La.” She replied, “Don’t be too sure about that; I was born at Hayes”. Bell City and Hayes are just two miles apart. I believe she said the young man’s name was Spears.

## ARMISTICE DAY

We have on Oct. 25 observed Veteran's Day in honor of all the veterans of all the wars in which American men and women participated, but I suppose to those of my generation, Nov. 11 will always be Armistice Day. The present conflict in Vietnam, which seems at last to be coming to a close, is unique in American history in that it has produced no great popular heroes; rather "non-heroes" in that we have witnessed the scene of American Army officers tried for alleged crimes against the civilian population of Vietnam. There have been no popular songs heard on all sides, no popular poems about the war, and the men and women serving in it. There have been no popular military figures mentioned as candidates for the presidency or other high office, all of which is contrary to American tradition.

From the American Revolution has come the song "Yankee Doodle," which is still heard occasionally, the tales of Francis Marion, the "Swamp Fox", of Lafayette and George Rogers Clark, as well as many others. George Washington remains the only person to be elected President of the United States by a unanimous vote of the Electoral College.

The War of 1812, sometimes called the Second War for Independence, while bitterly opposed by the New England Federalists and others, produced two hero-generals who were to be elected president: Andrew Jackson and William Henry Harrison, known to this day as "Old Hickory" and "Tippecanoe," respectively. The enlisted men's hero was Sgt. Jasper of Fort Moultrie fame, whose name is perpetuated in the names of Jasper County and the town of Jasper, Texas, and perhaps elsewhere. It was during this war that the words to the "Star Spangled Banner" were composed by Francis Scott Key.

From the Texas War for Independence came the names of Houston, Bonham, Bowie, Crockett, and Travis, whose names have become known wherever English is spoken or read. Houston was probably elected to more high offices than any American who ever lived.

The Mexican War of 1846-48, also opposed by the New Englanders and others, was responsible for the election of Gen. Zachary Taylor ("Old Rough and Ready") to the presidency. On the grounds of the state capital at Baton Rouge is a marker mentioning that his home was in the vicinity. Col. Jefferson Davis of Mississippi, who became a popular hero as a result of a battle at Buena Vista, was to later hold several high offices in the United States Government, but is better known as the President of the Southern Confederacy. While James Russell Lowell, the New England poet, was to write poems ridiculing the war and the men who served in it, Theodore O'Hara was to answer with his stirringly beautiful "Bivouac of the Dead."

The remembered and revered names of the men who served in the Civil War (to Southerners the War for Southern Independence) are a legion: Lee, Jackson, the two Johnstons, Hood, and Beauregard for the South and Grant, Sherman, Meade, and Sheridan for the North are but a few examples. For more than a generation after the war, no man was elected to the presidency who had not served with distinction in the Union Army, and as soon as the former Confederate leaders were restored to their civil rights, they became the leaders of the South. Students of the whole United States still hear and sing the music of the Civil War and the stirring notes of "Dixie" are still heard on the football fields as a "fight song."

While of short duration during the summer of 1898, the Spanish American War brought forth Dewey, Sampson, Schley, and Hopson as naval heroes and legions of American grammar school boys have in their imagination charged up San Juan Hill with Col. Teddy Roosevelt and his Rough Riders, the charge that was to make Roosevelt an American President and a folk hero who is still remembered.

What American who is at least 60 has forgotten “Black Jack” Pershing and the AEF? They are remembered in the songs of George M. Cohan and others with the words and tunes of “Over There” and the more somber words and tunes of “Keep the Home Fires Burning.” Pershing could probably have been elected to any office he wished.

World War II gave us “Ike,” later to be President Eisenhower, and a long list of heroes both major and minor, including the men whose names are listed on that pitiable paper plaque in the hallway of the old DeQuincy High School building, now a part of the Elementary School. Last year I suggested that when the new Elementary Building was completed that a permanent marker bearing the names of ALL the DeQuincy men who died in any war be prepared and placed in a conspicuous place in the new building and that it be dedicated to their memory. Several people have said, “It is a good idea,” but nothing has been done. If it is a “good idea,” what are we waiting for? Another war and some more names?

Allow me on this fifty-fourth anniversary of Armistice Day to end by quoting a few lines from a poem by a young Canadian soldier of World War I who was later to give his life:

In Flanders Fields

*To you from failing hands  
We throw the torch.  
Be it yours to hold it high  
Or we shall not sleep  
Though poppies blow in Flanders fields.*

Note: Last week I used the term “Creole” as applying to Louisiana French-speaking people, and the question has arisen as to the exact meaning of the term. Originally the French and Spanish settlers of America used the term (in Spanish “crillo”) to mean a person of pure European blood born in America.



## **BOREALIS REX STEAMER – MEMORIES AND STORIES**

There are probably hundreds of older people in this area who had close contact with the steamer Borealis Rex and who remember more about her than I, but there are also younger people and new comers to this area who were born or arrived in the locality since The Rex made her last voyage between Lake Charles and Cameron who never heard of her. The Rex was one of the last sternwheeler packet boats operating as a common carrier of passengers, freight, express, and mail on a regular schedule. There are a few river steamers still operating but it is my understanding that they are mere excursion boats and not common carriers.

According to Miss Grace Ulmer, who wrote a Master of Arts thesis in Louisiana history at LSU in 1949, there was an earlier steamer also called The Borealis Rex which plied between Lake Charles and Cameron. She says, citing the Lake Charles Echo of March 15, 1882, "A boat called the Borealis Rex was owned by Captain Thomas R. Reynolds, proprietor of The Haskell House and was also used as a pleasure craft. This boat caught fire under her boiler on Sunday, March 12, 1882, and was completely burned. This Rex could not have been the same Borealis Rex, commanded by Captain McCain, which I first saw in 1925, though the circumstances except for the date and the fire sound familiar.

This later Borealis Rex, if the information I have is correct, was built for use on one of the upper tributaries of the Mississippi, and when she was no longer needed up there she was brought to the Calcasieu River and placed on the Lake Charles – Cameron run, when I do not know. The same source says that she was sunk by the 1918 storm, but she was raised and returned to service.

During these years the town of Cameron and the other communities in Cameron Parish were pretty well isolated as far as the outside world was concerned. One newspaper story referred to Cameron as the town without a highway to the outside world, a telephone, a railroad, or a telegraph line. Early engineers are quoted as saying that it was impossible to build either a railway or a highway through the sea marshes to Cameron. Many Cameron people used boats when others used cars or horse-drawn vehicles. A man who was to be hanged in Cameron was confined in the Lake Charles jail until the date of execution and then taken by boat to Cameron. The Lake Charles American Press chartered a small sea plane to fly a reporter to Cameron to witness the execution and write the story.

The Rex left her dock at the foot of Pujo Street in Lake Charles each Monday morning loaded with the mail, all sorts of cargo and passengers. I recall one time seeing several saddled horses on the lower deck, I assumed that they belonged to cattlemen, perhaps some of the family of the late R.L. Richard of DeQuincy, on the way to Cameron to work cattle.

As the Rex proceeded down the stream, she made regular stops at such places as Hackberry. She also made other stops on signal, "Flag stops," in railroad terms. The late Mrs. Agnes Vincent Richard (Mrs. R.L. Richard of DeQuincy) told me that when she was growing up in the Vincent community there was a landing called Vincent's Landing and when the Rex had passengers or freight for the people of the community, Captain McCain would blow the whistle, "Blow for the landing," was the term I believe, and everyone in the community who was free went down to "meet the Rex." If someone in the community had passengers or freight for the Rex, a flag was put out on the wharf and she stopped.

I cannot at this time give any specific figures as to her size, but at the first time I saw her she was the biggest boat I had ever seen and was probably as big as any boat on the river. She had three decks, as I recall. There were no state rooms such as were found on the larger Mississippi river boats, since Rex' passengers did

not spend the night on board. I do not believe that meals were served on board, though a noon meal may have been served.

When the Rex arrived, passengers who did not live in Cameron or who were not visiting with relatives or friends spent the night at the local hotel for at least one night, as there was no public way to return to Lake Charles on Thursday and repeat on Friday and Saturday. She arrived in Lake Charles about noon. On Sunday she was frequently chartered by groups for a Saturday night or Sunday afternoon cruise. According to C.E. Cline of DeQuincy, who grew up in Lake Charles, these cruises were ideal for “courting” and several modern families trace their origin to these romantic moonlight cruises.

On the return trip the cargo frequently included fish, oysters, shrimp, and furs and other products of the gulf and marsh. If I were in Lake Charles on Saturday I always tried to get down to the dock to see the Rex come in and when one of the Bell City Delaneys introduced me to Captain McCain, it was a proud moment for me. My family and I frequently discussed making a trip to Cameron on the Rex, but for various reasons we never made it until it was announced that the “impossible” highway to Cameron was now open and that the Rex had made her last trip.

She was tied at the dock at the foot of Pujo Street, where she eventually sank. During World War II she was stripped of her metal parts and the wooden hull gradually rotted away. Someone in Lake Charles has her bell and someone else the steering wheel, and possibly there are other relics in other hands. The final resting place of the Borealis Rex (Northern King) is now covered by the fill in the lake at Lake Charles.

A LETTER from an old friend, Millard Martin of Houston, formerly of DeQuincy, says that the village of Hayes was probably established by William Hayes, the father of Thomas Hayes shortly after 1800. William Hayes was the brother of Rebecca Hayes who married Zachariah Martin II in 1815. This couple was the great-great-grandparents of Millard. The Martins, Millard and Audrey, hope to return to DeQuincy when he retires from work with the M.O.P. This sort of thing is what makes writing this column interesting and rewarding.

## THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving – giving thanks! For 350 years more or less intermittently, Americans have theoretically paused for one day at this season of the year to give thanks to God for the blessings received during the past year. As we said last year, traditionally Thanksgiving goes back to the Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony of Massachusetts, but Virginians dispute the claim of the Pilgrims as to the origin of the day, claiming that the Jamestown settlers observed a day of Thanksgiving before the Pilgrims arrived in Plymouth. So, if we give thanks what shall it be for?

First, several of the original thirteen English colonies were founded by groups seeking a land where they might worship God according to their understanding of God's will. True, some of them were not willing to grant equal rights to other fellows to worship according to the way they understood God's will, but the germ of the idea of religious freedom was there. On Thomas Jefferson's tombstone are chiseled these words: "Author of the Virginia statue for religious freedom."

The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States reads, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the exercise thereof." The state constitutions generally have a similar statement. As a result Americans are free to exercise their religious beliefs as far as it is possible to make them free by law. As another result, there are more than 300 religious bodies in the United States and any man who cannot find a church which satisfies his spiritual needs is free to start one that does meet his needs. Let us GIVE THANKS FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM!

Associated with religious freedom almost from the beginning has been the right to an education. Indeed the first public schools in the United States were established so that people would be able to read the Bible. The colonies early began to make provisions for schools, but not always at public expense, it is true, and not always open to the children of black and Indian parents and other ethnic groups, but still a beginning. The third statement of Jefferson's grave marker reads, "Father of the University of Virginia." Today both intensive and extensive efforts are being made to guarantee that every American child, regardless of ethnic background or economic status, has the opportunity to gain as much education as he is capable of acquiring. True, the effort is not 100 percent successful, but no generation of any nation is trying harder to make education available to everyone. Some time ago I read a statement that there are more black people graduating from college every year in the United States than there are graduating from all the colleges and universities in all the nations of Western Europe. Americans are free to study any subject or science they choose. LET US GIVE THANKS FOR EDUCATIONAL AND INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AND OPPORTUNITY!

Man is an emotional being and must give vent to his emotions in some way or he becomes tense and pent up inside himself. Again an American is free to obtain the emotional release almost as he pleases, as long as he does not harm his fellow man or his property. To some singing songs of praise to God meets this need; to others, cheering for "the team" at an athletic contest will bring the desired release from tensions. Some, like the Apostle Peter, find release in fishing, others in hunting. Some of us need only to contemplate the beauty of the stars, a gorgeous sunrise or sunset, to walk through the calm woods, view the blooming flowers or listen to the songs of the birds to find all the release needed. The primitive Germans are said to have found release in the flash of the lightning and the crash of the thunder and I have known a few people who still enjoy to some extreme these awesome manifestations of the weather's power. To others a book, a poem, a musical rendition or just being with friends and loved ones is enough. FOR WHATEVER FILLS OUR EMOTIONAL NEED LET US GIVE THANKS!

It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone," but the same Speaker also recognized the need of bread in the feeding of the Five Thousand. Americans are blessed with more of everything in a material way than any other people who have ever lived. Part of this is because the North American continent has been blessed with a greater variety and abundance of natural resources than any other part of the world. We have been blessed with keen minds, skilled hand, and the will and freedom to make use of these resources to reach our present stage of development. I challenge you to select the poorest American family you know about and I believe that a vast majority of the people in the world would gladly change their economic status for that of the American family. How long we shall be able to maintain this superior status is within the hands of God and ourselves. **LET US GIVE THANKS FOR MATERIAL BLESSINGS AND SHARE WITH OTHERS!**

D.C. Littlepage has called my attention to the fact that in the column devoted to Armistice Day, wherein I mentioned the various wars in which the United States has engaged, I failed to mention the services rendered by the National Guard along the Rio Grande just before World War I when it seemed necessary that we guard against the possibility of troubles of the Mexican revolution spreading across the river. Mr. Littlepage said he fought the fleas and sandstorms while serving in the Texas National Guard, but fought nothing else.

The late George Black of DeQuincy served in the United States Cavalry with Gen. John J. (Black Jack) Pershing on the expedition into Mexico following the raid of the famous Mexican General Francisco (Pancho) Villa at Columbus, New Mexico, on March 16, 1916. The main benefit the United States derived from both of these affairs was the experience that the men of the National Guard and the Regular Army of the Pershing expedition received which was available to them later in World War I.

Mrs. Martina Van Dyke Hundley Brignac called to say that when she was a girl about 10 years old her family lived across the Calcasieu River and downstream from Vincent Landing on what was then called the Haymark place, but is now the Shell Tank Farm. Their place was a regular landing for the steamer Borealis Rex and Mrs. Brignac's father, the late John Van Dyke, met the Rex on each stop, received the mail from her and distributed it among the neighbors. Mrs. Brignac met her husband, the late Edward Hundley Sr., on one of the moonlight cruises which were so popular among the younger people of the time.

## **HISTORICAL NOVELS, MOVIES, AND TELEVISION SHOWS**

Since I read my first G.A. Henty historical novel and saw my first historical movie I have been addicted to what has been called “the sugar-coated method” of learning history. The problem is now that I find myself continually noticing the historical inaccuracies in these works, especially the TV “western.” For example, I doubt that some of the actors in these shows ever drove a horse-drawn vehicle in real life. They apparently do not even know how to hold the reins. I never saw anyone who drove a horse or team to a vehicle who held a rein in each hand; usually they were in the left hand, leaving the right hand free to handle the whip or to operate the brake on vehicles having a brake. No good buggy horse or team was ever permitted to gallop or “lope;” they either trotted or paced, and in a race if a horse broke his gait and started galloping, he was automatically disqualified in horse shows and harness races.

In old western towns it was up to the town Marshall and his deputies to maintain law and order, not the United States Marshall. The favorite weapon of these municipal officers was a breech loading double barrel shotgun, either ten or twelve gauge, loaded with buckshot. These officers were not too scrupulous about shooting “wanted” outlaws on sight, armed or unarmed from the front or back. The much-despised “bounty hunter,” despised on TV, served a useful purpose in keeping outlaws under control where regular law enforcement officers were lacking. Deputy United States Marshalls were sometimes in a sense bounty hunters in that they worked for reward money rather than a salary.

Another objection to TV western serials is that the hero and other prominent male characters are never permitted to marry. The fact is that any girl or woman over fifteen years old usually married “early and often,” as often as they were left a widow which might be frequently. One old timer said, “We married any woman who got off the train as soon as possible.” The “Harvey Girls” made famous by the late Judy Garland in the movie of that name, were choice brides and many a lonely rancher fondly imagined that if he would just marry a Harvey Girl he would not only have the pleasure of her company but that she would continue to serve him the satisfying meals like those he ate at the Harvey House along the Atchinson, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroads. Little did he realize that it took the whole Harvey organization, not just the neat and pretty waitress, to prepare and serve those meals. Still, numerous modern families in Santa Fe territory now boast that “Grandma was a Harvey Girl.” She was the prototype of the modern airline stewardess. Within my own memory of fifty years ago and more, in Texas a young lady teacher, especially a home economics teacher, could be married or at least engaged at the end of her first school year if she chose.

My chief complaint with post Civil War movies and TV programs is that the deep-eyed villain is usually a former Confederate soldier. I admit that there were some rather unsavory characters among the broken men of the South, but the ex-Confederates were not all villains and outlaws, and the Northern army had its share of disreputable characters. On the screen any man who “rode with Quantrill” is pictured as the lowest sort of character. It is true that Quantrill was not a very desirable character and deserved his fate, but there were good people, Southern sympathizers, along the Kansas-Missouri border, who thought Quantrill was a hero. The Civil War started along this border several years before it started back east in 1861, and continued for some time unofficially, long after the surrender of the Southern armies. In the spring of 1922, while teaching at Sagerton, Tex., I boarded for a time with Mr. and Mrs. W.P. Caudle. Mr. Caudle’s father had been the colonel of the 34<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry CSA and came to know Quantrill personally and respected him as a hard and efficient guerilla fighter. The W.P. Caudle’s oldest son was named for Quantrill. The last I knew of him, “Quant” Caudle was still living somewhere in west Texas near Spur.

It used to be said that one could tell whether a Missouri family was pro-Union or pro-Confederate by their attitude toward Jesse James. To Union people James was an outlaw and nothing more; to pro-Confederates he was a folk hero. To pro-Confederates the reward hunting traitor Bob Ford was this:

*“The dirty little coward  
Who shot Mr. Howard  
And laid poor Jesse  
In his grave.”*

John D. Cranor of DeQuincy, a Missouri native, says his grandfather was a Union officer who helped run the James boys out of the state. Former President Harry Truman’s family were pro-Confederates and could have admired Jesse. My grandfather Ratliff, who lived for a time as a youth on the Tennessee-Missouri border, told a story to the effect that Jesse James was sheltered by the family one night and that the next morning when a posse came by looking for Jesse the family denied having seen him. My grandfather’s father had died in the Confederate Army.

The late Henry Blankenship, father-in-law of the late George Black, told this story: the Blankenship family lived in the James territory and owned some good horses. One morning they went to the stable and one of the better horses was missing, but in his stall was a good stallion who showed signs of being exhausted from hard riding. On the stable wall was a short note reading, “Keep him. He is valuable.” The horse was recognized as one owned by Jesse James. The Blankenship family kept the stallion, who became the sire of numerous good colts.

To the small farmers and homesteaders, the railroads, express companies, and eastern-owned banks were “oppressors of the poor” and such men as the James boys, Cole Younger, Sam Bass, and others, as long as they confined the robberies to the organizations named above, were folk heroes in the best Robin Hood tradition – to be defended and protected in life and sung about in death:

*“Sam Bass was born in Indiana,  
It was his native home.  
At the age of seventeen  
Young Sam began to roam.  
He roamed out to Texas  
A cowboy for to be,  
A kinder hearted fellow  
You’d hardly ever see.”*

## THANKSGIVING TRIP TO SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA

I suppose that this might be considered a sort of travelogue of a trip beginning at DeQuincy, up La. Highway 27 to DeRidder thence to Shreveport via U.S. 171, returning via La. 1 to Natchitoches, thence over a short section of La. 6 to Hagedwood, then over La. 117 to Leesville and back to U.S. 171. At this season of the year the autumn leaves of the hardwood trees intermingled with the velvety green of the pines to make a picture worthy of brush of an artist.

Skipping for the present the stories of the towns such as DeRidder and Zwolie whose names and origins are connected with the building of the KCS, those like old Wasey and Ludington, whose names originated with the timber industry and Fort Polk where scores of thousands of United States Army men have trained, the first town of interest in this column is New Llano. New Llano located between Fort Polk and Leesville is the site of one of the last of several communities in the United States devoted to the ideal of communal, cooperative living based on the Socialistic doctrine of "from each according to his ability and to each according to his needs". Originally a sawmill town called Staples (some accounts call it Stables) the town was sold, when the lumbering industry was no longer profitable, to a group from California who had tried such a community called Llano del Rio and had failed for the same reasons that such experiments have always failed in free enterprise America. The story of New Llano is worth a whole book which may be written yet by someone. The experiment lasted until just before the outbreak of World War II.

On Monday afternoon, before starting on this trip on Tuesday, I was talking with Joe Clement and "Butch" Treme about a deer hunt Joe had made and I remarked that in over forty years of travelling over the highways and back roads of this area I had never seen a live wild deer. Less than twenty-four hours later, about five or six miles north of Many, a good sized buck with a good rack of horns came bounding out of the woods to the left, crossed the highway just ahead of us, sailed over the fence to the right, and disappeared. It was suggested that he was being chased by hunters with hounds but we saw no evidence of them.

Mansfield always brings back dimly remembered stories my grandfather, David W. Pace of Texas told about that area. He and his brother John were members of Company I – Sixteenth Texas Cavalry (Dismounted) CSA. They participated in the battle of Mansfield on April 8, 1864 and the battle of Pleasant Hill the next day. I understand that there are at least two buildings still standing in Mansfield which were there during the Civil War, one of them was at that time the main building of Mansfield Female College which was used as a hospital after the battles and is now, the lower floor at least, a residence. The Mansfield Episcopal Church is dedicated to the memory of the men, both Federal and Confederate, who fell in the battles.

Shreveport itself is a modern city with a historic past. The stories of Captain Henry Shreve and the clearing of The Great Raft from the Red River and the establishment of the landing and trading post which became Shreveport (some old timers still call it Shreve's Port) have been told man times by many writers and with the stories of events during the Civil War, such as the establishment of a fort nicknamed Fort Humbug because of the wooden "humbug" cannon mounted along its battlements belong to the story of the war and not here.

One of the interesting things to me is that the traveler on U.S 171 is rarely out of sight of the timber lands, mostly pines mingled with some hardwoods. There are almost no cultivated fields along the highway which follows the undulations of the hills and valleys. Yet just a few miles to the east La. Highway 1 is almost flat as it follows the Red River Valley between Natchitoches and Shreveport. Most of the way the traveler has the levee along the river and the Texas and Pacific Railway in sight a few yards away. There are no large towns along the seventy or so miles between the two cities but several communities which suggest to me that they

were once cotton plantations depending on the river for transportation. They still raise cotton and there is usually a gin which still operates. There is usually one main house which might be the successor to the “big house” of a pre-Civil War day. There is usually one store, which now included a filling station and several smaller homes. There may also be a school and a church. Some of the field workers homes have been abandoned and have fallen into ruins. In the old days the fields would have been filled with cotton pickers at this time of the year but now one sees cotton picking machines, trucks and tractors to replace the plantation mules. The former plantation workers have gone to the cities seeking, too often non-existent jobs, in industries and contributing to the problems of the cities.

At Natchitoches the traveler may turn west along La. Highway 6, once called by the Spanish El Camino Real (The Royal Highway) and to old time Texans The San Antonio Road, the road that St. Denis took in 1714 into Mexico, later the road of most of the Filibusters and the Texas colonists and Gen. Zachary Taylor’s army in 1846.

At Hagewood, also called Coldwater, one turns southwest on La. Highway 117 and for nearly fifty miles winds down through the Kisatchie National Forest and again there are no fields, few people but some cattle. This is also part of the Fort Polk training ground. This is no road for the person who is in a hurry, the posted speed limit is usually forty-five miles per hour; but if you are in no hurry the drive is a relaxing, pleasant experience. The highway joins U.S. Highway 171 at Leesville.

As was mentioned in the column about the steamer Borealis Rex there are probably hundreds of people who know about the Rex. Mrs. Louis Cruickshank remembers as a small girl going on the excursions and watching the older people dance to the tune of The Whang Whang Blues. J.B. (Jimmy) Ellender of DeQuincy travelled on the Rex many times as a young man and C.E. Cline says that there are several “second generation” families in Lake Charles who also travelled and “courted” on the Rex.



## MERRY CHRISTMAS

Again it is time to say “Merry Christmas”, to tell again the story of the Christ Child, of the Shepherds in the fields watching their flocks by night, the Three Wise Men and to sing and listen to the traditional Christmas Carols; a time to attend church and hear the familiar Mass and sermons, time to visit with loved ones and send the familiar Christmas cards, a ritual within itself.

A recent news story says: John Calcott Horsley, 19<sup>th</sup> century British artist, designed the first Christmas card in 1843 for Sir Henry Cole, founder of the Victoria and Albert Museum. Before the year is out, Americans will have bought more than seven billion greeting cards, according to Irving Cohen, president of a card shop chain.

To most Believers Christ was truly the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem of Judea at a time when Caesar Augustus, emperor of the Roman Empire, gave orders that every inhabitant of the empire should return to his birth place to be enrolled and pay his taxes. This order applied to Roman citizens and non-citizens alike and as far as we know Joseph, the husband of Mary, was not a citizen as was Saul of Tarsus, better known as St. Paul or the Apostle Paul. Historians are not able to fix the exact year or even the time of year that Christ was born, but some think that we may be in error from three to six years, that He was born that many years previous to the time from which Christian nations began their calendar. Various dates have been, and still are in some countries, observed as the birthday of Christ.

To the Hebrews of the time His name was Joshua ben Joseph (the son of Joseph), Jesus being the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua. To some professing Christians He was the son of Joseph and Mary with nothing supernatural about His birth, but that He was possessed of an insight and understanding of the principles of Godly living, love and charity to a far greater extent than any other person who has ever lived. To them He was the greatest of a long line of great Teachers who have lived and taught before and since His time. A great many Hebrews accept Him as the promised Messiah. To the followers of Mohammed, the Moslems, He was a great Prophet but to them Mohammed, who came some 600 years after Christ, was the last and greatest of the Prophets. Some Christian sects believe in and follow other and later prophets, but also believe that Christ was the Son of God.

Roman and Greek mythology is filled with stories of the demi-god, men and women born of one mortal and one divine parent. Usually the divine parent was the father and the mother of a mortal, but there were cases where the reverse was believed. I have often wondered what effect these myths had on the willingness of the Greeks and Romans to accept the story of the Virgin Birth of Jesus! Did it make it easier for them to accept the story of the birth of Christ or did they thrust the story aside as “just another story of a miracle working demi-god”? The effect probably varied with the individual and the Athenians do not seem to have been greatly impressed by Paul’s preaching.

No one knows for sure what Jesus looked like in his physical body. There are no detailed descriptions of Him in the Bible and if there were any contemporary pictures painted of Him they would not have survived. The artists of each ethnic group have tended to paint Him like one of themselves. I doubt that He was the blue-eyed blonde with flowing brown hair and beard like most western artists have painted Him. The earliest pictures which now exist go back to about two centuries after Christ and show Him as resembling the brunette Semitic people of the Middle East. This seems more logical to me, as He was in the flesh a Jew.

I doubt that He was the rather delicate, almost effeminate person as He is generally portrayed. One of the Hebrew prophets described Him as having no physical beauty.

After all, if tradition is correct, that tradition is about all we have, He worked as a village carpenter during the years from the time He was in the Temple at the age of twelve until He was about thirty when He began His ministry. Carpenter tools of the time were rather crude by modern standards, no power saws, and no hard steel cutting tools such as knives, chisels and planes. A carpenter had to be rather strong and well muscled to handle these tools. Life was rugged and only the strong survived long. I imagine that Mary must have been a rather sturdy young woman herself, she had to be to endure what she endured and she may have passed her strength on to her Son; mothers do that today.

What He was like physically is not important now. The important thing is that He went about doing good; feeding the hungry, healing the sick, the blind, the lame, comforting the comfortless and above all teaching men principles by which they could live in this life; principles of right conduct, ideals of love and forgiveness, the ideal of sharing with each other and giving answer to the question that has troubled men from the first and which Job put into words:

“If a man die, shall he live again”?

Even if He were not the Son of God, He still remains as the Greatest Life ever lived and is worthy of the respect and honor we pay Him at this season. May the Peace and Love of God be with you all as we observe the birthday of His Son!

A most enjoyable recent experience was a conversation with Mrs. J.B. Whitfield and her daughter Wanda, now Mrs. Richard Ketchum of Baton Rouge. Wanda was in at least one of my classes before World War II but I had not talked with her since June of 1943 when she, as a member of the personnel staff at the Consolidated Steel shipyard in Orange, interviewed me when I applied for a summer job with Consolidated. After a career in the Air Force, Mr. Ketchum is employed with a chemical company in Baton Rouge. The Ketchums have five children and two grandchildren.

Mrs. Whitfield recalled that in “dear, dead days beyond recall” if a person wanted to take the KCS train from DeQuincy to Lake Charles and was a few minutes late all that was necessary was to call the depot and the train would wait for the passenger.

## NEW YEAR THOUGHTS

Again it is time to say "Happy New Year", to send, somewhat embarrassedly perhaps, New Years Cards to those friends and loved ones who sent us Christmas cards but whom we overlooked then. It is also time to hang up the new calendar, if we have not already started using one of the new ones which include a page for December of 1971. It is time to stop and take stock of all the blessings of 1971 and to recall with sorrow the losses and tragedies of the old year. It is a time to make the traditional New Year resolutions which even if we do not always keep them are still good for us, so the psychologists tell us. Pretty soon the IRS will be sending out the new Income Tax forms and we shall be getting ready for April 15 and perhaps to call for some professional help with the pesky Form 1040. Perhaps it will be of some comfort if we recall a remark by Clyde (Doc) Walker of some years back, "At least you cannot go broke paying your income taxes".

Speaking of calendars, they come in all sizes and types; ranging from a small plastic card which fits well into bill folds to a large work of art; these last frequently offering a beautiful or educational picture ad as well as data of all sorts. A good calendar will answer questions which might be difficult to answer from other sources.

Our calendar is based on the revolutions of the earth on its axis each twenty-four hours and the orbiting of the earth around the sun. In spite of the best efforts of the scientists, astronomers, and others, all calendars are not exactly accurate and can never be. We base our year on 365 days, each twenty-four hours long, but the orbit of the earth around the sun is not exactly 365 days but approximately three hundred, sixty-five and one fourth days long. Each fourth year we add an extra day to February to take up the slack. Even then we fall behind just a little each year. The astronomers know in detail just how much and how it all happens. Until the year 1582 A.D. the western world had been using the Julian calendar of the Romans but in that year the more accurate Gregorian calendar came into use. By the middle 1870's the calendar was eleven days behind the natural or sun calendar. In 1750 the British Parliament passed an act providing for setting up the calendar eleven days, to take effect in 1752. For example we celebrate George Washington's Birthday on February 22, but he was actually born on February 11, 1732 Old Style. In some sections there were riots protesting against the change, people felt that they had been cheated out of eleven days of their life. Perhaps we get the same feeling when at the beginning of Daylight Savings Time we set our clocks up an hour. We get the same feeling when we travel eastward and set our clocks up one hour when we cross a Time Zone line.

Some astronomers claim that the huge Aztec Calendar Stone which can be seen in the Museum in Mexico City was more accurate than the one the Spaniards were using when they landed in Mexico in 1521.

There are several schemes advocating for improving the calendar. The most common one perhaps is based on the idea of thirteen months in the year, each month being twenty-eight days long. Sunday would always fall on the first, the eighth, the fifteenth and twenty-second day of each month and the other days would fall into line automatically with Monday on the second, the ninth, the sixteenth, and twenty-third of the month, etc. There would be no need to consult a calendar to locate the date. Thirteen times twenty-eight is only three hundred sixty-four, so an extra day would be added at the end of December 28 each year which would not be accounted as a regular day but would be celebrated as New Year or Year Day. Each four years there would be two days to celebrate and at long intervals another day to keep the calendars in line with the sun. However, I am not expecting this change to be made in my lifetime, so I shall continue to hang up the new calendar on January 1 or perhaps a few days earlier.

This issue of your DeQuincy Journal will complete two full years of these columns; there were quite a few of them late in 1969 but they have been weekly beginning in January of 1970. When we started them neither the publishers of the two papers or I had any idea that we would make them weekly, but it happened.

The only “contract” between us was that I would try to write them and the paper would print them until they or I decided that they had run their course or you, the subscribers to the papers, decided that you had had enough. In either case they would be dropped and no “hard feelings” either way. The only reward so far as I am concerned is the fun of doing them and the kind words you, the readers, have spoken or written either to the papers or to me directly. You have been very kind and indulgent and I thank you. Our “contract” has been renewed and “The Lord saying the same” we shall try to continue for the year 1972.

In the meantime, I wish a happy, prosperous and health 1972 to you all. May the love of God and your fellow man fill your lives.

## KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN TRAIN TO LAKE CHARLES

The conversation with Mrs. J.B. Whitfield concerning the “good old days” when the KCS would hold the Lake Charles train for a passenger who was late in reaching the depot called to mind other things about the earlier passenger trains and the services rendered to the travelling public. Within my memory the KCS has used three different types of passenger service between DeQuincy and Lake Charles; at one time the regular Shreveport-Port Arthur train, “The Flying Crow” made a round trip down to Lake Charles and return and then resume its regular run either to Shreveport or Port Arthur, at another time there was a short “plug” grain which ran between DeQuincy and Lake Charles, making connection with the “Flying Crow” at DeQuincy, the last service rendered was a bus which made a daily round trip between Lake Charles and DeQuincy and connecting with the train. The late Paul Johnson was a KCS conductor in those earlier days.

When railways were new in America an effort was made to give the Conductor the title of Captain and endow him with some of the absolute authority exercised by ship captains. Why the title of “Captain” for Conductors did not come in general use I am not sure. Some of the early passenger trains competed with the river steamers for the passenger business and a situation arose which caused some of the “gentlemen” passengers on the trains to denounce the train “Captains” as “no gentlemen”. The custom was that when a river steamer docked to discharge and receive passengers or cargo the “gentlemen” passengers adjourned to the nearest bar to indulge in some convivial drinking and fellowship. When the boat was ready to depart the captain sent members of the crew to the bar to remind the passengers that the boat was ready to depart and if necessary the crew members “escorted” the passengers back to the boat. When the train “Captain” refused to render this service he was denounced as “no gentleman”. Some of the larger river boats had a bar on board as did some of the more elite transcontinental trains in states where it was legal. The bars were closed when the trains were in a “dry” state.

One of the problems for the passenger on a long train trip was that of meals. Some passengers carried their own “shoe box lunches”, some trains had a “news butch” who passed through the coaches selling sandwiches, cookies, candy, peanuts and sometimes fruit as well as books and periodicals, soft drinks and coffee. Some lines had railroad “eating houses” such as the Harvey Houses on the Santa Fe, and the Van Noy Interstate Company which once had a restaurant in the KCS “Y” in DeQuincy. The MOP also had a meal stop at DeQuincy but I think the case was locally owned and operated. I can almost still hear the porter on the old Wichita Valley train between Wichita Falls and Abilene calling out in his deep-toned voice, “Stamford, Stamford Change cars for the M.K. &T. and the Stamford and Northwestern. Twenty minutes for supper”. Those who wanted supper went to the “eating house” in the depot.

Another system of feeding the passengers was that of the “chicken and bread” peddler. Before railway cars were air-conditioned the passenger could raise the windows and since they were not screened the passengers could communicate with people on the platform. In some towns there was someone who prepared some sort of food which he sold to passengers on the train and since the commonly sold food was fried chicken and a hot bread of some sort these towns were known as “chicken and bread towns”. Decatur, Texas was on the Fort Worth and Denver railway. Now was a story that when Will Watts, the “chicken and bread man” at Decatur, was ready to buy a home he paid for it with small change which represented his savings from the “chicken and bread” business. Of recent years I am discovering that some of the tales I heard at Decatur over fifty years ago were true, some were true to some extent, and some not true at all. The story of Will Watts may fall into either category.

As late as October 1970 the Sothern Pacific had two types of meal service on the Sun Set Limited; the regular dining car service and the buffet car. This last operated on automatic or slot machine systems.

Passengers who used this service usually enjoyed it; the food was good, the cost was less than that in the diners and there was a sort of relaxed atmosphere that most of us enjoyed. The Santa Fe had a restaurant in the depot at Barstow, Calif., but did not have the buffet car that I recall.

On the old fashioned open vestibule coach, which some smaller and branch lines used until fairly recent times people who went from one car to another were momentarily outside. There is a story that the man who was the prime mover for the establishment of Abilene Christian College at Abilene, Tex., was a minister from Tennessee with a dream of starting a school somewhere in west Texas. He was on his way to San Angelo, Texas to discuss the plans with a group of well-to-do cattlemen in that section. He was travelling on the old Kansas City, Mexico and Orient Railway (sister line to the KCS). He attempted to go from one coach to another, a puff of west Texas wind blew his hat off and it was lost. Being short of funds he bought a cloth cap to replace his hat and when he appeared before the group of wide-brimmed Stetson-wearing ranchers with his cap they did not take him seriously and did not agree to help establish the school. Later he went to Abilene where another group gave him the backing he sought and a small private academy called Childress Classical Institute, named for one of the supporters of the plan, was established. From that small beginning about sixty years ago came the modern Abilene Christian College, now one of the well known church related colleges of university status in the United States. It is about the same size and rank as our own McNeese State University. If the founder's hat had not blown off the school might have been at San Angelo. If this story is true it is just another example of how small and seemingly unimportant events may change the lives of men and institutions.

## TRADING POINTS IN EARLY DAYS

A FEW DAYS AGO WHILE buying the weekly family groceries I met a number of others doing the same, some of them young mothers with small children riding in the carts, some of them old friends, fellow “senior citizens”. This brought to mind the changes that have come about in the marketing customs of the American family in the generations past.

Today I am within five or ten minutes walking time of several types of stores carrying just about anything in the way of merchandise I would need. Most of these things I could carry home in my hands or the more bulky items could be transported in a push cart of some type; people do this all of the time in some localities. Some stores, the drug stores and some grocery stores, especially deliver goods on phone orders. This leaves out of consideration the lumber yards, the feed stores and other dealers in bulky goods who deliver merchandise all of the time.

Fifty years and more ago when more of the American people lived on farms and ranches most of the people whom I knew usually came to town on Saturday on a weekly basis but sometimes less often to buy the things they needed. Nonperishable staple goods were bought in large quantities, however I have no recollection of seeing people buy flour in barrels, forty-eight pound bags were the largest packages I ever saw but they were sometimes referred to wholesale as a “one fourth barrel.”

GOING BACK ANOTHER GENERATION, my mother was born in 1876 in Collin County, Texas at a time just this side of the frontier days for that area. She spent her girlhood on farms in Collin, Fannin and Cooke counties. I heard her tell how the family, which consisted of the father and mother and fourteen children, usually made the trips twice a year to their major trading point; one trip in the spring and another in the fall after the crops were harvested. Cotton and grain were the main crops. They bought their supplies in large quantities; with fourteen children this last phrase is superfluous. Cotton cloth was probably bought by the bolt. In a family group picture made sometime in the nineties the “baby” of the family, Aunt Edna who was born in 1888, is wearing a dress made from the same material as her mother’s dress. Some of the older girls were already married when the picture was made and had selected their own dress materials. It might be of some interest to say that the art of home weaving had been largely abandoned in the South because northern and English made textiles were cheap, but during the Civil War homespun materials again were common in the South, to be abandoned again after the war.

AS A SMALL BOY I SAW MY mother’s side saddle which she as a young lady rode six or seven miles into town for the family mail. She said that she enjoyed these trips; I suspect that I inherited my love for horses from her.

Going back a couple of more generations my great-grandfather moved from Clarke County, Alabama in 1838 and settled in what was then Red River County, Texas. Red River County was later carved into several other counties, including Collin, Fannin, Cook and Lamar counties. The principal trading point for people of that area was Jefferson, Texas which was at the head of navigation on Big Cypress Bayou which is a tributary of Red River via Caddo Lake. Jefferson at one time was the largest town in Texas. The farmers hauled their cotton and other crops to Jefferson by ox wagon, a trip which a modern truck could make in a matter of a few hours took several days or even weeks then. When the Great Raft was removed from Red River by Captain Henry Shreve and his crew using the “snag boats” which Captain Shreve developed, the water level in Big Cypress fell to such an extent that the river steamers could no longer reach Jefferson with any degree of certainty. A railroad was built from Shreveport to Marshall, Texas and the latter became the trading center. Jefferson dwindled to a small town which today is visited by tourists every year for its historical interest.

The situation in southwest Louisiana was similar to that of northeast Texas. Opelousas, Lafayette, and Alexandria were the principal trading points. About twenty years ago I had the pleasure of talking with a Mr. Judice, an elderly merchant of Scott, Louisiana, who told me that his father and grandfather had operated a store or trading post at Scott before him. He said that as a small boy he had seen settlers come from as far west as the Calcasieu river territory to trade at his grandfather's store. Among the traders were Indians who brought handmade baskets to trade for goods handled by the store. Mr. Judice said that at that time the Judice store was the farthestmost west of any trading post west of Lafayette.

I HAVE SOMEWHERE IN MY FILES an old cartoon of the Out Our Way Series which shows a scene on the Plains frontier. In the background the sun is setting behind a small village, the train is pulling out. In the foreground is a young couple, obviously newlyweds. The bride looks as if she may have been an eastern girl who had married the young rancher. The wagon is loaded with supplies, the road is muddy, the ruts are deep and the team is already tired, and it would be almost impossible to turn around and if they did it would be dark before the young couple could reach the village again. With a look of supreme dismay the young wife is saying, "I forgot the thread". The team is joining the young husband in a look of deepest disgust.

About forty years ago I talked with a man; Ellis Buxton is the name which comes to mind, who told me that his family had lived along the Sabine River for at least four generations. He said that when he was a boy, sometime before 1900, the people along the Sabine raised or produced practically everything they used, but when they needed something from the outside they cut a few logs and floated them down to Orange and traded for what they needed.

In some respects life was much simpler than now, but in other respects "the good old days" were more complicated.



## AMNESIA CASES IN SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA

A recent TV program featured a man who, as a result of a bullet wound in his head, became a victim of amnesia. Such stories, valid or not, are common in all folklores. Here are a couple from southwest Louisiana. The late Mrs. A.T. Carmouche told me the first one over forty years ago.

Some years before World War I some men were harvesting rice on a farm near Lake Arthur, using the now obsolete horse drawn equipment. The binder broke down and one of the men crawled under it to remove the broken part and while under it he raised up suddenly and struck his head against the machine. He suffered a momentary flash of pain which was soon gone and he continued with his work. The same man started to Jennings in a buggy with the broken part but never arrived. Several hours later the horse and buggy were found alongside the road with the broken binder part still in the buggy. No one could remember having seen the driver since the buggy left the rice farm.

SOME TWO YEARS PASSED with no news from the missing man, until one day a cable was received from the American consul in London asking if a man by the name of the missing man had ever lived in Louisiana. Then a few weeks later, the missing man arrived home and told his story.

The last thing he could remember was driving along the road, in his farm life, toward Jennings and passing a large red barn on a farm. Judging from later events he must have caught a Southern Pacific freight train into New Orleans; as the Captain of a British sailing vessel which was in New Orleans later told the Louisiana man that he, the farmer, was found on the dock near his vessel. The captain being in need of an additional laborer on the ship hired the man under a name which he seemed to have made up on the spur of the moment. British sailing captains were not inclined to ask too many questions about the background of the men they employed in unskilled work.

AGAIN ACCORDING TO THE CAPTAIN'S report, for two years the missing rice farmer remained as a member of the crew of the ship, developing some skill in the work as a sailor. The man visited several parts of the world with still no memory of his true name or background. One day when the ship was en route from the Far East to London in some sort of minor accident the Louisiana man was again struck on the head. He was rendered unconscious by the blow and when he recovered he had no memory of having been on the ship, how he got there, or of the name he was using. He said later that when he recovered consciousness he was still driving along the road in the buggy and passing the big red barn. The two years spent on the sailing vessel were completely blank to him and all of his shipmates were strangers. As the story was told to me, he returned home to Louisiana and resumed his life as a rice farmer.

I have never asked a medical doctor or a psychologist if such a story could be true for fear that it might ruin the good story. Who wants to ruin a good story with facts?

The second story has its setting in southeast Calcasieu Parish, Cameron Parish and the Lake Arthur area. The central figure I knew personally during the latter part of 1927 and the first part of 1928.

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South at its meeting in November of 1927 assigned a minister by the name of Johnson or Johnston to a circuit which included the churches of Bell City, Hayes, Grand Chenier and perhaps other churches. He was a middle aged man, somewhat eccentric in his manner and dress who explained his oddities by saying that he had served as a newspaper correspondent on the front lines in France during World War I and that any man who had the experiences he had and saw the things that he saw could never be completely normal again. He denied having any relatives at all. From the

conversations I had with him I would say now that if there is any such ailment as “shell shock” he may have been a victim of it. Otherwise he was an agreeable sort of person and preached some good, thought-provoking sermons. Part of his travelling on the circuit was done by boat, especially from Grand Chenier to Lake Arthur.

One of his churches, Grand Chenier as I recall, raised some money to buy a piano for the church and the Rev. Mr. Johns(t)on was appointed to go to New Orleans and buy the piano. He made the trip from Grand Chenier to Lake Arthur in a boat with two members of the church and thence to Jennings where he was to take the train for New Orleans. He was never seen by anyone who knew him after he reached Lake Arthur.

THE FIRST OBVIOUS ASSUMPTION was that he had embezzled the money and disappeared. The objection to this assumption is that the amount was not great enough to make a crime worthwhile and that he forfeited his salary from his churches, which would have been a greater amount.

Several years after the disappearance of Johns(t)on, a woman with whom I talked at the Lake Arthur Youth Camp told me she suspected that the two men in the boat with whom he made the trip from Grand Chenier had murdered him and stole the money. This woman was a “Yankee” who obviously distrusted and feared Louisiana Cajuns. Mrs. Virgie McCall Lebleu, a native of Grand Chenier, who knew the two men in the boat, firmly denied any such possibility. She said the men were fine outstanding citizens of Cameron Parish who had no need to murder a man for two or three hundred dollars. She had no explanation for the disappearance of the preacher, whom she also knew.

Mrs. A.T. Carmouche, whose husband was the Southern Pacific agent at Hayes, was an outstanding member of the Hayes Methodist Church and a personal friend of Johns(t)on who was her pastor. She checked with the crew of the Sothern Pacific train on which Johns(t)on would have ridden in to New Orleans. The conductor recalled that on about the date mentioned that a middle aged man fitting the pastor’s general description became ill just as the train reached New Orleans and that an ambulance from Charity Hospital was called and the man was taken away to the hospital. Mrs. Carmouche, good and loyal Methodist that she was, thought that the minister had a stroke of amnesia, and wandered off and was lost or perhaps died in the hospital and since his body was unclaimed he was either buried in an unmarked grave or his body sent to the laboratory at Tulane University Medical School for dissection. Tulane medical graduates will know if such a theory is plausible. To me there are only two possible answers; embezzlement or amnesia: charity suggests the latter.

## **TRIPS FROM DECATUR TO ERA, TEXAS IN 1910**

On a recent Sunday after Sunday School we drove over to Orange to eat "Sunday dinner" with the Paul Pearson family, Mrs. Pearson is my sister Frances; has a good visit and were home by five P.M. This would have been impossible fifty or so years ago. Between the years of 1908-1921 my family lived about the same distance, some forty miles or so, from my grandparents and some associated uncles, aunts and cousins who lived just across the water shed ridge between the Trinity and Red Rivers in Cooke County, Texas. This ridge was called locally the Hog Back. During these years we made the trip across to Cooke County three times, and one of those trips was in September of 1912 when my grandfather Pace died.

Cooke County corners Wise County on the northeast and Tarrant County, Fort Worth, is south of Wise County. To make a trip from Decatur to Era in Cooke County, it was necessary to get up early, catch the Fort Worth and Denver train and ride for forty miles in almost the exact opposite direction from Cooke County to Fort Worth and then if all went well, make connections with the Santa Fe in Fort Worth then ride north, making a sort of lopsided "V" forty miles on one side and fifty-four miles on the other. When we reached Valley View, my grandparent's rail shipping point, we would still be thirteen miles from my grandparent's home near Era, which was not on any railroad. My mother often mentioned making the trip, "going home" she called it. I was puzzled by her use of the phrase "going home" because to me "home" was where she, my father and brothers and sisters were. During those thirteen years she never really made the trip by rail.

One day about 1910 my father announced that we were going to make the trip to Cooke County across country by horse drawn vehicle. So, he went to the livery stable, hired a three seated horse-drawn "hack". My mother packed a lunch, we filled a water jug and we started out early upon a summer morning. By noon we made it to the little inland town of Greenwood where, beside a pleasant little shaded stream, we stopped to eat our picnic style lunch. To me, at the age of nine, this was camping out in the best pioneer fashion.

Our next stop was at another inland village, Leo, where we stopped at the blacksmith shop to have a lost shoe replaced on one of the horses. I had already started my career as a "blacksmith" with the Morris brothers, Silas and Archie, and considered myself an expert on horse shoeing, that is knowing how it ought to be done but of course I was too small to undertake the job myself. I stood close by and kept a close eye on the Leo blacksmith to see that he did the job according to the Morris way of shoeing a horse. The Leo man must have done the job to my satisfaction as I have no memory of receiving a fatherly rebuke for correcting an elder. I had already received one such "rebukey" for scraping up an acquaintance with a stranger back at the creek at Greenwood and telling him that we were "camping" up the creek a little way.

After the horse was shod we resumed the trip, stopping at a couple of farm houses to inquire about the roads and to fill up the water jug. The roads were just country roads with no markings or guide marks of any kind, you either knew the road or stopped and asked.

Late in the afternoon we recognized my grandparent's house across the prairie and soon we saw our grandfather, with his long white beard waving in the breeze, standing at the front gate looking for us. We kids started yelling and waving at him and the horses, tired as they were, tried to run away. (This word "runaway" was all one word which had a special meaning both as a verb and a noun and meant that a team or horse had "stampeded" while hitched to a vehicle, sometimes out of fright and sometimes out of "pure cussedness".)

Shortly before my grandmother's death in 1916, it was decided that my mother, some of the older children and my younger sister, Frances, who was then two years old, would make the trip back to Cooke County for a final visit with my grandmother. A Model T "service car" driven by a Mr. Smith was hired and we started out. The

plan was to make the trip and return in one day. For some reason it was decided to make the trip by a longer, more circuitous route, again over unmarked country roads by the “stop and ask” system of navigation. We passed through the town of Sanger fairly early in the morning and continued on for about an hour, following what seemed to be the best roads, but making several turns to the left. After a time the driver saw a town off to the left and suggested that we drive over and get our bearings. We drove up to the school at morning recess and I was delegated to go over and ask where we were. I approached a boy about my age who appeared to be harmless and asked, “Boy, what town is this?” He was brief and to the point, “SANGER”. We had left Sanger about an hour earlier but the new approach was from a different side and the driver did not recognize it as being the same place.

We finally reached my grandmother’s house but on the way a rough jolt on the road broke the frame of the car just under the hood. This was before the day of modern welding techniques and the best the local blacksmith could do was to use a sort of “splint” brace with straps and bolts. We did not get home until late the next day after what was planned as a one day trip.

About ten years ago I made the same trip from Era to Decatur over a modern paved highway in about forty minutes without driving over the legal speed limit. Those may have been “the good old days”, but as for most things to me these are the “good days.”

## MOVIES - GREAT AND OLD

Recently a syndicated columnist asked, "What was the greatest movie you ever saw?" I have never been much of a movie fan, but I saw some of the earlier films which were considered "great" at the time.

One of the first that I can remember was a silent film, *The Siege of Troy*, which was based on Homer's *Iliad*, complete with Helen, her husband Menelaus the king of Sparta, her lover Paris of Troy, the wooden horse, various gods, goddesses, demi-gods and plain mortals. There were single combats between various heroes and ending with the final destruction of the city of Troy after the introduction of the wooden horse into the walls.

IT WAS DURING these same years that someone produced a sort of documentary called *THE RAISING OF THE MAINE* which showed the U.S. Navy driving a double circle of piling around the hulk of the battleship *MAINE* which had been sunk in Havana, Cuba harbor in 1898. Mud was pumped into the space between the rows of pilings, forming a more or less watertight cofferdam. Huge pumps were used to pump the water from inside the cofferdam, leaving the *MAINE* more or less dry. As the skeletons of the men were exposed, the hand of one man still wearing his Naval Academy class ring was visible. The man who narrated the film in person at each showing pointed out this gruesome detail.

*THE MAINE* was raised for two purposes; to clear Havana harbor of the wreckage and to determine the cause of her sinking. The United States, at the time, insisted that she was blown up by a torpedo from the outside, planted by the Spaniards. The Spaniards denied planting a torpedo and contended that the explosive originated on board the ship, or if a torpedo was to blame that it was planted by the Cuban insurrectionists; reasoning that it would be blamed on the Spaniards and that the United States would then come to the aid of the Cubans against Spain. Whatever the United States Navy discovered has never been fully revealed. The hulk of the *MAINE* was towed out to the deep sea and re-sunk but the top of the main mast can be seen today as a monument over the graves of the men of the *MAINE* in Arlington National Cemetery. Whatever the cause of the explosion, the result was the Spanish-American War of 1898 which practically meant the end of the Spanish empire and the beginning of the United States as a world power.

THE EARLY "TEENS" of the twentieth century was the era of the Saturday night serial "thrillers" such as *THE MILLION DOLLAR MYSTERY*, *THE DIAMOND FROM THE SKY* and *THE PERILS OF PAULINE* starring Pearl White and Pauline Fredricks. (This is not the Pauline Fredericks who does news casts from the United Nations, though some of us thought they were the same until the modern Miss Fredericks disillusioned us about it.)

In the spring of 1922 I saw Rudolph Valentino in the *FOUR HORSEMEN* of the *APOCALYPSE* at the Majestic Theatre in Fort Worth. This was a silent picture but the Majestic Theatre had an orchestra which played music appropriate to the action of the screen. Seeing it under such circumstances was a very moving experience and one reviewer said, "In the audience fair women wept and strong men swore". A few days later I saw the same show again in a smaller theater in Gainesville, Texas. This time without the background music and the difference in the emotional effect was very evident.

ABOUT THE SAME YEAR I saw *THE BIRTH OF A NATION*, the film which made the director, David W. Griffith, famous. It was based on Thomas Nelson Page's novel *The Clansmen*, which dealt with the situation in a Southern state during the post Civil War Reconstruction era. It has been hailed as one of the early great movies; today it would probably be boycotted and picketed.

Sometimes in my boyhood I saw, and heard, a crude attempt at a talking movie at Capt. E. Blythe's Majestic Theater in Decatur, Texas. There were two short films; one of Al Jolson singing and the other a talk about baseball by John McGraw, manager of the New York Giants. I found out later that there was a phonograph back of the screen producing the sound. The record was supposed to have been synchronized with the film. The first real sound film I saw and heard was at the Aztec Theater in San Antonio, Texas about 1931. I do not recall anything about the story, but I was fascinated by being able to hear the characters in the plot actually talk.

ONE OF THE first "long" movies was ANTHONY ADVERSE which was based on the novel by the same name; one of the earlier modern "long novels". I saw this one at the Paramount in Lake Charles about 1928.

I am sure that there are not many Americans over fifteen years old, if they attend the movies at all, who have not seen GONE WITH THE WIND, either in the original size, or the new wide screen size. Those of us who have seen Clark Gable as the handsome, debonair but somewhat villainous Rhett Butler, Vivian Leigh as Scarlet O'Hara, the beautiful schemer whose motto was, "I'll worry about that tomorrow", Olivia Dehaviland as Melanie, the sweet young Southern belle will probably never be forgotten.

I suppose if I were going to select my all-time favorite it would have to be GWTW, though DR. ZHAVAGO would receive serious consideration.

I WONDER If the reason the Armed Services are not making a serious effort to find and return to duty the thousands of deserters who are said to be still in this country as well as abroad is that they are using it as a cheap way to get rid of useless and undesirable men, saving money on finding them now and on the various G.I. benefits later.

During the Civil War both sides lost thousands of deserters whom they never found until years later when some of them applied for pensions. I remember one old gentleman who had a long and honored career as a minister after the war who, some fifty years after the war applied for a Confederate pension in Texas only to be told that the Muster Roll showed that he had deserted. He did not get the pension. Stonewall Jackson in private life a stern "blue light" Presbyterian Elder but a stern disciplinarian in military matters is said to have had more men shot for desertion and other infractions of the rules than any other officer in either army, Confederate or Federal.

## **ELECTION OF FEBRUARY 1, 1972**

The state election is over; one of the longest drawn out campaigns in Louisiana in many years due to the fact that the Republican and the American parties fielded a slate of candidates for several important state and local offices which they have not been doing until recently. For almost a century the winners of the Democratic primaries always in the second and sometimes in the first, were automatically elected by default of the other parties.

This year the Republican Party, and in a few cases the American Party, named a group of highly respected and capable candidates and waged a hot fight. The Republican Party polled a high percentage of votes from registered Democrats who were disgusted with the alleged corruption in some of the state offices. However, the majority of the Louisiana voters seem to have voted the straight Democratic ticket for various reasons best known to the individual voter.

These reasons may have been from force of habit and tradition, conviction or as I suspect in some cases just plain laziness. This last statement is made because that is the easy way to vote; just pull the main lever above the Rooster and automatically vote for the straight Democratic ticket. In the days of the paper ballots in each voting booth was a rubber stamp pad and one or more pencils with an eraser on the end. The voter who wished to vote a straight Democratic ticket merely dipped the rubber stamp into the ink and stamped the spot inside the circle which surrounded the game cock, "stamping the rooster". Generally there were no other candidates but the Democrats and many people did not bother to vote in the general elections because technically only one vote for the Democratic nominees would elect them. Sometimes, but not often, there might be a "write-in" Independent candidate; generally this was a disgruntled Democrat who was dissatisfied with the results of the primary. I do not recall one who was elected. Newcomers to Louisiana had to be taught that the game cock, not the donkey, is the emblem of the Democratic Party and that the eagle, not the elephant, is the emblem of the Republican Party. If the voter wished to vote a "mixed ticket" he had to go down the line and mark an "X" opposite the names of each candidate of his choice. This was a slow process and none but a very conscientious, dedicated voter would go to that much trouble. It was easier to vote a straight ticket.

Texas had a rather complicated method of marking a ballot. First of all there was a sort of "iron clad pledge" at the head of the ballot by which the voter by casting the ballot pledged himself to support all of the Democratic nominees against all other candidates in the general election. Failing to do so would cause him to be excluded from the next Democratic primary. The voter literally voted against candidates by marking out their names, leaving only the candidate for whom he wished to vote. If he failed to mark out all of the candidates he was against, his ballot was spoiled and would be thrown out by the election officials. Under this system the voter in our recent first primary for governor would have been required to mark out sixteen names. Sometimes a new voter in the state would make an "X" opposite the name of his choice; this would also cause the ballot to be thrown out. In 1924 I helped hold a primary election in Texas and several ballots were thrown out for one of these reasons.

Dr. G.W. McGinty, who taught Louisiana History at Louisiana Technical University, says in his book, *A HISTORY OF LOUISIANA*, "Louisiana did not have a democratic government before the Constitution of 1845. It was something akin to a big planter oligarchy; they ran the government to suit themselves regardless of the label they carried." – "So most of the planters became Whigs after 1832." The Whigs were the conservatives of the time and the Jacksonian Democrats were the liberals.

During the time mentioned by Dr. McGinty a minority of the population enjoyed the right of voting. There were several large blocks of people who did not have the right of suffrage; women, Indians and Negroes.

Most of the black people in the state were still in slavery; however there was around New Orleans a group referred to as “free men of color”, some of them may have voted. The “poor whites” were technically entitled to vote but were often restricted because of property qualifications. They were the Jacksonian Democrats.

The Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery (the Emancipation Proclamation freed few if any slaves) but the black people were still only Freedmen, not citizens. The Fourteenth Amendment made them citizens but still did not insure the right to vote, but the Fifteenth Amendment did so. The Fourteenth Amendment practically barred from voting Southern men who had served the Confederacy in any way. For ten years following 1865 the state government of Louisiana and most other former Confederate States was in the hands of the Republican Party supported by the black voters, hence the name Black Republicans. Southern white men hated the name Republican to such an extent that men like my father believed that if a Southern white man voted the Republican ticket he went to Hell when he died or if he did not he should have. He and his generation learned their politics from the men who went through the Reconstruction era.

When the Reconstruction governments were finally overthrown, 1876 in Louisiana, the Democrats established the “white primary” system which practically excluded blacks from voting and guaranteed that the winner of the Democratic primary would be elected. For almost a century, Republican and other third party members did not usually bother to run for office in the South, knowing that they faced certain defeat. In the General Election now, Republicans and others run for state and local offices and are assured of a substantial vote even if they do not win, which they do in increasing numbers.

Since the “white primary system” has been declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court under a Democratic administration, black citizens who were once Republicans almost to a man now, I understand, are more likely to vote Democratic.

The day may not be far distant when Louisiana will have the open primary system and become a real two party state with the voter having a real choice of party and candidates in the general election. It is worth “sticking around” to see what the outcome will be.



## DR. WILLIAM VALENTINE

Perhaps it would have been more appropriate to have used this story last week during Negro History Week, but nevertheless here it is.

This is a summary of a story I read several years ago in La Revista Rotaria, which is a Spanish, sometimes Portuguese edition of the Rotary Magazine. I have never read the story anywhere else and the original magazine has been lost, so please forgive me if some of my translated memories are not exactly in keeping with the account as originally given in La Revista Rotaria. I do not remember the name of the original author. This is the story as I remember it:

BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR there lived near Montgomery, Alabama a family named Valentine who owned a plantation which was worked by black slave labor. As was fairly common in those days on the plantations, the white and black families used the same name, which was in this case, Valentine. About 1810 a son was born to the white family and as in some plantations, as soon as the sons were of age to start walking around and "exploring their own" a black boy somewhat older was assigned the job of looking after the white boy and keeping him out of danger and trouble, "baby sitting", I suppose might be the modern term for it. Often a deep and lasting relationship of friendship and affection developed between the two boys. This was in the case of the two Valentine boys.

WHEN THE CIVIL WAR CAME on, the two young men joined the Confederate Army and shared the same things, the good and the bad as they had always done. The relationship was that of comrade and friend rather than of master and slave. The white Valentine was wounded and his black comrade cared for him and helped him to return home where the wounded man recovered in time.

At the close of the war the white family gave the black Valentine a tract of land cut from their plantation where he established himself as a farmer. In time he married a girl from the plantation and they became parents of a son.

IN THE MEANTIME some white women teachers representing the Methodist Episcopal Church (Northern Methodist) had established a school near Montgomery. This was a sort of missionary project primarily for black boys and girls but some white boys also attended. One day one of the teachers saw the black Mrs. Valentine on a street in Montgomery with her son and asked the mother to allow her son to attend the school. The mother replied that they were poor and could not afford it. The teacher told the mother that the school was supported by the church and that there was no charge, but if the family had extra farm produce such as eggs, vegetables or milk which they could spare it would be acceptable and be used to feed the less fortunate students. On this basis the boy was enrolled and became one of the better students. In time he became well enough educated to work as a Postal Clerk and to be a part time preacher and teacher. He was especially fond of reading Shakespeare and became a local authority on the great English poet and dramatist. He married and he and his wife became parents of a son, named William if my memory is not at fault.

He was enrolled in the same missionary type school which his father had attended, but this school, like a great many schools of that type, was not equipped to teach much more than the basic subjects, the famous "Three R's". One day young William passed along in front of the Montgomery High School and peeped through the windows where some students (all white) were carrying on chemistry experiments. He was fascinated and told his parents and his teachers that he wanted to study chemistry. When he completed the local missionary school, the teachers made arrangements for him to go to Indiana to attend DePauw University, the alma mater of some of the teachers. When he arrived at DePauw University, he was told that he was not

prepared to enter the university but would have to attend the preparatory department for at least two years. (This was common fifty years ago and most colleges operated a preparatory department.) He accepted the conditions and after six years graduated at the head of his class in the university with a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry. He obtained a graduate scholarship to Yale where he was awarded a Master of Science degree. From Yale he went to a University in Vienna, Austria where he earned the degree of Doctor of Philosophy or perhaps Science, also in chemistry.

RETURNING TO THE UNITED STATES, Dr. Valentine was employed by the Glidden Paint and Varnish Company as a research chemist with the special assignment to investigate the use of soy beans in the manufacture of paint and varnish. At that time cortisone was being used in the treatment of arthritis but it was obtained from the adrenal gland and bile from cattle and was rare and expensive. I do not know if it were by chance or by planned experimentation that Dr. Valentine discovered that cortisone could be prepared synthetically from soy beans. Now cortisone could be produced in any amount and the price fell. Pharmacist Clyde (Doc) Walker told me that he remembers when this happened. Dr. Valentine left the Glidden company and joined a pharmaceutical house, Smith, Kline and French, where he devoted his full time to pharmaceutical research.

At the time I read the original story in La Revista Rotaria, Dr. Valentine, then in his early seventies, had retired and was spending his time traveling over the nation speaking before Rotary Clubs, as he was a Rotarian, and other organizations spreading the ideals of brotherhood and cooperation among mankind.

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B.D. Hammons brought me a highly enjoyable copy of the Tombstone Epitaph-Historical National Supplement, dated October 14, 1971. This edition of the Epitaph is filled with reprints of news stories printed originally beginning in the eighties and continuing until the early 1900's. There are pictures of buildings, scenes and people from those eras. There is a picture of Doc Holiday, dentist-gunman and friend of Wyatt Earp, but none of Doc's girlfriend, "Big Nose Kate". The fight at the OK Corral is told by eye witnesses.

This is better than a TV western.

## CHICKEN WAGON FAMILY

Several years ago I read a delightfully light hearted little novel called THE CHICKEN WAGON FAMILY, the author of which I do not remember. It is the story of a family from the rural south, the father of which drove a "chicken wagon". One summer the family decided to drive to New York City and try their fortunes. The wagon was pulled by a pair of small mules who were considered as members of the family, which consisted of the father, mother, a grown daughter and a smaller son. On the road they picked up a young man who was on the way to the city to try his fortune as a writer. After numerous adventures along the road, they reached the city and were able somehow to get permission to move into an abandoned fire station which had stalls for the mules. The family set up a sort of neighborhood store and trading post and the young man launched his career as a writer. It all ended happily with the store and the writing career a success and the young man and the daughter were married and "lived happily ever afterward"! At least that is the way I remember the story.

WHAT BROUGHT ALL THIS on is that I see passing along Second Street nearly every week, huge flat-bedded trucks loaded with live chickens coming from the broiler plants of north Louisiana and east Texas on the way to the markets of Lake Charles and perhaps New Orleans. These trucks are the modern version of the "chicken wagon" of the pre-World War I days.

It all started I suppose with the farm wives of that era who usually kept a flock of mixed breed chickens of nearly every color and type found in the South at that time, though they tended to run to Barred Rocks (Domineckers) and Rhode Island Reds. The way they were mixed up as to breeds and varieties would make a modern breeder of pure breeds or the specialized cross breeds, improperly called "hybrids", shutter. These chickens more or less raised themselves by the survival of the fittest system, but it was usually understood that any money derived from the sale of eggs or chickens belonged to the farm wife, which was called the "chicken and egg money", or something like it. The expression probably varied from place to place.

AT THE OTHER END OF THE CHICKEN and egg economy was the poultry house which was located in some town with a railway. This was the gathering place or market for poultry of all kinds, as well as eggs and sometimes a few 'possum and skunk hides during the winter months.

The "chicken wagon man" was the middle man between the farm wife and the poultry house. The "chicken wagon man" was as I recall usually a man past middle age who realized that he was never going to become either rich or famous and had accepted his lot and seemingly enjoyed his work. The wagon was usually pulled, like the one in the novel, by a pair of small mules or horses and equipped with a coop or cage to hold the live poultry and a space for an egg crate. The man usually carried with him a small supply of commodities such as soap, spices, cooking extracts and sometimes home remedy patent medicines, things which the farm wife used but not often enough to merit a trip to town for them.

The "chicken wagon man" drove from farm to farm buying or trading these articles for chickens and eggs. There was, I imagine, some shrewd bargaining between the farm wife and the man. After the chicken wagon man had filled his cage with fowls, sometimes there would be a duck, a goose, a guinea or even an odd turkey among his purchases, he drove to the poultry house which he represented. Here the fowls were weighed and the eggs counted and the wagon man paid in cash. The fowls were later sent by rail to Fort Worth or some other larger place where they soon appeared on the market as dressed poultry. I never made a trip with Mr. Smith or Mr. Kimball, two "chicken wagon men", but I was at the poultry house more than once when they delivered their goods to Mr. Burns.

DUCKS AND GEESE WERE RATHER RARE and few people whom I knew raised or ate them. Turkeys were usually sold in the fall just in time for Thanksgiving or Christmas. They were usually sold directly to the poultry house and not handled by the wagon men. One odd thing was that few families would eat a cockerel after his spurs began to develop or he began to crow. The produce house would buy them at a flat price of ten cents per head without weighing them at all, large or small the price was ten cents. Of course, the “ultimate consumer” paid a higher price by the pound.

During the spring of 1925 when Mrs. Ratliff and I had just started our housekeeping in a four unit apartment house in Chillicothe, Texas, we decided to have chicken for dinner one Sunday. On Saturday I went down to the poultry house and bought a young Rhode Island Red cockerel which probably had been bought for ten cents from the farm wife but I paid nine cents a pound or a total of forty-five cents for him. The other three wives in the apartment later confessed that they felt sorry for the poor young Ratliff’s who did not know that people did not eat roosters. Later when the odors of the roasting fowl permeated the air they had second thoughts about the matter and when they were invited in for a taste they admitted that a “young” rooster was “good eating”.

NOW ALL OF THIS HAS BEEN CHANGED and the Mr. Smiths and Mr. Kimballs no longer make their rounds with their “chicken wagons” and farm wives no longer hope to be able to raise a hundred chickens in a year. The poultry industry has become a highly specialized big business, the farm wife has been superseded by the broiler plants producing millions of broilers and fryers at a much cheaper price per pound than the old-fashioned farm wife with her few “settin’ hens” could ever hope to reach. Places like the hill sides of the Bosque valley of Texas raise turkeys by the thousands. Highly specialized breeds and cross-breeds do a better job than the old “domineckers” and “reds” ever did.

## **DIRT MOVING METHODS AND EQUIPMENT IN THE OLD DAYS**

Last spring I was helping with tickets at the track meet held in the DeQuincy stadium when my old friend and former colleague on the DeQuincy High School faculty, Coach John Buck of the Kinder High School passed through the gate. After the usual greeting he asked me what I was doing to pass off the time since retirement. I told him that in addition to reading, writing and translating articles from Spanish into English, I held a part time job as operator of dirt moving equipment. With a look of concerned interest which is so typically Johnny Buck, he asked for details. I told him that in the yard I used a shovel, a hoe and a wheelbarrow and in the house a vacuum sweeper. This little visit with Coach Buck and also seeing the heavy equipment used in moving dirt pass along the street and on jobs recalled the changes which have come in this work since the teens of the present century.

Previous to 1920 any sort of job that required excavation, the pick and shovel were the basic tools. The “operators” of this equipment joked that the requirements for a good “operator” were a “strong back and a weak mind”. I do not agree altogether with that joke as it seems to me that there is a considerable amount of skill needed to do a really good job of using a pick and shovel. There are certain sections of the country, such as the rocky hills of western Wise County, Texas, where blasting was almost a necessity. I believe there is a strong possibility that the original cemetery at Decatur was located northeast of town in the black prairie because it would be easier to dig graves than in the hills to the south and west where the strata of hard shell rock is just beneath the surface.

THE TIME REFERRED TO is previous to the day of the caterpillar tractors, bulldozers, draglines and all the other large and complicated dirt moving equipment which is so common today. Beyond the pick and shovel perhaps the most common dirt moving machine was the horse drawn dump scraper or slip which was really nothing more than an enlarged shovel or scoop pulled by a team of horses or mules. There were no wheels but there was a pair of handles much like the handles on a wheelbarrow which projected toward the rear. Usually two men operated a scraper, one to drive the team and the other to raise the handles so that the blade would tilt downward and penetrate the earth very much like a scoop or shovel would have done. When the scraper was full, it was driven to the place where the dirt was to be used and the operator lifted up on the handles and dumped the scraper over end-wise, toward the team. Later there was an improved type of scraper on wheels which handled a much larger load. This, I believe, was called a fresno.

THERE WAS ANOTHER MACHINE generally used on road work or dirt leveling jobs called a grader. This was the forerunner of the modern motorized grader or bulldozer. It has about the same type and size blade as the modern machines. They were pulled by four animals which required one man to do the driving and another man who stood on a platform and operated the gears which changed the angle and pitch of the blade. The wheels were also adjustable as to angle and pitch. This job required skill and judgment as well as a strong arm and shoulder muscles. Since even four large horses or mules did not have the power of the modern diesel engines it was not unusual for the team to get stuck if the dirt was muddy and the operator set the blade too deep. In this case, the operator might have to raise the blade and the driver used his voice and sometimes a whip to “stimulate” the team: much different from merely giving the motor a little more fuel.

For moving dirt relatively short distances the wheel barrow was standard equipment but for longer distances the horse drawn dump wagon was used. This wagon in no way resembled the now commonly used dump truck. It was a common two-horse wagon with box removed and another made for dirt or gravel hauling. They were built to hold approximately one cubic yard and were probably about nine feet long, they could have been shorter, three feet wide and one foot deep.

THE BOX WAS MADE OF two-inch thick pine or rough oak or any other type of wood available. The sides and end gate were approximately twelve to fourteen inches wide. The bottom boards, called dump boards, were made of boards two inches thick and six or eight inches wide and as long as the box with about two feet in length extending out to the rear of the end gate. The ends of these dump boards were trimmed to form a handle. These bottom boards were laid flat-wise the full length of the running gear (chassis). The side boards were also placed length-wise with the bottom edge extending down alongside the bottom boards. The end gates were then dropped into place in a slot formed by cleats nailed to the side boards. The whole thing when assembled formed a hollow wagon box. The weight and pressure of the dirt held the whole thing together by pressing against the upright "standards" at each corner on the "bolsters". When the wagon was loaded, the wagon box was steady but when the wagon was empty, the boards were loose and did not make for comfortable riding. The loading was done with shovels.

When the driver was ready to dump his load he pried out the end gates, lifted the side boards, seized each bottom board by the handle end and dumped the dirt down beneath the running gear of the wagon. This was slow and laborious by modern standards.

ALL THIS HAS BEEN CHANGED and modernized by such men as the late R.G. Letourneau of Longview, Texas, his associates and competitors. Just last week the telephone company laid a new underground cable along Second Street. They had a small motored ditching machine which operated by one man and dug a ditch in a matter of a few short hours which would have taken a pick and shovel crew days perhaps. One of the very interesting processes was the way they tunneled under the concrete entrances to the residential driveways. Rather than break up the concrete, the same ditching machine was stopped at one end of the concrete slab and a drill bit with a long stem was attached to a power take-off on the tractor, and a hole drilled for the ten or twelve feet width of the driveway. The cable, with its plastic sheath, was pulled through the hole and the job was done.

## **BUSSING IN SCHOOLS**

All of this talk about “busing for quality education” ought not to worry people in this area very much. There are at least two full generations of southwest Louisiana people who do not remember when we did not have school buses. The first public rural schools we had were of the one and two room type located within a few miles of each other at some convenient location; near a church or a settled community. John McNeese, Calcasieu Parish Superintendent from 1888-1913 specified that schools must be located near a suitable water supply, a spring, a clear running stream or a well could be dug. If possible the schools were spaced within walking distance for the pupils. For example, there were schools at Perkins, Marcantel Settlement, Buhler and Houston River as well as others. As late as the early thirties there was a two room school at Lunita teaching through the fifth grade. Pupils above that grade were bused to Starks. Mrs. Sophie Kroger Bobbit and Miss Anderson were, I believe, the last teachers of the Lunita School.

IN MY OWN SCHOOL DAYS, which began in 1908, the students living in town always walked to school or rode bicycles. In my case the distance varied from a few blocks to well over a mile. It was a great thrill when one of my uncles came to visit us with an automobile and took us to school one morning. Pupils from outlying farms who wanted to attend high school sometimes boarded in town or rode horse back to school or used a horse-drawn buggy or surrey. A hitching rack was a part of the regular school equipment. In some sections there were private boarding academies. The St. Charles Academy in Lake Charles, the Fort Jessup Academy at Fort Jessup which was operated by some members of the Hardin family, and Prof. Baldwin’s famous Sugertown Male and Female Academy are examples in this area.

In the late ‘teens of this century, the move was toward consolidation of the small rural schools and the establishment of a busing system. In some areas candidates for the School Board or County Superintendent (in some states superintendents were elected by popular vote) were either praised or condemned as “consolidationists”. In some areas the consolidation of schools was delayed until a system of all-weather roads were built.

MY FIRST TEACHING EXPERIENCE began at Sagerton, Texas, where five teachers taught about 100 pupils from the first through the tenth grade. There was no public pupil transportation of any kind. The one and two room schools were still used in the area but a move toward consolidation was in the making. Today the Sagerton School no longer exists, being consolidated with the Rule School which is about ten or twelve miles away, buses being used for the Sagerton area pupils.

It was in the fall of 1921 I attended a Teachers Institute at Abilene, Texas, and one of the numbers on the program was a silent film, with a narrator, demonstrating the advantages of a consolidated school with buses. There was pictured a neat consolidated rural high school and an attractive white building, the Teacherage, or home for the teachers. The Starks school of forty years ago could have very well served as the location for the film. The final scene of the film showed the buses departing from the school with the happy, smiling teachers, who then adjourned to their home in the Teacherage. Actual experience was not always that ideal and happy, but most of the time it worked very well.

MY FIRST ACTUAL EXPERIENCE with the busing system was at Hayes in 1925 where there were three motorized buses and one mule-drawn hack; this one came from about two miles north of Hayes from near the Verret store. There was a bus which came from the Illinois (Gardener) Plantation south of Hayes. The Hayes School taught through the ninth grade, pupils beyond that attended the Bell City High School. The bus from the Illinois Plantation picked up the Hayes students and those who had come in on the other buses who

were attending the Bell City High School and transported them the two miles between the two schools. In the afternoon, the route was reversed.

The early day buses were rather crude by modern standards. They were usually regular trucks with hand built wooden bodies with seats running lengthwise of the bodies. Some of them were built into a Model T Ford truck which had a special transmission with a “four on the floor” shift. There was no heat and some of them were not fully enclosed. They had a long canvas curtain or a long roller running lengthwise down the side of the body. Theoretically it could be rolled up in good weather and lashed down in bad weather. The seats were sometimes unpadded benches. So far as I know there were no state or parish regulations as to safety.

THIS MIGHT BE CONSIDERED a “safety” requirement. In the case of the mule-drawn hack at Hayes, the School Board owned the hack or bus and maintained it but the driver had a contract to furnish the team and operate the bus. One day I received a letter from Parish Superintendent F.K. White asking me to find out why the driver was having to buy so many single trees for the hack. (For those of you born since 1950, a “singletree” is that bar of wood or metal across the front of the bus, and just behind the horse, to which the traces, or tugs are hitched, and the power is exerted.) An investigation revealed that the driver was using the hack to break unbroken mules. He was ordered to discontinue the practice.

It is ironical that in addition to using busing to maintain quality education, it was also used to maintain segregation; now the reverse is true.

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Mrs. James Burgess of Ragley called to say that they have one of the old dirt-moving slips mentioned last week. We promised that we might come to see it sometime.



## **REDISTRICTING OF THE POLICE JURY AND SCHOOL BOARD AREA**

The problems leading to the rulings of the Federal Courts on the “one man, one vote” principle are not new, they have existed since the earliest English colonies in America. It is a conflict between the thickly populated, high property value and consequently high tax paying sections and the more thinly populated and relatively low property valued and low taxes paid. The thickly populated areas felt that they should be controlled and in some cases frustrated in the plans by the thinly populated areas, even though the latter might be of much greater area. On the other hand the rural people did feel that the city people should not completely dominate them. It is a difficult problem to solve with due regard for the rights and interests of both groups.

IN EARLY COLONIAL VIRGINIA the Tidewater area was in the relatively thickly settled, high land value, tax-paying area and the Piedmont was the thinly settled area. The frontier people of the Piedmont were faced with hostile Indians who, justly perhaps, resented the westward movement of the English settlers. On the other hand, the Tidewater people had no conflict with the Indians, indeed some of the Tidewater merchants were carrying on a profitable trade with the Indians through agents on the frontier. The frontier people wanted the Virginia House of Burgesses (Colonial Legislature) to supply men and arms to fight the Indians. The Tidewater people felt that they would have to pay most of the cost and since they controlled the House of Burgesses they refused to vote the money for men and arms. In 1675 a young frontier leader named Nathaniel Bacon raised a force of volunteers who defeated the Indians and even drove out the Royal English Governor and captured and burned Jamestown. Bacon died from fever and his revolt ended with the basic question still unsettled.

BASICALLY THE SAME QUESTON faced the national Constitutional Convention of 1787. Should the small and large states have equal representation in the national Congress or should representation be based on population and consequently wealth and taxes paid? Naturally the large states favored representation based on population and the small states demanded equal representation regardless of population. Finally a compromise was reached by which each state, regardless of size or population, would elect two Senators. Until 1913, when the XVII Amendment to the Federal Constitution was adapted, the Senators were elected by the Legislature of each state. The Senators were thought of as representing the state in its sovereign status and not necessarily the people of the state. The theory of state sovereignty was a “casualty” of the Civil War. Someone said that “states rights” died at Appomattox.

Locally I can see how perhaps the court ruling might be a benefit to this area of Calcasieu Parish. The pine forest area of north Calcasieu, so it seems to me, has more in common in industries, ethnic background, social, and political problems with Beauregard and Allen parishes than it does with the industrial and rice growing area of southern Calcasieu Parish. This is not absolutely true however because of the large number of people from this area who work in the industries in the Westlake and Lake Charles area. There are also numerous ties of family and friendship.

AS TO THE COMBINING OF Wards Five and Six of Calcasieu Parish into one district for representation on the Police Jury and School Board, I think I can see where it might have been an advantage to Ward Five especially. With all due respect to my friends of forty years ago in Starks and the good men who served Ward Five on the Police Jury and School Board, it was common knowledge that Ward Five was divided into several political factions each contending for the positions on the Police Jury and School Board. Usually whatever one faction favored the other faction more or less automatically opposed it. This extended down to competition for jobs on the parish road crew, school bus drivers and school janitors. Old timers in Ward Five can name names and incidents. The conflict was bitter at times. I hope this situation no longer exists but if it does the abolishment of separate seats on the Police Jury and School Board for Ward Five and Six might help to

end the problem and if the factions still exist they might unite and work together for the best interest of Starks, Lunita and DeQuincy and surrounding areas of the two Wards without resorting to factionalism.

DURING THE ADMINISTRATION of John McNeese as Parish Superintendent of old Imperial Calcasieu (1888-1913) the wards were large and thinly populated and schools were widely scattered. Many communities had a school but were some distance in time and space from their School Board member. Mr. McNeese developed a system of Local Directors for each school. These men were appointed, usually two, by the School Board to act as a sort of liaison between the people of a community and the School Board. They were probably without legal authority and were not paid but these Local Directors frequently rendered valuable service to the school which they represented. Small problems perhaps, such as seeing that the physical plant of the school was ready for use in the fall, seeing that there was an adequate supply of firewood on hand in time for the cold weather. Things which did not require the attention of the entire Board were handled by the Local Directors. This system was still in use in the Hayes-Bell City area as late as 1928 but I do not recall that it existed in Starks and DeQuincy that late. Perhaps if the need arose under the new system of one School Board for Wards Five and Six, some such scheme might be used again. The Police Jury might develop a similar plan for their work!

I failed to state in the above that in the House of Representatives, the number of representatives is based on population thus giving the more thickly populated states the advantage.

## **REVEREND B.F. STEGALL – PIONEER METHODIST**

The other day several of us were discussing the various types of religious experiences which people have, including those of the old time “shoutin” Methodists. From there we drifted around to our memories of one of the old-time Methodist circuit riders, the late B.F. Stegall of Texas, Indian Territory which later became the state of Oklahoma. He was a sort of missionary evangelist from about 1895 until the early twenties.

When I first became aware of the Stegall family about 1910, so far as I knew then, the family consisted of Mrs. Stegall, her daughter, whom we called Miss Willie, and two sons, Ben and Roy. Since Mr. Stegall was not on the scene I more or less assumed that Mrs. Stegall was a widow, since she sewed for other women for pay. Miss Willie was the cashier in a dry goods store and the boys held out-of-school jobs.

It was not until several years later, after my uncle Bert had married Miss Willie and she became Aunt Willie to my brothers, our sisters and me that I learned the true and interesting story about the Rev. Mr. Stegall, or Bro. Stegall as he was better known.

During the summer of 1918 I helped Uncle Bert and Aunt Willie on their farm near Rolf, Okla., and met Bro. Stegall who by that time was retired from the active ministry, “superannuated” is the Methodist term for retired from the active pastorates.

This is approximately the story which he told me as we worked side-by-side in the cotton and sweet potato fields that summer:

Until about 1895 he had been a successful hardware merchant; no strong religious convictions or dedication. It was about that time that he attended a revival meeting at the Decatur Methodist Church, more from a sense of duty and habit than anything else. He attended several of the meetings and then as he expressed it he was “gloriously saved and received the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

He said that he felt the call to preach and disposed of his business as quickly as possible and went to the Indian Territory as a sort of missionary-evangelist. He was a member of whatever Methodist Conference that had jurisdiction over the area which is approximately Pontotoc County, Okla.

He must have held regular appointments to circuits or pastorates in the Conference, but he preferred evangelistic work, preferably the open air type under a brush arbor or a tabernacle. He built several of them, with his own hands as he was described in a book of the history of the Methodist church, of that era, “handy with tools”.

He believed in using tools but in caring for them; he was the only man I ever knew or heard of who, when he came in from the field at the end of the day, washed the blade of his hoe and then wiped it with an oiled rag before hanging it up on the back porch.

When he retired, one of the churches at Ada, Okla., gave him the old wooden church building which he was to build into a home. When the home was completed, he was given a “house warming” at which he invited the guests to inspect the work and offered a reward of twenty-five cents for any dents in the wood made by careless or unskilled work on his part; he had done the carpenter work himself. There were no rewards paid.

He travelled over the Circuit by whatever means available but always carried his clothing and any other equipment he owned in a pair of leather saddle bags. He became known over the country by his saddle bags.

One time he approached a man in a buggy and asked if he would be so kind as to haul his saddle bags to the next town. The man recognized him by his saddle bags and said, "Brother Stegall, I shall be glad to haul your saddle bags, but how will you recover them in the next town?" Bro. Stegall replied, "I had planned on riding with them in your buggy." The man laughed, introduced himself and the two rode together to their mutual destination.

Another time he was preaching under a brush arbor and was "exhorting" with all his heart and soul. The atmosphere was tense with religious emotion. All at once a man stood up and emptied his six-shooter up through the brush roof of the arbor. Bro. Stegall kept on with his "exhorting". After the services Bro. Stegall was walking down a little path through the woods when he heard hoof beats coming behind him. He stepped out of the path to permit the rider to pass, but the rider stopped his mount, a mule, and said, "Parson, I am sorry I acted like I did, but I got so excited that I could not help myself. Please forgive me." He was forgiven and rode on. Bro. Stegall believed that if you did not "get religion" down at a "mourner's bench" it was not the genuine article and that you were not "saved".

During those years one of the popular national magazines was the Literary Digest which Bro. Stegall read regularly. (The LD ceased publication in 1932 after having supported President Hoover for re-election). One summer night in 1918 we, Bro. Stegall, Uncle Bert, Aunt Willie and I, attended church at the local Methodist Church. There was a power failure and there were no lights available. The young minister apologized, saying that it was a new sermon he was preaching and that since he could not see his notes he would have to stop. He dismissed the congregation and we started home. Bro. Stegall did not wait for us but struck out on foot. When we reached home he was sitting up in the kitchen in a cane bottom chair reading his Literary Digest by lamp light. He was "boiling mad". He denounced the poor young preacher for not being able to preach without notes and said that he was not "called" and should give up the ministry.

I do not know if Bro. Stegall was a Confederate veteran or not but he was a great admirer of President Jefferson Davis of the Confederacy. He assured me that President Davis was one of the greatest statesmen of the United States had ever produced and that he understood the Federal Constitution better than any man of his times. Bro. Stegall insisted that the Northern Republicans, in order to gain the support of black voters, built up Abraham Lincoln and tore down Jefferson Davis.

About ten years ago Dr. Hudson Strode of the University of Alabama wrote a three volume biography of President Davis in which he advocated the same theme. I could not resist the temptation to write to Dr. Strode and tell him that I had heard the same theory from an old retired Methodist preacher in an Oklahoma sweet potato field forty years earlier.

## FISHING

When someone asks me if I ever go fishing, I have two stock answers, "Oh yes, I went fishing in August of 1927 when the late T.S. Cooley and I filled the bottom of a boat with white perch from Lacassine Bayou near Hayes in a couple of hours. After that I decided to quit fishing while I was still ahead." The other answer is that I fish by the "signs". I answer that when I want to fish I start looking for a sign which reads, "Fish for Sale." I have never failed to "Catch" all of the fish I wanted by that method. I went on such a "fishin' trip" last Monday with great success.

Our daughter Dorothy Ricketts of Lakewood, Calif. was here and wanted to taste some of the blue channel catfish in ponds and bred and fed scientifically. The reputation of these fish has reached the west coast. So, Dorothy's husband John and I drove up to the Haley Fish Farm some seven miles north of DeQuincy on Highway 27 to "catch a mess of catfish".

WHEN WE ARRIVED WE WERE MET by Pat Bennett, Mrs. Ethel Bennett, Kenneth Overmeyer and R.C. Sharbino. Jimmy Haley and his wife, the former Bessie Bennett, were not there so we missed seeing them. Kenneth, Jimmy and Bessie I had known as former students at DeQuincy High School.

The "farm" consisted of three ponds about 650 feet long and perhaps 150 feet wide. I failed to ask about the depth of the water but I would estimate it to be around three or four feet. We were in a hurry to get back home to get the fish into the frying pan, so we did not take time to inquire about the details of this new enterprise of raising fish by scientific methods. As I understand it, the baby fish, fingerlings I believe they are called, are produced by a specialized form of the business, the hatchery, and then placed in the raising ponds where the water is kept fresh and circulating and the fish are fed a specially prepared high protein food which resembles some of the types of cat and dog food of the dry pellet type. Chicken raisers will recognize the process as similar in many ways to the raising of broilers and fryers.

We tried our hand at feeding the fish, hoping to see them feeding but without success. Bennett said that the wind was probably too high, and that the fish were not feeding.

THE FISH ARE LEFT IN THE PONDS until they are a year old, when they are about a foot long and weigh over a pound. They are uniform in size. I later saw some of the same fish for sale in a local market and they were of the same size and type as those we bought directly from the Haley farm.

We did not see the fish caught from the pond, but assumed that they are caught in a net of some sort, I doubt that the "hook and line" system would be fast enough. Those ready for sale are kept in a special tank in a building where the dressing is done. This tank has a circulating pump also. A special net is used to dip up as many fish as are wanted at the time.

If the fish are to be dressed, they are killed with a blow of a hatchet on the head and are then skinned and dressed. I was impressed by the idea that it was a much more humane way of killing them than allowing them to die from suffocation while being transported to their final destination live. Within a few minutes we had all of the fish we wanted.

OF SPECIAL INTEREST WAS AN albino of the species about six inches long which had its private tank in the dressing shed. Needless to say he will probably never wind up on someone's dinner table; he is too

unusual for that fate. I wondered if it would be possible or desirable to start a strain of albino catfish by selective breeding.

Bennett told us that a few days ago a man from Houston with a sizable sum invested in a boat, trailer and other fishing equipment, stopped by the Haley place on his way home and bought over sixteen dollars worth of fish. He said that after making the trip all the way from Houston to Toledo Bend and spending a whole weekend, he had not caught a fish and was determined that he was not going all the way back to Houston to face the cruel jibes of his friends and enemies at his lack of luck as a fisherman. I suspect that the Houstonian and I are members of the same club, Those Who Fish By The Signs.

I SUSPECT THAT FISHING IS LIKE most sports and pastimes; you sort of have to grow up with it to have much success. I never learned to fish when I was growing up for several reasons; one of which was that in the rocky hills of north Texas there was not much fishing water available. There were some shallow ponds, “tanks in Texanese”, where sometimes a few small perch could be caught by a worm on a hook with a sinker and cork setup sometimes if the land owner was willing. Some of the farmers discouraged fishing because it kept the cattle away from the water. The other sources of fishing water were some creeks like Big Sandy and Denton Creek and the West Fork of the Trinity, and they were several miles away. Perhaps the main reason I never learned to fish was that my associates were not fishermen. My older brother Dennis was and still is a fisherman, I think largely because his associates were fishermen and willing to go to the trouble to make trips to water. Today with Lake Bridgeport said to be one of the best fishing spots in the state, and just a few miles away, fishing and boating have become major pastimes in that area, as they have here since the building of Toledo Bend and other nearby lakes.

I do not suppose now that I shall ever become a fisherman for “fun”, but with Toledo Bend and the other lakes and the Haley farm and others like them there will always be fishing enough for both groups; those who fish for recreation and those who fish by the “signs”.

## THE YOUNGER GENERATION

I used to keep on my desk a quotation which I had copied somewhere which ran about like this: "The youth of the land is getting worse and worse. They have no respect for their elders, neither their parents the priests nor the teachers. They monopolize the best seats in the public places, they seize the best of the food, and they insist that they must have their way about everything. Each generation gets worse; surely the end of the world is at hand." Sometimes I would read the quotation to a group of high school seniors and ask them when they thought it was written. Invariably some student would indulge me by saying, "last week." This was my cue to tell them it was written by an Egyptian priest some 2000 years before Christ.

I INSIST THAT those who declare that each generation gets worse and worse just have not read enough detailed history; including the historical books of the Old Testament. On the other hand, I made the above statement to a relative who had considerable experience in law enforcement work who did not exactly agree with me. He said, "the difference between you and me is that you deal with a better grade of society in your work than I do in mine". I admit that the crime statistics indicate that he was correct.

My undergraduate college years of some fifty years ago were spent in three different church related colleges representing three different Christian groups or denominations. Perhaps the student bodies of these schools did represent a higher level of morality and conduct than the average young person of the time but it was known that among them were some rather rough characters among the boys and sometimes a co-ed was sent home; "shipped" was the word for it, and asked not to re-enroll at the next semester. Outside of the college world the situation was worse. In Fort Worth there was an institution called The Rescue Home where girls who were "in trouble" went to have their babies who were put up for adoption. "Shotgun weddings" were fairly common in all levels of society.

MY FATHER, who for nearly forty years was "a country lawyer", spent a good portion of his time representing younger people in the courts. These younger men and women were charged with all sorts of crimes from murder to petty thefts, chicken staling was a felony in Texas. Disturbing the peace and disturbing public worship were common charges against boys and young men. More than once I recall some worried father calling my father at night with a story something like this: "Lem, my boy is in jail at such and such a place and his Mamma is crying her eyes out. Would you go see what the trouble is and what you can do to get him released?" He went.

There is a tradition that about fifty years ago that there was a gang of young rowdies in DeQuincy who delighted in terrorizing older men, women and others who could not defend themselves. People from other communities did not like to come to DeQuincy to trade or visit. The late District Judge Thomas E. Porter said that as a young teacher from Sugartown he wanted to make a trip to Lake Charles via the KCS with a change of trains at DeQuincy. He was warned that when he reached DeQuincy to go immediately to the Lake Charles train and not spend any time "fooling around DeQuincy" as it was "a wild place". Judge Porter, while he was at the depot, a "shooting scrape" took place just across Lake Charles Avenue from the depot. He decided that the advice given him was sound and went to the Lake Charles train without delay.

RIGHT AFTER WORLD WAR I the late H.M. Wells was employed as principal of the DeQuincy School with orders from the School Board to "tame" the DeQuincy School. He did. The tales told about Mr. Wells and his experiences in DeQuincy are themselves worth a column. The Rev. Alton McKnight, former pastor of the DeQuincy Methodist Church, said that he was a student at the Clinton High School when Mr. Wells was principal at that school before coming to DeQuincy. Bro. McKnight said that the students believed that the initials HMW meant "Hell-a-Mile-Wide".

Whatever sins and shortcomings modern youth may be guilty of, they did not invent them. It has been said that there have been no new sins invented since the Ten Commandments were handed down, there are just variations and elaborations on them and these are not new. Mankind has been rather ingenious in inventing and elaborations on the Law. If you are inclined to believe that the modern styles of hair and beard are new, just turn back through an American history book covering the period of about a century ago, especially the Civil War period.

WHEN I THINK OF MODERN YOUTH, there are several good words which come to mind as characterizing most of them. Such words as: compassion, concern, tolerance, courage, curiosity, industry, loyalty and last but not least, reverence. It is, in my opinion, a matter of motivation. A leader whom they respect, a teacher, a pastor, a parent or sometimes just an adult friend can motivate younger adults into good causes that are almost unbelievable to those who have not witnessed it.

I would not be so naïve as to claim that every young American girl is an innocent angel, as many of them are not, nor every young man a peerless knight in shining armor. I have known and know too many of them who are not but as a whole they are the equals of and in most cases, an improvement over earlier generations and I have hopes that the future generations will be even better. Otherwise, those of us who have devoted our lives to trying to help each generation better itself have wasted our time and lives.

If I am living in a dream world about our “kids”, please do not wake me up. I like my dreams like they are.

APRIL 1972 IS AN IMPORTANT anniversary in my memory. Early in April of 1922 I went out to Whitt’s Chapel School, a one-room rural school in Haskell County, Texas, to teach for one month in order to complete the session.

Sagerton School, where I had been teaching, closed at the end of March from lack of funds and I was without a job. The young lady who had been teaching at Whitt’s Chapel resigned one month before the six months term was over because she could not endure the loneliness any longer. Mrs. Ed Robertson, County Superintendent of Haskell County, sent me out to complete the term. The Whitt’s Chapel School has been described in an earlier column.



## TRANSPORTATION CHANGES

Recently I was watching some pre-school age boys playing near a railway crossing and the thought came to me that they probably have no memory of seeing a passenger train and probably never travelled on one. At one time there were eight passenger trains a day passing through DeQuincy, four each on the Missouri Pacific and the KCS.

From its crude beginnings in America about 1830, railways rose to the height of its popularity just after the turn of the century. Soon after that the automobile and later the airplane began to compete with the railways for the passenger business of America. Today there is a whole generation of younger Americans who have never ridden on a train. Changes in conditions and ways of living brought about changes in transportation systems.

A FEW MONTHS AGO W.W. Bishop mentioned that when he first visited DeQuincy from what is now northern Beauregard Parish, he made the trip by ox wagon. The trip took about three days and the party camped out at night. I never rode in an ox wagon at all and have seen only a few of them. The only one I recall was used by a family moving west through north Texas about sixty years ago. My grandfather, who lived in Tennessee before 1892, used oxen and my father as a youth drove ox teams for his father.

For early American farmers and travelers the ox had some peculiar advantages; he was cheaper to buy or raise than a horse or a mule and required less care and grain food to do the work required. The ox could also be eaten in an emergency or if he became injured or when he became too old to work. I have heard it claimed that the best flavored beef was from the carcass of an old ox who had been allowed to become fat and lazy.

The pioneer moving by wagon sometimes preferred oxen to mules or horses because the ox's digestive system is such that he can work nearly all day and then in the late afternoon and early night hours graze enough grass and then lie down and by the process of chewing his cud obtain enough energy to work the next day. He needed water to make the process complete.

THE MEMBERS OF THE HORSE family have an entirely different digestive system, they are non-ruminants (cud chewers) with a much smaller stomach which cannot hold enough grass to supply the energy needed for the next day if they are worked continuously. They require a certain amount of grain in their diet. Indians and cowboys who used horses regularly needed a small herd of horses frequently in the "string" or "remuda". They changed horses frequently in a day's work or travel so that the horse could eat enough grass to obtain the required energy. Grass fed horses sometime developed an extended stomach (grass belly) when living on a strictly grass diet.

My first memories of road travel go back to about 1903 when I saw both pairs of my grandparents driving teams to a buggy or surrey. I faintly remember seeing my father ride a grey mare (Grey Belle?) from our house in Era, Texas, out to the one-room school (Bermuda) where he taught. Farm wagons and implements and city drays, delivery wagons and street cars were all animal powered. (I never saw a "Horse car" but there are people living who remember the mule drawn street cars in Lake Charles.)

Until my late teens I did nearly all of my traveling on the train or by horse power. I never learned to ride a bicycle and never owned a car until 1926, a 1925 model T. I doubt that either of my daughters ever rode in a horse drawn vehicle for serious traveling, perhaps for fun at some park.

My paternal grandfather was born in 1849 and died in 1937 and during that span he used every form of transportation from the ox wagon to an automobile but still did his field work with mules. I tried to persuade him to take a trip by air just to be able to say that he had gone from ox cart to the airplane but he refused.

I OWNED ONE HORSE BRIEFLY during 1919 but rode horses for other people, the Morris brothers or Dr. L.H. Reeves of Decatur. I drove a grocery delivery wagon for Mr. Dallas; it was pulled by a pair of small mules or one horse. I also did some farm work with horse-drawn implements. I also rode and drove horses which belonged to my father.

During Christmas of 1964, Mrs. Ratliff and I made a trip to California by train and when we were ready to board the train for the return trip, one of our grown grandsons, David Ricketts, was very helpful in getting us seated and luggage stowed away. We expressed our appreciation and he confessed that he was partly motivated by his love for his grandmother and he also wanted to see what a passenger train looked like from the inside. While on that same trip we met, both going and returning, a young married couple (Paul and Sandy) who were making their first trip by train.

I never saw, except in parks, an old fashioned stage coach but our son-in-law, Clifford Blackwell of Shreveport, is the modern successor of the stage coach driver in his capacity as an operator for the Trailway Bus Lines.

I have made one round trip to California by air. We have two great-grandsons, "Chico" Ricketts who will be two in August and "Dore" Kelly who will be one year in July. It is interesting to speculate how they and their contemporaries will be traveling when they have reached "three score and ten", provided that some maniac has not pushed the fatal button and blown us all back into the stone age by nuclear power or something worse.

In transportation as well as other things: "The old order changeth, yielding place to the new."

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I was happy to discover that the representative of the Gideon Society who spoke at the DeQuincy United Methodist Church on April 9 was none other than Gerald Helms, the son of some old friends, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Helms of Sweetlake. I had never met him before but I knew his parents, Walter and Edna (Starnes) back in the twenties before they were married.

## ICE PLANT IN DEQUINCY

The demolition of the old DeQuincy ice plant is indeed the final passing of an era which only “youngish” grandparents can remember much about, an era in which every town of any pretensions at all had an ice plant and the ice man with his ice wagon and tongs were a familiar sight. There was an even earlier period which probably no one now living can remember. This was when people in the north cut blocks of ice from the lakes and streams and stored the ice in ice houses for either home consumption or for sale. At Thomas Jefferson’s home, Monticello, and Henry Clay’s home, Ashland, at Lexington, Kentucky they can still be seen. They are of the underground cellar type; those at Ashland are circular shaped with conical shaped roofs covered with wooden shingles. The ice was packed with sawdust or shavings until needed.

FEW PEOPLE IN THE DEEP SOUTH had ice all during the summer and very little in the winter as the ice layers in the streams and lakes were too thin to be cut. Some enterprising Yankees built up a business of cutting and storing ice, loading it on special ships and bringing it south for sale during the summer months. Only cities like New Orleans with deep water ports had access to the ice and it was expensive. Poor people never used it, but among the more well-to-do the arrival of the first ice ship of the time was a time for celebrations and parties.

With the development of the ammonia compressor type ice machine, ice became available to most of the larger communities. My father grew up in Hickman County Tennessee, where some of their neighbors were the Lyles and Beasleys, relatives of the families of that name in this area. Lyle Station is just a short distance down the line from Grinder’s Switch, Minnie Pearl’s “home town”. My father told this story; a man from Lyle’s Station made a trip to Nashville and reported on his return home that he had seen some ice in Nashville in the summer. Some of his fellow church members wanted to try him in the church for lying, claiming that not even God could make ice during the summertime. Fortunately for the man’s reputation, some of his neighbors made a trip to Nashville to investigate and returned to verify the story that ice could be made in the summertime.

JOKES ABOUT THE ICEMAN and his daily visit to the home of his customers were common and cartoons showing small boys and their dogs gathered around the ice wagon on hot summer days to pick up the chips which fell when the iceman was cutting the ice into chunks for his customers. The ice plant usually froze the ice into two hundred pound blocks which could be cut into fractional sizes as desired. The larger cuts were usually made with a special saw and the smaller cuts with an ice pick. Most home refrigerators were built for a twenty-five or fifty pound cut but some of the larger sized ones would use a one hundred pound block. Commercial refrigerators such as those used by meat markets might use several of the two hundred pound blocks. I remember that at Starks in the late twenties and early thirties our ice came from Vinton and its delivery was uncertain.

Due to the development of mechanical home refrigerators the demand for domestic ice had passed its peak by the middle of the thirties or early forties but about this time the Mo.Pac. started cooling its passenger trains with ice and DeQuincy became one of the icing stations. The demand for ice was greater than the local plant could supply. I remember seeing trucks from DeRidder or perhaps New Llano delivering ice for the trains.

MOST FAMILIES WHO USED ICE were supplied by the ice company with a square card about twelve inches to the side with large numbers 25-50-75-100 arranged around the sides of the card. When ice was wanted the card was placed in a window where it could be seen from the street with the number indicating the amount of ice wanted turned to the top. All the ice man had to do was look at the card and make his delivery accordingly. Most ice companies sold books of tickets with each ticket good for twenty five pounds of ice.

These books of tickets were hung above the refrigerator and the ice man tore off tickets to the amount of ice delivered.

The first I ever heard about a mechanical refrigerator was in the summer of 1923. I was taking a biology course at Abilene Christian College under Prof. Batsell Baxter; we called him Bro. Baxter, who became interested in a mechanical refrigerator from a scientific viewpoint as well as practical use and proposed to buy one, until he found out that they sold for about \$800 which was too much for his budget at that time.

LATER, THE A.T. CARMOUCHE family at Hayes owned a kerosene burner type refrigerator. These are still used in some areas where electricity or natural gas is not available. The monitor top G.E. electrical refrigerator was a popular type. When General Motors brought out a machine called the Frigidaire it became so well known that a great many people called all electric refrigerators "frigidaire" just as all cameras were called "kodaks". Recently again General Motors in their TV advertising is warning us that all electric refrigerators are not "Frigidaire". There was, and still is, a type of refrigerator which produces cold from a tiny blue gas flame. Where piped natural gas is not available bottled gas can be used.

The first electric refrigerator we owned was bought after the electric power lines came to Starks about 1933. It was a relatively rare make known as a Grunow which was supposed to operate under a vacuum and used a different refrigerant from the other brands at least that is what the salesman told us. It ran for thirteen years without any repairs or service except a door handle which cost thirty-five cents. The late Dr. J.B. Robinson told me that they had good success with their Grunow also but for some reason they do not seem to make them now. They may have been foreign made, the name sounds German or Swedish to me and the war may have caused them to disappear.

## **GARAGE CLEARING AND FINDING THINGS LOST, ETC.**

Clearing out garages, attics and other such places of accumulated bric-a-brac is not always to be recommended, first there is all of the labor involved and then there is the matter of bitter-sweet memories and perhaps evidence that we are not as young as we once were. A couple of weeks ago we decided to reroof our family garage which made it necessary to clear it out to some extent. We uncovered things, some which had been "lost" for over thirty years.

First to be removed was a couple of chairs which we bought in 1925, some of our first housekeeping furniture. One of them is an ordinary hickory kitchen chair and the other is a rocker in which we rocked our two generations of our babies and hope to rock the third generations.

ANOTHER UNUSUAL ARTICLE was an old fashioned curved blade, double bend handled scythe which was once used for weed cutting in town and on farms for cutting hay and in still earlier times for harvesting grain, the type sometimes seen in cartoons depicting Father Time or the Grim Reaper. The late Mr. Carmicheal, who lived on Third Street in the house now owned and occupied by Mrs. Mary Catherine Morris, gave me the scythe about thirty years ago and it has hung in our garage since. I never attempted to use it.

Hidden among some empty glass jars and bottles was a full quart bottle of Newport pine oil which someone at the Newport plant gave me sometime in the late thirties. The metal cap to the bottle is a little corroded; otherwise bottle and contents are intact.

There is a kerosene lantern, still usable, which was used the last time I believe on the final night of the 1941 Army maneuvers in this area. The "Southern" Army was moving through DeQuincy to attack the "Northern". A part of the Southern Army was converging on Highway 27 where it joins Second Street on the corner by the Frank Wallace home. Some of the ambulances were coming down the narrow street between what were then the I.J. Goode and Dr. O.E. Douglas homes. The vehicles were traveling "black-out" and one of the ambulances crashed into the end of a metal culvert which crosses Second Street. Fortunately no one was hurt but the dent in the culvert is still there. I lighted the old lantern and sat it on the end of the culvert. As I mentioned in an earlier column, I am happy to report that the "Southern" Army defeated the "North" at that time. Along with the lantern are a couple of attachments which are used to make an ordinary glass Mason jar into a lamp. These lamps were used to heat the once commonly used LSU type sand floor chicken brooder. These attachments and lamps had not been used since World War II, or shortly thereafter.

BURIED BENEATH SOME OTHER JUNK was an old style jack screw loaned to me by Elmer Bierd in 1952. I have offered to return the jack screw to Mr. Bierd more than once but he always said that as long as he knew where it was and could get it when he needed it I was welcome to keep it. It has now become a souvenir item as the modern hydraulic jack has superseded the jack screw.

Among the things I really had forgotten are three sticks of stove wood, one hickory, one cedar, and one oak, which were cut from land in the neighborhood, if not the actual land where my grandfather and father lived near Lyles Station in Hickman County, Tennessee before 1892. The wood was given to me by the late Ermine McCord, a boyhood companion and distant relative of my father who in 1952, at the age of seventy-five, was still living on the spot where he and my father were born and grew up.

There was an old single bit axe which was old when I acquired it about forty years ago. Along with the axe were a hoe, a rake and shovel which I have owned for at least twenty-five years. There was also a device

for turning a Mason jar into a chicken drinking fountain as well as a feed trough for baby chicks. For some unknown reason wild song birds will not drink from a fountain made from the device.

Beneath a lot of other things was a large old-fashioned lard can, fifty pound size I believe it is, in which was a collection of cotton rags, remainders of garments of different types. I put them aside with the idea that I might need some rags for something some time. When I opened the can I found some old dresses, skirts and blouses which Dorothy and Doris wore when they were high school students during World War II days.

THE RAGS AND GARMENTS MENTIONED above were partially wrapped in an issue of The Beaumont Enterprise of Sunday, June 22, 1947. The headline stated that a bond issue for various public projects in Beaumont had carried. The second headline and story predicted that the Senate would override President Truman's veto of the Taft-Hartley Labor Bill. (It did.) A notorious gangster, "Bugsy" Seigal had been shot down in Beverly Hills, California. Members of a rival gang were suspected. The Communist Hungarian government complained that the United States had pledged financial support for a counter revolutionary plot. The Reds were about to capture Changchun, the capital of Manchuria. (They did.) In Texas City Protestant, Catholic and Jewish clergymen were to hold a joint funeral service for sixty-three unidentified victims of a dual ship explosion which occurred on April 16, 1947. (The vibrations of the explosion rattled windows in DeQuincy.) In Bar Harbor, Maine, the noted American novelist Mary Roberts Rinehart narrowly escaped death when one of her servants became deranged and attempted to shoot Mrs. Rinehart; the pistol miss-fired. Miss Texas of 1947, Miss Lynn McClain of Lufkin was "scared to death" about going to Atlantic City to compete for the Miss America title. (One wonders how she came out at Atlantic City and where she is now.) The Newport Industries plant at Oakdale had begun hauling stumps for their new plant. (Few people realized it at that time, but that was the beginning of the end for the Newport plant at DeQuincy.)

DeQuincy, Starks, Singer and surrounding areas did not "make the news" that day as far as the surviving pages of the Enterprise reveal. To paraphrase an old poem of the Civil War days, "All was quiet along the KCS and the MOP." Forgive me for saying that the above mentioned poem was based on a news story from the front lines of the war which ran, "All is quiet along the Potomac and the James, save now and then a sentry shot."

All of the above is further evidence of what happens in later years if you are one of those, "I had better-keep-this-it-might-come-in-handy-sometime people.

## HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

A book published one-hundred and twenty years ago in the United States, translated into twenty-three languages and read by millions is still the subject of differences of opinion in Louisiana. In 1852 Harriet Beecher Stowe, Connecticut born daughter of a minister, sister of a more famous minister, Henry Ward Beecher, and married to a college professor, Calvin Ellis Stowe, and herself a teacher published *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It was an instant best seller in the northern states but condemned in the South. Abraham Lincoln referred to Mrs. Stowe as the "little woman who wrote the little book that caused the big war." One hundred and twenty years later people who never read the book are familiar with the names of some of the characters in the book whose names have become part of our folk speech; a "Simon Legree" is any hard driving, cruel task master or boss, "Topsy" is any person or thing which "just grew" without apparent background or origin and an "Uncle Tom" is a Negro who is regarded by his fellow blacks as subservient to the whites.

THE QUESTIONS UNDER DISPUTE are: Did Mrs. Stowe visit and spend some time in Louisiana in Grant Parish at the McAlpin plantation near Chopin, Louisiana and use the area as the setting for her novel? Was Robert McAlpin, owner of Hidden Hill plantation, the inspiration for Simon Legree and was Uncle Tom a slave owned by McAlpin? Was the whole story fact or fiction?

A couple of weeks ago Mrs. Ernest Scruggs of 203 Page Street in DeQuincy called and offered to lend me a couple of clippings from the Alexandria Town Talk published in two issues during April.

The first clipping was a newspaper column by George Avery of Dry Prong in Grant Parish. Avery, a retired engineer and authority on early Louisiana history, presents evidence from several sources on both sides of these questions. One view is that Mrs. Stowe spent some time in the Cane River area and that Cane River is the setting for the controversial book. He cites a book by D.A. Corley, *Visit To Uncle Tom's Cabin*, to support the Cane River setting viewpoint. Avery mentions that Jeffery Huntwell of "Ole Miss", also an authority on the subject, believes that a plantation in Kentucky was the inspiration for *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

There seems to be no doubt that a strange woman from the North spent some time near the McAlpin plantation doing research work on slavery and some authorities believe that she was Mrs. Stowe.

ACCORDING TO ONE STORY at least the woman (Mrs. Stowe?) was traveling up the Red River by steamer but was delayed at Alexandria by low water over the "rapides". She left the steamer and took the stage overland to the Cane River area. At this point the Scruggs family entered the picture. Dr. L.O. Scruggs of Alexandria (the grandfather of Ernest Scruggs of DeQuincy) said that the Stowes, husband and wife, were guests at his home on the trip by stage from Alexandria to Cane River. This is perhaps one of the better arguments for the statement that Mrs. Stowe was in Louisiana.

Mrs. Stowe later wrote another book, *A Key To Uncle Tom's Cabin*, in which she denied that she had ever been in Louisiana. Some accounts say that years later after the book was published she traveled in Kentucky and that is as far south as she ever went. Those who condemned her book as a malicious libel of the South accept this story as the true one. With her on the Kentucky trip was a Mary Dutton, a teacher who did visit the Cane River area. Some believe that she was the woman who visited the home of Dr. L.O. Scruggs. Another story is that Mrs. Stowe's brother visited the Cane River country and took notes which his sister used in her book.

THE SECOND COLUMN FROM the Alexandria Town Talk is by Mrs. Leo Carnahan, retired librarian and teacher of Library Science at Northwestern State University at Natchitoches. She says that she first heard

the story about Mrs. Stowe's visit to Louisiana in 1927 when she was a student at the old Normal (now Northwestern U.) and was taking a course in drama and did some research for material for a drama she was to write. In 1928 she went to Couthouse to teach and that many citizens of the town were POSITIVE that the McAlpin plantation was the setting of the book and that Robert McAlpin was the original Simon Legree, and that one of his slaves was the original Uncle Tom. Dr. Sam Houston Scruggs, son of Dr. L.O. Scruggs and father of Ernest Scruggs, said that his father was a friend of McAlpin and that Mrs. Stowe did visit the McAlpin plantation and was a guest in the Scruggs home. Dr. Sam H. Scruggs said that his father at one time owned an autographed copy of Uncle Tom's Cabin with the question, "Do you recognize this?" on the fly leaf with the autograph. The book was loaned to another person and when it was returned the fly leaf was missing. The Scruggs family to this day is convinced that the mysterious guest was no one other than Mrs. Stowe.

MRS. CARNAHAN CITED A LETTER from a Mr. Phanor Breazeale of Natchitoches to the editor of the Louisiana Historical Quarterly which denied that McAlpin could have been the original Simon Legree. Breazeale stated that he knew McAlpin and that he was a very kind hearted man, though he did own seventy or eighty slaves at one time. Breazeale's wife and her brother, who was the husband of the Louisiana authoress Kate Chopin, owned the former McAlpin plantation of Hidden Hill for some time after the Civil War.

So, whichever story you choose to believe about Mrs. Stowe's sojourn in Louisiana, Simon Legree and Uncle Tom you will find support. In the meantime if you have not read UTC you might like it just because of its impact on American thinking over one hundred years ago. Northerners believed it was all true. "After all wasn't Mrs. Stowe the sister of Rev. Henry Ward Beecher and she just could not be wrong". Southerners said it was all a malicious lie composed to put the South in a bad light and arouse sympathy for and raise money for the abolitionist cause. If that was the purpose it was one of the most effective bits of propaganda ever composed; surpassing even The Emancipation Proclamation in that respect.

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Grant Robinson, father of Mrs. C.K. Davis, recalls the days of his youth in 1896 when at Leotia, Kansas he saw older men cutting ice from the frozen ponds and streams for storage and use later.

Miss Bell Ford of Decatur, Texas, writes recalling the old ice wagon days and seeing the children go out to pick up the chips of ice. For smaller amounts of ice people met the wagon or truck with a pan and bought a "dime's worth of ice." The ice man fought a losing battle against the electrical refrigerators but finally had to succumb and buy one himself.



## **PINE STUMP OF 1945-1946 AND EARLIER 1922**

Last week Mrs. Evar Peterson, Artimese Mazilly, gave me a clipping from the Fifty Years Ago Column of the Lake Charles American Press which recalled a lot of memories for those of us who were around at that time. Artimese was almost a member of the second graduating class, Class of 1930, of the Starks High School after it became an Approved high school. There were about five or six members of the junior class during the session of 1929-30 who normally would have been seniors the following year. However, for various reasons when school opened in September of 1929 there were only two members of the senior class, Artimese and Imogene Stephens. Due to the death of Artimese's father, the late Larkin Mazilly, the family moved to DeQuincy where she became a member of the senior Class of 1930.

Imogene Stephens was left as the "Senior Class of 1930" at Starks. She graduated in full form with all "pomp and circumstance" and then enrolled in Mary Hardin-Baylor College at Belton, Texas where she graduated in 1934. She became one of the first trained librarians in the Calcasieu Parish school system. She later married Ellery Genius of Iowa where she and her husband operated a drug store; he being a pharmacist by profession.

THE CLIPPING REFERRED TO mentioned that the DeQuincy High School was publishing an annual, The Pine Stump, which was the first year book to be published by the students of DeQuincy High School. There are a few copies of the annual still around this area. Apparently no effort was made to publish another annual for several years; the Depression and the war made it impossible. It was not until 1946 that another edition of The Pine Stump was published. This is the way I remember it, if anyone has a copy of another edition, I would like to hear from you and if possible see the book.

After the DeQuincy High School was moved to the new campus in 1959 it was felt that a new name for the annual was needed, especially since the Newport plant had closed down it was felt that Pine Stump was not exactly an appropriate title. A student election was held to select a new title and after some opposition from some of the more "conservative" students, the title of DeCalla was chosen, beginning with the year 1960. The origin of the new title is obvious perhaps; De(Quincy) – Cal(casieu) – La(abbreviation for Louisiana).

THE 1922 EDITION OF THE PINE STUMP contained a brief history of the DeQuincy School, including a list of the faculties year by year and of the graduates each year beginning with 1914 or 1915, I am not sure which. There were pictures of the winners of various student "elections" held by the annual staff. Those listed in the American Press were: Prettiest and Most Popular Girl, Velma Lyons; Most Handsome Boy, Avery Gallagher; Most Popular Boy, Arthur Phillips; Most Innocent Person in School, Charles Odell; Most Dignified Senior, Ruth Stafford; Most Serious Person, Jean Carroll; The Most Hopeless, Robert Morton; Biggest Flirt, Lois Jones; and the Jazziest Person, Iva Welch.

The class of 1922 was the largest to graduate from DeQuincy High School at that time. There were eleven members of the class: Hillaries Chatelain, Avery Gallagher, Marshall Heard, Irene Stahl, Ruby Smith, Lena Wilcox, Ruth Dahlquist, Jewel Ruth, Ima Hollander, Ruth Stafford, and Tennie B. Otis.

During these years and for several years afterward the State Department of Education gave a statewide spelling test to the students in the elementary schools. A list of words was selected from the spelling text (speller to the students) for each grade and sent to the principals. These tests were given by the teachers all over the state at the same hour on the same day. The tests were first graded by the teacher and those papers which had no errors were delivered to the office of the Parish Superintendent whence they were sent to the State Department office. There they were re-checked and those students whose papers were "perfect" received a

certificate certifying that the student had scored a perfect test. These certificates were printed on letter size typewriter paper and were duly signed by the proper officials of the State Department, beginning with the State Superintendent and ending with the signature of the classroom teacher. They were supposed to be framed and hung in the home or school room of the student. I never knew of anyone who framed one, however.

IN THE MAY 5, 1922 EDITION OF THE Lake Charles American Press referred to above, no list of perfect spellers from DeQuincy was printed but it is to be hoped that we had some. From Starks there were Myrtie Drake, Beatrice Granger, Daisy Stout, Iris Buxton, Firl Porter, Ada Granger, Weldon Lowe, Artimese Mazilly, Carol Bass, Eunice Gillis, Albert Johnson, Althea Clark, Ollie Doyle, Emery Wyatt, Perry Gibson, Edith Batchelor, Eva Doyle, Hazel Burch, Gladys Wyatt, and Mabel Burch. Some of these Starks perfect spellers I was to know and teach in the high school section years later, 1928-34, as students in Starks High School. Some of them had already completed their high school education by the time I reached Starks but I knew them as worthwhile citizens of the community. Some of them I still meet occasionally. Misses Mabel and Hazel Burch were to become nurses and after the death of Dr. C.R. Price and Dr. W.G. Hart and Starks was without a resident physician they rendered valuable service attending to injuries and illnesses until a physician could attend to the case if one was needed. Often they handled the matter themselves. Althea Clark, now Mrs. Odes Poole, is Postmaster at Starks.

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Readers may recall that in January 1971 the Supreme Court of the United States appointed a Federal District Judge Robert VanPelt to study the question of the boundary dispute between Louisiana and Texas. Louisiana under the Treaty of 1819 between Spain and the United States claimed that the west bank of the Sabine is the boundary. Texas claimed that under the agreement reached when Texas was annexed to the United States and under a law passed by Congress in 1848 that the middle of the river is the boundary. Judge VanPelt ruled in favor of Texas but Louisiana will appeal to the whole Supreme Court for a final decision.

## SENIOR CLASS OF 1972

Again it is time to say, "Congratulations and Farewell", to the area high school graduates. To the graduates there will come a sort of "let down and lost" feeling for a few days after graduation. This is a natural reaction to all the excitement and thrills of graduating, but it will pass away as the graduate begins to face the responsibilities of young adult Americans. There will be decisions to make which only the graduate himself can make, decisions which may determine his whole future. Until recently the young men graduates were faced with the almost certainty that the Selective Service System would play an important part in determining his immediate future, but that possibility has decreased to a considerable extent since the installation of the new lottery system of selecting inductees for the armed forces. For the first time in the history of any modern nation perhaps, and certainly in the United States on a nationwide scale the recent graduates will have the opportunity to vote in a national election to elect the president, vice president, members of the national House of Representatives and in some states, one of the two United States Senators from each state. This last is true of Louisiana young and older citizens.

A FEW OF THE YOUNG WOMEN WILL HAVE already made decisions and will assume their roles as wives and mothers. To others it will be plans for further training and jobs. Young American girls who graduate from high school no longer do as their great-grandmothers and others did, sit at home and wait for some eligible man to propose marriage. To those of us who are older it is still a marvel to see young women filling jobs which, "in our time", were filled by young men.

To those of us who have been observing graduations for a half century or more it has been a source of pride and amazement to note the increase in size, both in numbers and percentage, of the graduating classes. Part of this has been because of the demands of employers that their new employees be at least high school graduates. Young men and women tell me that in most cases when they are interviewed for a job of any importance almost the first question the prospective employer asks is, "Are you a high school graduate?" To repeat a statement from a column of a few weeks ago, the "senior class" of 1930 of the Starks High School consisted of one student. The Class of 1972 numbers twenty-three and there was an earlier class of twenty-six. A recent "Fifty Years Ago" column of the Lake Charles American Press gave the name of twelve members of the senior class of DeQuincy High School and mentioned that it was the largest class in the history of the school. The class of 1972 numbers one-hundred five. I realize that these figures seem trivial to the larger high schools of the cities. Lakewood High of Lakewood, California, where some of my grandchildren attend, graduates in excess of fifteen hundred seniors per year, but these are large cities with populations amounting into the millions where we count numbers in the hundreds or at best the thousands.

RECENTLY, STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC Education, Michot, made a statement to the press that only about fifty percent of the students entering the first grade any given year in Louisiana graduated from high school twelve years later. I do not have statistics to confirm or refute that statement as far as area high schools are concerned, but it would be interesting to know how many first graders of September 1960 are now members of the graduating classes of 1972.

How many "drop outs" were there between 1960 and 1972 and why did they drop out? The Decalla for 1968-69 shows ninety-eight freshmen in DeQuincy High School who were the "raw material" for the graduating class of 1972. They were joined in September of 1969 by the class from Grand Avenue High School, just how many I am not sure but I estimate that there were about thirty. If these figures are somewhere near correct it would make approximately 130 potential graduates from DeQuincy High for 1972. I have no way of obtaining the exact figures without bothering Mr. Moon, Mr. Coney, and Mr. Adcock or their busy secretaries, but if someone wants to do that research and supply me with the exact figures I shall be grateful.

COL. LEONARD LYONS, USA (Retired), recently suggested that I write a column about the former DeQuincy students who had attained high rank in the Armed Forces. Later someone, Ed Bredehoeft I believe, suggested that I do a column about the former DeQuincy students who had entered the field of medicine or one of the healing arts. I made an effort along both lines and discovered that the list was so long in each category that it would be almost impossible for me to make a complete and fair list of each.

In the military field it would have to include Major Generals Robert Smith and Billie Ellis, Cols. Lyons, William Robert Wray, and Beauregard Brown III, as well as a long list of majors, captains, lieutenants and others below the commissioned officer ranks who did devoted service and in some cases gave their lives in the service of their country.

I wonder if DeQuincy does not hold a record for communities of its size for the number of young men who have been appointed to one of the Service Academies. I doubt that there is not another family in the United States which has four sons appointed to one of the Academies as has the family of Mr. and Mrs. S.E. Snider Jr.

As for those in the various healing arts the list is long and honorable. The same is true for several other professions and occupations; education, the ministry, law, science and business.

Again, Seniors of 1972, high school and college; "Congratulations and may success crown your future efforts in whatever field you choose." Some of your predecessors have set you examples which will require your best efforts to equal or surpass. Good Luck!

## **CALCASIEU LIBRARY ASSOCIATION MEETING MAY 10, 1972**

On May 10, I had the honor and pleasure of speaking before the Calcasieu Library Association at its meeting at the Piccadilly in Lake Charles. The membership of the Association is composed of the professional librarians of the schools, McNeese State University and the public libraries of the area. Robert Ivey of DeQuincy, Librarian at Louisiana Correctional and Industrial School is vice president and program chairman of the Association to whom am indebted for the invitation to appear before the group.

W.E. Pate, who was principal of the DeQuincy High School from 1945-51 once said that all that was necessary to make me happy was to put me in a room full of people and let me talk about history and history books. This was about the situation at the Library Association meeting.

DUE TO THE KINDNESS OF MRS. Cruikshank and Mrs. Perkins of the DeQuincy Branch of the Calcasieu Parish Library and Miss Lynch, Librarian of the parish, and of my sister Mrs. Frances Pearson of Orange, I was able to obtain some examples of old books which were favorites of my generation and of generations back into the middle 19<sup>th</sup> century.

From the Calcasieu Parish Library I was able to obtain copies of two books by Horatio Alger Jr. They were; Julius the Street Boy, and Strive and Succeed. Those who read Alger's books will recall that he was the Apostle of the American Dream. He had only one plot which he used over and over in a long list of books; a poor boy usually an orphan or at least the son of a widow who by hard work, clean living and taking advantage of every opportunity and with generous help from Lady Luck, finally rose to the top. One commentator recently said that Alger advocated marrying the boss's daughter also, but I do not recall that element in Alger's formula for success.

FROM THE ALGER BOOKS THE BOYS of my generation usually moved up to the historical novels of G.A. Henty. Henty was an Englishman of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century who covered the field of history from ancient Egypt of the time of the Exodus until the Boer War in South Africa shortly after 1900. He also had only one basic plot; create a fictional teen age boy, English if at all possible, then put him down in the midst of one of the great historical events of the time and have him play a leading part in the event. Sometimes he had his hero do things that real historical men did. Henty was so interested in geography and history that he would frequently drop the plot and write a chapter describing the geography of the setting of the story or describing a real battle or other event. Suddenly at the end of one of those chapters Henty seemed to suddenly realize that his readers might be interested in what had happened to his hero and he would add a statement something like this taken from his A Coronet of Horse, "Rupert Holiday took part in the battle of Bienheim serving on the staff of the Duke of Marlborough."

I was also able to borrow from Mrs. Pearson two books by Henty. By Right of Conquest is the story of a young Englishman who by unusual circumstances happened to be in Mexico living with the Aztecs when Cortez reached Mexico in 1519. The young man, Roger Hawkshaw, manages to escape both the Spaniards and the Aztecs, marry an Aztec princess, Amenche, and finally to make his way back to England with a fortune in gold and jewels; buy an estate and settle down and become the ancestor of several families who boast of their Aztec blood.

IN WITH WOLFE IN CANADA, another English teenager, James Walsham, helps the English General Wolfe defeat the French under Montcalm at Quebad during the French and Indian War which ended in 1763. Henty liked to begin the titles of his books with prepositions, "by" and "with" being his favorites, but I first met

the characters in the French Revolution by reading *The Reign of Terror*, which turned me into a royalist for a time.

John Esten Cooke was a Virginian who served on the staffs of both Stonewall Jackson and J.E.B. Stewart. After the war he became a writer of history and historical novels, creating a character called Col. Surrey who appeared in several books, the best known was perhaps *Surrey of Eagle's Nest*. Cooke has Col. Surrey participating in the same events and doing the things which Cooke actually did. The books are in the first person and the editor inserts footnotes such as, "his words", "these expressions are all of Stuarts", "an actual occurrence".

THIS PARTICULAR VOLUME OF *Surry of Eagle's Nest* was a fourth edition printed in 1866 and autographed, "Duncan Stuart, Laurel Hill, July 10, 1866". There is also a plate which states that the book was given to the Louisiana State Library by Mrs. George Lester in memory of her late husband of Waverly Plantation, Bains, Louisiana.

I also used in the program, Vol. I of Gibbons, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico*, both from a sixty volume series *Nations of the World* published in 1898. These are from the library of my late father-in-law J.D. Grimes of Belton and Meridian, Texas.

I also used a volume of Ridpath's *History of the World*, which my late father bought about sixty years ago. There were nine volumes of this work, each book being about the size of a modern encyclopedia. One unusual work was one of Josephus *Antiquities Of The Jews* which was given to me by the late Rev. E.W. Day who was pastor of the DeQuincy Methodist Church from 1951-54. Among these books of interest was *Historia De Mexico* by Prof. Luis Perez Vardia which was given to me by Dr. Domingo Cervantes Gonzales, M.D. of Mexico City. Dr. Cervantes is a brother of Mrs. Peter Kroger of DeQuincy.

There were other books which I exhibited but space does not permit mention of them. I enjoyed meeting with the members of the Library Association and I hereby extend my thanks to each member for permitting me to appear on their program.

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A note from Mrs. E.P. Glass of Baton Rouge says that she reads with pleasure the accounts connected with the life of the late Dr. George Lyons. She recalls how he treated cuts, fingers, stubbed toes and all of the other accidents of childhood. Mrs. Glass has a sister named for Velma Lyons, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Lyons.

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Mrs. Ruth Jacobs Shirley called to say that there was a 1926 and a 1922 edition of *The Pine Stump*, the DeQuincy High School annual which had originally belonged to a member of her family. She has given the 1926 edition to the DeQuincy High School library.

## **RADIO – EARLY SETS AND PROGRAMS**

Recently my grandson-in-law and I were watching TV together and I asked Bill, who is in his twenties, if he could remember the pre-television days. He was not sure, but the conversation caused me to recall that it was just 50 years ago about this time of year that I heard my first radio program.

I was visiting back at Decatur and a Decatur Baptist College classmate, who was teaching science at Decatur High School, took me up to the laboratory where one of his classes had built a radio. We put on some earphones, he pushed buttons and turned dials, but I heard nothing. After a time my friend announced that evidently “There was nothing on the air.” This was within 40 miles of Fort Worth and Dallas! The next day I was in the Lillard Hardware store and heard my first radio program, the live-stock market report from Fort Worth.

During the next two or three years radio became fairly common as scientifically talented men and boys built their own crystal sets and families bough storage battery-powered sets. By the late twenties a sort of transformer or battery charger was developed by which house current could be used to operate a radio, thus relieving the radio owner from having to take his battery to a garage to have it charged rather often.

It was during this time that Mrs. Ratliff’s father bought an Atwater-Kent set with a horn type speaker with a long extension cord which made it possible to carry the speaker to any part of the house without moving the entire set, which was rather bulky and had to remain connected with the power source.

Radio fans sat until late hours trying to get far away stations and blasted about staying up until midnight and ‘getting New York’ or some other equally distant station. If possible some people sent a telegram to the station announcing that they were “coming in loud and clear; people can hear you all the way down the block.” One scoffer is reported to have said to his radio fan friend who was boasting about his long distance reception, “That’s nothing. I stayed out until two in the morning and got heck.”

Most of the earlier programs seem to have been purely local one-station affairs and most of the performers were local amateurs. Any person with musical or comedy talent or an idea he wanted to present to the public did not seem to have too much trouble “getting on the radio.” Stations were looking for programs which did not cost them anything. I remember visiting with a friend in the fall of 1923 just to hear the Male Quartet from Abilene Christian College sing; the Quartet was composed of my classmates of the summer sessions at the college. Mrs. Lorena Walcott Barker of Decatur, a talented singer, appeared frequently on the Fort Worth station. This same station had a full-time professional pianist, Miss (or Mrs.) Bera Meade Grimes who “came on the air” during the noon hour each week day.

It was not long until sponsors of different products began to buy time on the radio. One popular program was “Ma Perkins,” sponsored by Oxydol, who came on at 1 P.M., just at dishwashing time in most households; the time and the product were obvious. One woman said she did not care a “hoot” about “Ma Perkins,” her problems and adventures and did not use Oxydol in her dishwater, but somehow the dishes seemed to get washed while she listened to “Ma Perkins.”

If the Fort Worth Panthers (Jake Atz and His Long Gone Cats) of the Texas League were playing at home and the game being broadcast, it was difficult for baseball fans to get back to the office in the afternoon.

One of the most unusual success stories of a radio salesman, disk jockey today perhaps, was a Yankee flour salesman named W. Lee O’Daniel who was on the Fort Worth station. At first it seems that mostly it was

housewives who listened to him since his sales talk and general chatter was directed to them, but in time he began to express some political and so called ideas that attracted the attention of some of the political leaders of the Democratic Party in Texas. This was in spite of the fact that he was suspected of having been a Republican before he came to Texas.

One day he seemingly casually mentioned what he would do “if he were governor of Texas.” The idea caught on with some of his listeners, so he ran for the nomination for governor, was successful and elected as governor. He was later elected to the United States Senate and served until either his luck ran out or conditions changed and he was defeated and disappeared from the political scene.

I do not know just when the first network program began, but I do recall hearing Pres. Calvin Coolidge speak on a nationwide hook up during the campaign of 1924. He ended his nation-wide address by, “and to my father in Plymouth, Vt., ‘Good Night.’” Somehow I cannot imagine a president ending a nationwide speech that way these days.

IN 1928 Louisiana listeners could hear Candidate-for-Governor Huey P. Long describe his Share The Wealth program and in 1932 Democratic Presidential Candidate Franklin D. Roosevelt was to give us hope for ending the Depression with one of his speeches beginning “My frie-e-nds.”

About this time the Jim Hamptons bought a radio and Jim said to me, “You ought to buy a radio; they are lots of fun.” A generation has passed, the Hamptons bought a TV and Jim said, “You ought to have one of these things; they are a lot of fun.” I said, “Jim, I wish you would make up your mind what I ought to have; 25 years ago it was a radio and now it is a TV.”

This would not be complete without mention of W. Henderson or the Shreveport station which he owned and his “Hello world, dog gone you!” and his battle against chain stores.

On a warm, lazy summer afternoon it seems that at times I can still hear strains of “Dream Girl,” the theme of “Amos and Andy,” and the announcer’s “Here they are,” coming from the filling station up the hill on east side of Meridian, as the sound bounced off the face of the cliff of Bee Rock and echoed down the Bosque Valley. People on their front porches did not need to turn on their own radios to hear the words of these two beloved characters and their associate like the King Fish.

Kind and gentle readers, this is real nostalgic remembering.



## **ROFF, OKLAHOMA TRIP ON JUNE 3, 1918**

This is being written on June 3, the anniversary of the beginning of a summer filled with experiences which I shall never forget; the summer of 1918.

It has no particular bearing on what follows the summer of 1918 marked the half way point between the close of the Civil War and the looked-for close of the war in Vietnam. In 1918 the Civil War had been over 53 years, almost exactly the time which has elapsed since the close of World War I. In 1918 veterans of the Civil War and their wives or widows were about the same age as the veterans and wives and widows of World War I are now, in their seventies and eighties.

During the school session of 1917-18, an appeal was made to the high school boys who were below the draft age to join the United States Boys' Working Reserve. We were asked to volunteer to spend the summer of 1918 working on farms to help produce the food and fiber needed to carry on the war. A volunteer might work on his own family farm (which he probably would have done anyhow) or to volunteer to help on some other farm under whatever agreement might be reached between the volunteer and the farmer.

I agreed to work for my Uncle Bert and Aunt Willie on their farm near Roff, Okla., and arrived at Roff via train on the afternoon of June 3, 1918.

One facet of the summer's experience has been the source of considerable teasing and joking by members of my family and friends was that I took my 4-H Club Project from Decatur, Tex., to Roff with me. In the fall of 1917 I joined the 4-H Club and bought a registered Duroc jersey gilt (to non-farm people a "gilt" is a young female swine) with the idea of entering her and any pigs which she might farrow in the 4-H Sow and Litter contest.

Since I would be away from home the entire summer there was nothing for me to do but take "Miss Ratler" with me. (Let me hasten to explain that Miss Ratler was her registered name given her by H.S. Cunningham, the man from whom I bought her. Had I been given the chance to name her I would have probably chosen Duchess of Decatur or something else equally high sounding.)

The agreement with my uncle and aunt was that I would receive \$25 per month payable when the crops were sold with board and bed for myself and feed for Miss Ratler. This arrangement was highly satisfactory to me and judging from the results to her also.

Later in the fall, after I had returned home she produced a litter of seven pigs which Uncle Bert sold for me and shipped her back to me after the pigs were weaned. That fall I sold her to my father who in turn traded her to W.A. Nobles, Sr., a farmer who lived west of town on the Bridgeport road.

My father traded her for a "meat hog" of the same weight. I ate my share of the meat hog that winter of 1918-19. That ended my 4-H Project for that year.

World War I was about the beginning of the end for the family sized farm. Soon after the war the tractor and other power equipment were to bring about the modern corporate style farm, which seems to be the farm of the future. Along with the family operated farm the small farm supported town is either disappearing or changing its style.

Roff is in Pontotoc County, Oklahoma, which had once been a part of the Chickasaw Indian Nation. Roff was named by and for the Roff family, a Texas cattle family who under some sort of lease agreement with the Chickasaws or the Bureau of Indian Affairs had established a ranch in that area several years before Oklahoma became a state in 1907.

By 1918 the land had been cut up into farms and sold and the Roff ranch was gone. There was one member of the family still there who helped establish the ranch, but by 1918 he had become rather embittered and was quoted as saying that he hoped to live to see grass growing in the streets of Roff again. My information said that the old rancher almost got his wish when Roff began to follow the path and fate of other small farm centered towns of the country.

About 1920 or 1922 I revisited Roff and was introduced to Col. John James, an elderly gentleman who was a former President of Texas A.&M. Col. James lived in a sort of apartment in a building which had been a store when I was in Roff in 1918. Col. James had the shelves of what had been the store filled with books and rare documents, some of them written on parchment in Latin or Spanish. He was kind enough to allow me to examine some of these old books and documents. I remember him as a medium-sized, trim, erect man with a cropped moustache with all of the dignity, and yet affability that one would expect of a retired colonel and former President of Texas A.&M.

Col. James told me that he was acting as agent for some eastern capitalists who now owned a considerable amount of land near Roff. He explained that it was a temporary arrangement until he joined his family in California. It is my understanding that the eastern capitalists persuaded him to remain in Roff and look after their interests and that he died in Roff.

This is not exactly what I had planned to say this June 3, 1972, 54 years after the summer in Roff but it will have to do, these are the shadow filled memories.

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One of the things which makes writing these columns so much fun is meeting with old friends and former pupils and their families. The other day in one of the local stores I met Mrs. J.M. Hanberry ("Emie" to everyone in DeQuincy.) With her was Ken McArthur of New York City. Ken is the husband of Dana Beth Hayes, daughter of Mary Ruth Hanberry Hayes and her husband Knapp Hayes and Angela who will be four July 11 is the daughter of Ken and Dana Beth. The McArthurs and the family poodle, Neithe, drove down for a visit.

Another enjoyable visit was with Mrs. G.H. Barrow, (Ruby Streams). We met on the C-M Bank parking lot while waiting for the bank to open and caught up on the accounts of the comings and goings of our respective children and grandchildren.

## **FORGOTTEN THINGS**

Why is it that in the “big moments” of our lives we are likely to forget some important detail or piece of equipment which creates a problem which may spoil the whole affair?

Everyone knows stories about the man who planned the big fishing expedition and after a long trip discovered that he had forgotten his lures, or the hunter who reached his blind and discovered that he did not have the right ammunition.

Recently I was making a trip to stores and post office and to the News office to give Lola the copy for one of these columns. I reached the News office, started to get out of the car and realized that I had left the copy on the table at home. That situation was easily cleared up, but not so for all of them.

On the night of June 10 when “Miss Sondra” Irwin Starks and her associates were producing “Show Case of 1972” I am rather sure that more than one incident of a forgotten “prop” or part of a costume was forgotten.

My little neighbor to the west, just across the fence, Cindy Howard who is four, practiced and practiced and her mother (Judy) and perhaps others had worked for hours to make Cindy’s costume and each felt that all was complete.

Her Daddy (Bill) “laid off” from work to attend and doubtless both her Wilson and Howard grandparents as well as assorted uncles, aunts and cousins were all there to see Cindy perform.

Cindy slowed down long enough for us to see her in her basic costume before she left for the program. About fifteen minutes later Bill, Judy and Cindy left. Judy came rushing back home and dashed into the back door and I knew that some important part of the costume had been forgotten. Sure enough! It was Cindy’s baton, which was soon found and all was well.

If you think things like this just happen to little girls read the following. In September of 1970 we were all excited about going to Shreveport to attend our granddaughter Claire Blackwell’s wedding to Bill McNease. All was perfect we thought until we were about several miles up the highway near Hornbeck when it dawned on the grandmother that the dress she planned to wear to the wedding was still hanging in her cedarrobe back at DeQuincy.

Our first thought was to turn back for the dress, then we thought of asking Bill, who has a commercial pilot’s license, to borrow Mr. Edward’s plane and fly back for the dress. (Bill pilots for Mr. Edwards, a Shreveport businessman, all of the time when Bill is at home.)

A little more thought suggested that it might be better and cheaper to go on to Shreveport and try to find a dress at one of the stores. We were lucky enough to find a dress at the first store we tried.

During the twenties it was customary for the Hayes School to produce a full scale graduation ceremony for the seventh graders while the eighth and ninth graders produced a one-act play as part of the program. (Tenth and Eleventh graders attended the Bell City High School.)

The play for the year 1927 was a one-act skit called The Arrival of Billy. The “plot” was that a family received a telegram from some friends stating that the friends were going on a trip and wished the “play family”

to care for Billy. The family assumed that Billy was a baby and for the next few hours the family was busy getting a room ready for Billy. When Billy arrived he proved to be a large and well-fed tom cat.

A student was made responsible for seeing that a suitable cat was on hand and did so. The cat was placed in a class room until he was to make his entrance. Unfortunately, in the rush we failed to notice that a window had been left open in the room and it did not take “Billy” long to find the open window and he left for parts unknown.

The climax of the play was almost at hand there was no Billy. Students started rushing around the neighborhood to find an “understudy” for Billy but when the students dashed up the porch of a house to ask about a cat all of the cats immediately took fright and, in the words of my father’s generation, “Left for the tall and uncut areas.”

The best we could do was a somewhat underfed, half grown cat to take the role of Billy. He did the part to the satisfaction of a not too critical audience.

The graduation ceremony which followed the play was as formal as we could make it. The members of the seventh grade class were seated in a semi-circle on the stage, along with a Lake Charles attorney who was to make the graduation address. I was there in my capacity as principal of the school and master of ceremonies.

The Lake Charles attorney was in the middle of his address to the class, which was well mixed with some political philosophy directed at the adult members of the audience “just in case” the attorney might choose to become a candidate for public office sometime in the future, when Billy wandered in from the stage wings and proceeded to weave in and out among the feet of those on the stage, meowing in rather disconsolate tones all the time.

The attorney came in for his share of attention from Billy. As far as the address was concerned, I doubt if the audience heard another word of it; Billy “stole the show.”

## TRAIL RIDES

Recently two weekly newspapers, the DeQuincy News and the Wise County Messenger of Decatur, Tex., both featured stories on the same theme: people and horses.

That week at Sulphur was held the Louisiana High School Championship Rodeo in which a number of area boys and girls competed. The News carried pictures of Joy Woodard, Tina Perry, Dorman Coleman and Mike Beasley, Jr. Joy was riding in the barrel race and I assume that Tina was also, though no barrels are visible in the picture. Dorman and Mike were competing in the bull riding event.

Up at Decatur they use two different approaches to youth participation in such things, just as we do with the Junior Livestock Show and the High School Rodeo. They at Decatur call the fall event the Youth Fair in which the members of the 4-H, FFA and FHA compete in different ways with their exhibits.

From what I can learn from The Messenger, they, just as at Sulphur, have a parade with a lovely young lady crowned as Queen.

The account in The Messenger did not deal with the Youth Fair, which comes later in the year, but with a Trail Ride sponsored by the Sheriff's Posse. This year there were several dozen riders, young people and older, who rode out to Black Creek Lake for a picnic and just visiting. In years past the Trail Ride ended with an historical pageant depicting some event in early Wise County history and an overnight campout.

The Sheriff's Posse and the Trail Ride, as well as the Youth Fair, are all events which have originated since 1921, when I left Decatur.

In Los Angeles County, Calif., they have all sorts of youth programs, some of which are adapted to city life where 4-H and FFA are not so well known. Out there some of the high school boys and girls belong to a sort of Junior Sheriff's Posse. I shall have to ask Jane Ricketts, a senior at Lakewood High, to forgive her grandfather for not knowing the exact title of the organization to which she has belonged for the last two years, but it is something like the one given above.

As I understand it, the young people wear a uniform and shoulder patch. They assist in the sheriff's office doing clerical work, answering the telephone, ride in the patrol cars and sometimes, their proudest moments are when called upon to help direct traffic, in times of special occasions such as the Rose Bowl festivals, etc. In this way they learn about the law and government and the problems of a peace officer.

The Lakewood High School, which is a part of the Long Beach area, now recognizes the Posse as a part of the school program.

Now back to the rodeo. It is claimed that rodeos (Spanish for "round up") originated in the old open range days when the cowboys from different ranches met at the round up and competed in the different phases of their work. It is also claimed with justice that the methods, equipment and vocabulary of the rodeo originated with the Mexican vaqueros who taught the English speaking cowboy the art of handling cattle from horseback. The English speaking farmer both in Great Brittan and the eastern states of the United States handled his tame farm cattle on foot.

The first rodeos (we call them "wild west shows") which I can remember were back when the twentieth century and I were both in our early "teens". They were sort of traveling tent shows which played at county

fairs, reunions and other public gatherings. Dan Buck operated one of them and the Boone brothers another. One of the best known bucking horses was a sort of chestnut sorrel with a “flaxie” mane and tail and called Flaxie. (Girls with blonde flaxen hair were also likely to be nicknamed Flaxie.)

Another grey bucking horse was White Cloud. There were no chutes for saddling and mounting the buck, he was snubbed up to the saddle horn of another horse. It was said of Flaxie that when he was not “snubbed” he was perfectly tame and was ridden in the parade; sometimes a woman rode him, without difficulty.

Buck and the Boone brothers could be called the professionals, I suppose, but there were others who rode just for the fun and excitement of it just as the High School Rodeo contestants today. B. Fox and “Little Guinn” Williams were two of this last group whom I recall. Guinn later went to Hollywood where, as “Big Boy” Williams, he was to become a well known screen actor of usually western roles.

The Fort Worth Fat Stock Show, which was held in the spring each year, sponsored the first “big time” professional rodeo which I knew about. I do not recall that they featured barrel racing and pole bending for the women.

In fact, women rodeo performers were rare.

One of the featured events was an act by Virgil Keel of Gainesville. Mr. Keel was a horse trainer, not in the sense of a trainer of race horses, but a trainer of show horses. He trained and rode two different horses that were trained to hurdle a car filled with passengers. The car was an old fashioned touring car with the top folded back, the horse leaping from side to side of the car. Mr. Keel used a flat English saddle for his act. Later when the Gainesville, Texas, Community Circus was produced by the local people, Mr. Keel’s trained horses was one of the highlights of the circus.

So, high school students, whether you participate in the High School Rode, the Youth Fair, The Trail Ride, the Junior Sheriff’s Posse or any other worthwhile undertaking, enjoy it, keep the contest and yourselves clean and make your parents and, above all, your grandparents, proud of you.

It is not “against the rules” for a grandfather, or a grandmother to brag on their grandchildren, especially grandfathers to brag about granddaughters. It is one of our proudest and happiest moments when you have done something worthwhile and we lean back and say, “That’s my granddaughter, “ or “he is my grandson.”

## **MEDICAL BELIEFS IN EARLIER TIMES**

To those of us who can remember as far back as a couple of generations a visit to a modern hospital, a clinic or a doctor's office the changes are almost unbelievable. Instruments, techniques and remedies which were unknown fifty years ago are commonplace now.

In ancient times diseases and ailments were almost universally believed to be caused by some supernatural power, an angry god or an evil spirit. The efforts of the healers were largely to the casting out of malignant beings. The priest and physician were usually one and the same.

The pre-Christian Greeks are generally believed but not universally, believed to have been the first to have reached the decision that there might be a natural cause for illness and that if the cause could be found there might be a remedy for the disease. Sometimes their ideas had a sort of scientific basis and sometimes not.

For example, the Greek physicians prescribed ashes of seaweed for the treatment of goiter. Today it is generally accepted that I believe that goiter is caused by a lack of iodine in the body. It is also known that iodine is found in seaweed and the ashes actually helped the goiter. There were other remedies which had some basis in scientific medicine of the times.

Skipping over the Middle Ages to the American colonial era, doctors were rare and people, especially those on the frontier, depended upon home remedies of all sorts; herbs, animal parts and minerals. The "mad stone" was used to treat the bites of rabid animals and to "draw the poison" from all sorts of wounds. A pinch of gun powder placed in a wound and then ignited was also used to combat infection and homemade wines and corn whiskey were specifics. The old standard treatments of blister, bleed, puke, purge or perspire were common.

Some claim that George Washington was literally bled to death by his doctor in an attempt to treat some sort of respiratory ailment, pneumonia some believe. The "herb doctor", either male or female was usually found in every community. Gene Stratton Porter was to make one of herbalist the hero of one of her novels, "The Harvester."

Medical schools and doctors were hard pressed to find cadavers for dissection in their study of anatomy. They depended upon the bodies of executed criminals and unidentified bodies generally with sometimes a case of "grave robbing."

Readers of Mark Twain's "Tom Sawyer" will recall the midnight grave yard scene wherein Tom and Huck went out to the cemetery at midnight to use a little incantation to cure warts and were the involuntary witnesses of a murder when "Injun Joe" and Muff Potter murdered the young doctor they had been hired by to rob a grave of a body to be used for dissection by the doctor.

During the Civil War my maternal grandfather, David W. Pace of Walker's Division CSA while in north Louisiana became ill of what was known as "slow fever." He and the Army doctor thought he was going to die but he happened to be lying nears some blackberry bushes and ate some of the berries. He recovered from the ailment. Several years ago I asked the late Dr. A.E. Douglas about "slow fever" and he told me that it was probably a low grade typhoid infection and that the tannic acid in the berries might have helped it.

After World War II our daughter Dorothy (Ricketts) told me that her neighbor in southwest Missouri regularly canned blackberry juice which they used as a remedy for “summer complaint” in small children. Losses of children in their “second summer” from this ailment were common at one time.

Most farm families own some sort of “doctor book” which they consulted in time of need. These books attempted to help the reader diagnose the common ailments and suggested available remedies. (These books had a lot of other useful information; the one my grandfather owned had a sample of letters of all types.

(There was one to be used when a man wished to write a young lady proposing marriage, there were three types of answers, one accepting the proposal, one rejecting it, and a third rejecting the proposal for the time being but leaving the matter open for further discussion.)

Before World War I a medical education was not as long and expensive as now and the requirements for admission to medical school not so rigid. Consequently men became doctors who find it impossible to study medicine today. The devoted “horse and buggy doctor” spent many hours of his time traveling to the homes of patients, these hours were lost time for the doctors. It took more doctors to care for the same number of people than now.

I can recall the names of seven doctors who practiced at Decatur, Tex., during those years with about the same population as the DeQuincy area now. In addition to the seven doctors there were others in outlying communities which do not have a doctor now.

The late Dr. R.R. Arceneaux and Dr. Claude E. Martin of Welsh (Dr. Martin was Louisiana’s most decorated soldier in WWI.) as well as Dr. Price, Dr. Douglas and Dr. Lyons and Dr. Howell all of the DeQuincy area were of this devoted group of “horse and buggy doctors” who later “graduated” into “automobile doctors.”

Dr. Arceneaux owned the second Model A Ford I ever saw. There were many others; Dr. Culpepper of Singer and the Vines brothers who practiced in this area. Their names are “Legion” and their service incalculable.

One day over forty years ago the late Dr. C.R. Price remarked to me, “We older doctors do know much but these young men who come out of Tulane today (this was before LSU Medical School was founded) are real doctors.” Some of these “young men” whom I met or knew personally were: Dr. W.G. Hart of Starks, Dr. Edwin Laundry of DeQuincy and later New Iberia, Dr. Sorrels of Iowa, Dr. Robert Howell of Lake Charles and of course our own Dr. Drez of DeQuincy.

Dr. Bishop and his former partner, Dr. Witherington, while not Tulane graduated, are of the same group of “young doctors” of whom Dr. Price spoke so highly.



## DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY OF 1912

When this appears in The DeQuincy News, the Democratic National Convention will be just about at the point of nominating candidates for President and Vice-President.

The first Convention of which I have any memory of at all (that memory is rather vague) was that of 1912 which was held at Baltimore. The Republicans had held their convention and split when the regular Republicans, the GOP, nominated Pres. William Howard Taft for a second term and the Progressive wing of the party withdrew and later in the summer nominated former Pres. Teddy Roosevelt and adopted the name Progressive for their party and used the Bull Moose as their emblem.

When the Democratic convention convened the Conservatives had as their leading candidate Speaker of the House Champ Clark of Missouri while the Progressive branch favored Gov. Woodrow Wilson of New Jersey. There was the usual list of "favorite son" candidates who were to receive complimentary votes but which no one took as serious candidates.

Present at the Convention but not an avowed candidate was William Jennings Bryan of Nebraska who had been the Democratic nominee three times, in 1896, 1900 and 1908. He was famous for his doctrine of "Free Coinage of Silver" as well as some other ideas which caused him to be labeled as a Populist.

At that time the Democratic Party required a two thirds majority of the votes of the delegates for nomination. Until the tenth ballot Speaker Clark was leading but still short of the two thirds and Gov. Wilson was second. On the tenth ballot the New York delegation, which had been supporting a token candidate, switched its vote to Clark.

At this point there arises a sort of historical controversy. Two different text books which we have used in senior American History High School classes for at least a generation state that at this point Bryan took the floor and announced that if Wall Street and Tammany Hall were for Clark that he was withdrawing his support from his Missouri friend and neighbor, Clark, and casting the Nebraska vote for Wilson and called up the Middle Western delegates to join him, which they did. The articles of Bryan and Wilson from the Encyclopedia Britannica agree with this story.

However, a detailed biography of Wilson by three competent authors, former newsmen Williams Eaton, Henry C. Read and Edmund McKenny, does not mention this incident and rather infer that Bryan turned against Wilson and that Wilson's supporters wanted to "read Bryan out of the party."

Dr. Keith Bryant, Jr., Associate Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, himself a native of Oklahoma and the author of a biography of "Alfalfa Bill" Murray of Oklahoma, says that Murray made the speech which turned the mid-western delegates to Wilson and won the nomination for Wilson. Dr. Bryant cites in his footnotes news stories from the larger city newspapers written by reporters who were present at the Convention.

Pres. Wilson evidently gave both Bryan and Murray credit for helping with the nomination as Bryan was appointed Secretary of State and Murray, as a member of Congress from Oklahoma, was, according to Dr. Bryant, a frequent visitor at the White House and was consulted by the president concerning affairs in the mid-west.

To me another interesting Convention is that of 1956. I have a transcript of some of the proceedings of that Convention, which met in Chicago, on the wire of an old wire recorder which I took down from radio broadcasts. This machine was the forerunner of modern tape recorders and is usually of interest to young people born since 1940. I re-played these old recordings for the material for the following:

Pauline Frederick, a well known personage of the news broadcasting system from the United Nations, first became prominent in that field when she helped broadcast the news of the Convention. Her unique voice is the first thing heard on Reel 1 of the transcript. The late Speaker of the House, Sam Rayburn of Texas (Mr. Sam), was Permanent Chairman of the Convention and his voice is recognizable to those of us who remember hearing him at other times.

Due to the technical difficulties with the recorder names and other dates are not always clear, but the key note speaker "pointed with pride" to the accomplishments of the Roosevelt-Truman administrations and "viewed with alarm" the history of the first Eisenhower administration. The Civil Rights discussion of 1954 was under discussion and drew considerable opposition from some of the conservative Democrats.

On Reel II Sen. John McCormick, who was Chairman of the Platform Committee, presented the platform, which was too long to record. Sen. Jackson of Washington made an eloquent speech nominating someone from the northwest but due to a burst of static the recording does not give his name.

When the roll call of the states was resumed and Arizona was called, the chairman of the Arizona delegation, probably Senator Carl Hayden yielded to Massachusetts and Chairman Rayburn introduced the Junior Senator from Massachusetts, Hon. John F. Kennedy, who made the nominating speech for former Gov. Adlai E. Stephenson. Future president Kennedy is clear and easily recognizable. Former Gov. John Connally made a seconding address. In the nominating speech the late Pres. Kennedy referred to former Pres. Truman as "the man from Independence" and Stevenson as "the man from Libertyville."

The Governor of North Carolina placed the name of Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas in nomination. Among other nominees were Averill Harriman and Stewart Symington. Stevenson was nominated on the first ballot when Pennsylvania cast its 57 votes for him with 12 states yet to vote. Former Pres. Truman was asked how he felt about the nomination and stated that while he favored Harriman he would support the ticket.

Reel IV of the transcription carried the acceptance speech of Gov. Stevenson but, Alas! A technical weakness of the wire recorder caused it to be lost. The wires would carry only 30 minutes of recording and if the machine was not stopped just before the end of the reel, the reel was likely to break and then the magnetized wire became tangled mass impossible to untangle and use. I was trying to get all of the speech and ran the machine too long and the wire broke, so I lost all of the speech.

The cool stormy Fourth of July reminds me of the Fourth of 1924 which had similar weather.

I was a student at Abilene Christian College that summer. I remember the auto races at the fairgrounds in Abilene were cancelled. I did not attend the races but was downtown and had to go back to my room and put on a winter suit to be comfortable. Mrs. Ratliff, and I were not married and she says that it sleeted down at Hamilton, Tex., where her family lived.

The Fourth of 1908 was a typical hot, dry Texas July day, memorable to me because at the age of seven I attended with my father and two brothers a picnic sponsored by the Woodmen of the World out in the woods near Bridgeport, Tex.

There I saw my first ice cream cones which other people were eating. I recognized the ice cream but the cones were new to me and being a sort of “conservative” I spent my nickel for a bottle of a known delicacy, strawberry soda pop. What Dennis and Roy bought with their nickels I do not know.

The DeQuincy News. Remembering With Ratliff... DeQuincy Louisiana, July 19, 1972

## **TRADE DAYS IN DEQUINCY IN 1930'S AND 1940'S**

On Sunday, July 9, The Texas Star, the Sunday supplement to the Beaumont Enterprise, carried a story called First Monday in Canton, which was the story of Trader's Day in that east Texas town.

It seems that a number of towns throughout the South in the years following the Civil War and extending up until about the time of WW II had such a day, the object of which was to bring farm families together for one day each month to visit, to buy and sell and to “swap” articles with each other. It was also a good opportunity for young people to meet, to arrange dates and pass the news of parties, “candy breaks” and other affairs of interest.

The two of these Trader's Day or Trade Days which I remember were First Monday at Decatur, Tex., and Trades Day at DeQuincy. My first memories of First Monday at Decatur go back to about 1910 when it was called Horse Trader's Day or just First Monday. Saturday before First Monday was rather dull as far as business was concerned since farm families who normally would come to town on Saturday waited until Monday. The merchants took advantage of the slack business on Saturday to rearrange their stock on the shelves and to select the merchandise which would be “on sale” on First Monday.

The restaurants stocked up on hamburger meat and buns as well as the ingredients for making chili. The meat markets, which were now a part of the grocery stores, did the barbequing in large pans outside of the market. At the Morris blacksmith shop we put tools back into their proper places and swept the floor of trimmings from horse and mule hooves.

Early Monday morning the people started coming to town; first the professional horse dealers, we called them horse “jockeys”, then itinerant peddlers, medicine show people and sometimes street preachers and candidates for office, on election years, followed by the farm families bringing with them farm products: fruits and vegetables in season, watermelons, tomatoes, peaches and plums and anything else that might be considered salable.

The horse traders usually had a bale of hay in a wagon and when they reached the “traders' ground”, which was behind the Masonic building and the county jail near the water tower; they tied their horses around the wagon so that the horses could nibble the hay. The public water trough was nearby and the traders were in business. The horses were usually not high priced stock but just plain “plugs” which in time came to be referred to as “first Mondays”. Anyone wishing to buy or sell such an animal could usually find a deal.

These “horse jockeys” had one iron clad rule, they never made an even trade, if they were exchanging one animal for another, even thought the animal they received might be better than the animal they traded the customer always paid a certain amount of cash “to boot”. This was the “jockey's” profit and his way of earning a living!

In time all sorts of livestock were brought in for sale: hogs, milch cows (I never saw any beef cattle on sale on First Monday), calves, once in a while a goat or two, but no sheep, and poultry of all kinds. It was a lively day for all.

Here in DeQuincy it was somewhat different. First of all, Trades Day was held on Saturday and horse dealers were not especially concerned with it. It may have been because by that time horses were going out as work animals and had not come into popularity as pleasure animals.

The prime mover of the idea seems to have been Mr. Kendall, Superintendent of this Division of the MOP railway, though there were other DeQuincy business and professional men who took leading parts in the Trades Day movement. Some of these men were the late Judge Brice, the Abdallas, father and sons, T.E. MacNamara of the National Department Store, C.E. Cline of the Lyons Lumber and Coal Co., and Clyde Walker of the Perkins Pharmacy. These are the ones I seem to recall, but I know there were others who had a prominent part in promoting Trades Day.

I never knew Mr. Kendall except by sight, but he seems to have been a born booster of the town and the MOP railway. He sponsored a brass band which was made up largely if not completely of MOP personnel. I have forgotten the exact name of the band but it may have been The Orleanian Booster Band or the DeQuincy Booster Band.

He also sponsored a semi-professional baseball team which was called the Orleanians and composed of MOP employees. It was "whispered around" that some of the men were hired because they were good baseball players and not because they had skills the railway needed. The name Orleanian was derived from the name of the crack passenger train which the MOP operated between New Orleans and Houston in competition with the Southern Pacific Sunset Limited.

Be all this last as it may, The Orleanians beat the New York Giants in one of the Giants' pre-season games so the late T.S. Cooley, former principal of the DeQuincy Schools, told me.

As I recall, the merchants of DeQuincy gave numbered tickets with each purchase, one part of which was placed in a revolving barrel-like drum and the customer retaining the stub. The merchants contributed goods and cash as prizes, to be given away on Trades Day. At the beginning some of the most desirable prizes were registered Jersey heifers which the MOP, inspired by Mr. Kendall, contributed. They had to be brought from "tick" country; otherwise they would have died from tick fever which was common in this area at that time.

Gordon Baxter, a young radio Disc jockey from Port Arthur, sometimes came over and acted as Master of Ceremonies at the talent show and the drawings. However, I do recall that the late W.L. Land, a MOP employee, sometimes acted as MC.

In the talent show youngsters and older people as well took part and competed for prizes. There were tap dances, fiddlers, vocalists, both solo and groups; in fact, any talent which people would enjoy. These talent shows were not as elaborate as the ones that Mrs. Sondra Starks, Mrs. Betty Lou Allen and other teachers were to produce later, but they were fun during the Depression years.

Perhaps World War II and the end of the Depression took our minds off the need for a Trades Day; at least it seems to have ended about then.

## PETERSON FAMILY

Saturday afternoon of July 15 I had the honor and privilege of being an invited guest at one of the most unusual family gathering it has been my pleasure to attend.

It was a gathering of the Peterson family and their intermarried relatives held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Milton Peterson in West Park addition to DeQuincy for the purpose of introducing three of their relatives from Jakobsrad, Finland: Mrs. Nils V. Sundqvist, her son Sture and Mrs. Lea Holm.

Sture is seventeen and the equivalent of a junior in high school with us and except for his accent English would be indistinguishable from most of our high school juniors.

We older residents of this area, and some of the younger ones, know about the small group of immigrants of Swedish ancestry but there were also natives of Finland who arrived here about the turn of the century.

Among these families were the Petersons, the Carlsons, the Backlunds, the Dahlquists, and the Victor Birches, some of the Johnsons and the Streams and perhaps others that I do not know about.

The people of the Republic of Finland are of several ethnic groups; the Finns who came in from the east about 700 A.D. and the Laps who live in the far northern part of the country. About 1155 A.D. the Swedes conquered the country and the Swedes began migrating to the western and southern part of the country. From this area came the people named above who are our friends and neighbors.

In 1809 Sweden was forced to cede Finland to Russia and Finland became a semi-independent grand duchy with the Czar of Russia as the Grand Duke. Otto Backlund told me that he was still mad because our immigration officials insisted on listing him as a Russian when he arrived in this country at the age of 17. In 1919 at the close of WW I Finland became an independent republic.

Finland is a timbered country and the Swedes of Finland were skilled timber workers; they were much sought after as timber workers in this country. Just who was the first person of this background to come to this area I am not sure but Lee Peterson told me that his father made several trips back to Finland to recruit workers for the lumber companies of this area.

One of the unusual things about the Scandinavian nations, Sweden, Norway and Denmark, was that until recent generations they did not use family names which are passed on from father to son. One of their customs was that when a boy was christened with a first name he then took his father's Christian name and attached the suffix "son". Thus a boy who was christened as John and whose father's name was Peter became John Peterson and in turn John's sons might call themselves Johnson.

Lee Peterson told me that when his father Isaac arrived in this country he told the immigration officials that he did not have a last name. The authorities told him that he would have to have one and then Isaac followed the old custom and took his father's given name of Peter and added the "son" and became Isaac Peterson.

There were exceptions to this method of naming people. Sometimes a person might take the name of a place from which he came or some geographical feature near his home or even a personal characteristic. Tom Streams told me that his family name was Lindstrom in Finland but that the immigration authorities wrote it

down as Streams. Later Mrs. Victor Birch (She was one of the last of the original immigrants) told me that Lindstrom meant a “valley stream”, hence the name Streams.

I failed to ask Mrs. Holm what her name means in English but I did tell her that I knew a German Lutheran pastor by that name in west Texas 50 years ago and there is a Danish explorer by that name mentioned in the encyclopedia.

The late Mrs. Otto Carlson told me that in her childhood in Finland that due to the custom of using a father’s surname with the “son” suffix that there were not many different family names and that in a directory of any sort there would be a long list of repeated names used by people who were of no known relationship.

One of the interesting relics on exhibition at the Peterson party was a small Elgin hunting case watch of the type which ladies carried at the turn of the century. The ladies carried them on a long chain which hung around the neck like a necklace or the watch could be hung on a small gold fastener which was pinned onto the front of a dress. The Elgin Company must have made them by the thousands; both Mrs. Ratliff’s mother and my mother owned one. Dr. Fred J. Peterson, now of Crowley, owns one of the two Peterson watches and Lee Peterson the other.

It seems that it was the custom in Finland years ago that when a young man wishes to propose to a young lady he offered her a watch and if she accepted it then it was understood that they were engaged.

On one of the Isaac Peterson’s trips back to Finland recruiting labor he took the Elgin watch with him and gave it to his father with the request that he present it to a certain young lady to whom Isaac wished to propose. His father said that if his son did not have the courage to offer the watch to the young lady himself he did not deserve to marry her, so the father kept the watch himself. The watch was handed down in the family since 1893 and last year when Fred and his family were visiting the relatives the watch was given to him. It still runs perfectly.

Later Isaac Peterson bought a similar watch for another young lady which she accepted. She became the ancestress of the DeQuincy Petersons and their descendants of other names. Lee has this second watch.

To me a regrettable thing about all of the Swedish-Finlander people of our area is that they let the knowledge of the Swedish language and literature die out with the second and later generations of the family; there was a communications barrier to some extent between the DeQuincy members of the party and the visitors.

With all of the delicious Swedish-American style food, featuring roasts, barbeques, salads and desserts, it was no place for a calorie-conscious individual, but I am very glad that I was there and I thank all of the Petersons and their families for inviting me. I shall never forget them and the occasion.

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Since writing this article, I have found that the name Holm means live oak tree.

## **POLITICS IN LOUISIANA IN THE 1930'S**

The recent death of Senator Allen J. Ellender just on the Democratic Primary in which he was a candidate and the resulting confusion recalls an even more complicated situation in which Senator Ellender played a part about 40 years ago.

In 1930, Gov. Huey P. Long defeated Senator Joseph E. Ransdell for the senatorial nomination for the Democratic Party, which in those days in Louisiana was equivalent to election. At that time the Federal Constitution read that the newly elected senators and representatives did not take office until about 13 months after the election. In this case Senator-elect Long, who was elected in November of 1930, would not assume office until December of 1931.

As the time drew near, for the newly-elected congressmen and senators to take office, it seemed to be generally assumed that Sen. Long would resign his governor and assume his seat as senator. However, Long and Dr. Paul Cyr (he was a dentist by profession), the lieutenant-governor, had come to the parting of the ways personally and politically and Long refused to surrender the office to Cyr.

Some of Long's opponents argued that he had automatically given up the office of Governor when he was elected senator but Long insisted that since he had not taken the oath of office as a senator that he was still governor and that the senate seat was vacant. He said that under Sen. Ransdell the seat had been practically vacant anyhow and that the state was no worse off.

Some one convinced Dr. Cyr that if he took the oath of office as governor he would become the legal governor of the state. Some authorities have suspected that he fell into a trap set by Long and that Cyr's advisers were really Long supporters.

Long insisted that Cyr had vacated the office of lieutenant-governor and that he now held no public office at all. The case was thrown into the courts for a decision. Long called Senator Alvin King of Lake Charles, a Long supporter, who as Chairman of the Senate was third in line of succession to the governorship and asked King to come to Baton Rouge, to take the oath and assume the office of governor. This was done and Long went on to Washington to assume the office of senator.

In the election in the early weeks of January 1932, Oscar K. Allen, also a Long supporter was elected as governor and was installed on May 16, 1932. For the next three years or so the main problems of the state were those growing out of the Great Depression which Gov. Allen handled as well as could be expected, I suppose. Senator Long kept a firm hand on the affairs of the state and it seems to have been generally understood that Gov. Allen was merely a "stand in" for Long.

On Sept. 6, 1935, Long was assassinated in the corridor of the state capitol while on one of his "friendly visits" to the Legislature which was in session. Long's death again threw the political affairs of the state into confusion.

As the Constitution of Louisiana then read a governor could not immediately succeed himself in office but governors usually tried to secure the election of a friend who would continue the policies which the governor advocated. Accordingly, Gov. Allen and Senator Long selected Judge Richard E. Leche, who was elected. The people of Louisiana were assured that Judge Leche was a calm judicially-minded person who would not use his office to further the political affairs of the Long faction.

He was compared with former President and later Supreme Court Chief Justice William Howard Taft whom Leche was said to resemble in physical appearance and temperament. Most of us, including the writer, breathed sighs of relief at this information.

Gov. Allen was elected to serve out the remainder of the term of the late Senator Long but Gov. Allen died suddenly on Jan. 28, 1936, before he had relinquished the office of governor or assumed that of Senator. The office of lieutenant-governor was vacant as John B. Fournet had resigned that office to accept appointment as Justice of the State Supreme Court. Again the Chairman of the Senate, in this case James A. Noe, was called upon to assume the governorship, which he did, and served until May 12, 1936. Gov. Noe appointed Mrs. Rose Long, widow of the late senator, to the office of senator to serve the remainder of her late husband's term. It was said that when Sen. Russell Long was elected to the office some years later he became the only person in the history of the Senate both of whose parents had served as senators.

It was said that the Rev. Gerald L.K. Smith, former pastor of a Shreveport church, but now the chief organizer and fund raiser for Long's SHARE-THE-WEALTH clubs was "waiting in the wings" expecting to be called to be appointed as senator to fill out the unexpired term and be the party's nominee for the regular term at the election of 1936. If this is true, he was doomed to disappointment. He was a member of the upper echelon of the Long organization but those who were members regarded him as one of the "hired hands" to be dropped when he was no longer useful. In any case he was dropped and lives now in California and publishes a violently anti-Semitic magazine, THE CROSS AND THE FLAG!

The man selected to run for senator on the Long ticket in 1936 was Allen J. Ellender of Terrebonne Parish.

Perhaps Sen. Ellender's first state-wide attention came when he served as a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1921 from Terrebonne Parish. One of his fellow delegates was another rising young attorney from Beauregard Parish, Sam Houston Jones, destined to serve as governor from 1940-44 as an "anti-Long" governor. Ellender was elected to the state House of Representatives in 1924, was made floor leader for Long in 1928 and Speaker in 1932. He was one of the Long supporters who blocked the attempt to impeach Gov. Long in 1932.

Following his election to the Senate in 1936, he was re-elected five more terms and was an active candidate for this seventh term at the time of his death. It was said by one of his political opponents that when the Legislature was investigating the so-called Long scandals beginning in 1939, Sen. Ellender was one man who was completely exonerated in every detail. In spite of his age, 81 years, it was generally conceded that he would be hard to defeat for his seventh term.

So far as I knew, his last public appearance in DeQuincy was in the spring of 1966 when he was the speaker at the Chamber of Commerce banquet held in the high school cafeteria. I made a tape recording of that address which may still be on file at the DeQuincy High School.

One is led to speculate as follows: If Gov. Allen had not died in office as governor before assuming the office as senator he would have in likelihood been elected for a full term in 1936 and Senator Ellender would have probably never been elected and the state of Louisiana, the United States and indeed the whole world would have been the poorer without the services of "The Old M'Sieur," Senator Ellender, in the United States Senate.



## PAT PATILLO

The recent death of James S. (Pat) Patillo, a long-time citizen of DeQuincy and retired MOP blacksmith, recalled an association I had with him during WW II.

At that time I was local leader for the DeQuincy 4-H Club and also a member of the Civilian Defense Council. In those capacities it was a part of my job to go from place to place appearing before groups to encourage the raising of gardens and other food products.

My “specialty” was demonstrating the popular LSU type sand floor chicken brooder and to talk about raising chickens for home consumption. Several trips were made at night to the old Rosenwald School here in DeQuincy to put on the program. It was there that I met Mr. Patillo, Pat to his friends.

Since I did not have a car he called me at my home, helped me load my equipment, which included some live chickens, transported me and it to the school, helped unload it and then after the program made the return trip.

While traveling, and sometimes waiting for the audience to assemble, we just talked. Since I had served a sort of apprenticeship as a blacksmith, we talked about the tools and skills involved in that trade. From there, other subjects of more personal nature arose.

While he never said so, the time and place of his birth would indicate that his parents were born and lived their early lives in bondage. James S. Patillo was born and lived most of his life during a time when black Americans were legally free and endowed with all of the rights and responsibilities of any American citizen, but actually by custom and sometime by local and state laws they were subject to a great many restrictions, politically, socially, economically and educationally. Anyone old enough to recall the old Rosenwald School in DeQuincy will remember the educational situation.

If he told me I have forgotten just how he did it, but somehow young James S. Patillo made his way to Tuskegee Institute at Tuskegee, Ala., where he enrolled to learn the trade of blacksmith. I do recall that I asked him if he knew the world-famous scientist and humanitarian, Dr. George Washington Carver.

His reply I shall never forget, “Oh, yes, I knew Dr. Carver very well and used to shine his shoes. That was the way I helped pay my way through school.” Later he was to pay me a compliment of which I was and am still humbly proud. He said, “You, Mr. Ratliff, you remind me of Dr. Carver a great deal.” I was never paid a higher compliment.

I am aware that some young black Americans do not revere Dr. Carver and his great sponsor Dr. Booker T. Washington, and look upon them as subservient “Uncle Toms”, but these young people, in my opinion, fail to recall that these two great American educators and scientists had really a start from the bottom.

They were both born in bondage and had to use whatever means that were available to obtain an education for themselves and lay the foundation for the present, to them unbelievable, opportunities for black Americans. They, especially Dr. Washington, without power of any sort, political, social or economic, had to accomplish most of what they did on the white man’s terms.

One young black American leader was recently quoted as saying, “I am tired of hearing about George Washington Carver and his peanuts!” Yet it was with those peanuts that he was to make a start.

There is a story that he was to appear before a Congressional Committee to explain a part of his program to help southern farmers of all races with a better way of life through peanuts. At first the Committee had in mind that they would be dealing with some ignorant black who would exhaust the subject within a few minutes. Dr. Carver astounded them with his knowledge of the subject and the possibilities for the lowly peanut.

It was through the new uses for the peanut, more than one hundred, and an equal number of new uses for sweet potatoes that he was to change the whole picture of southern farming and bring new products to relieve the needs of people throughout the world.

Dr. Carver never married and the story is told that someone asked him why he had never married and his reply was, "Where would I ever find a wife who would be willing for her husband to be constantly getting up at 4 A.M. to go to see about some scientific experiment?"

After more than 50 years of studying and teaching history, I am of the opinion that no ethnic group in this age has in an equal length of time made the progress in all fields that black Americans have made in the past century. Some anthropologists and other related fields of study are of the opinion that black Americans are now a distinctly cultural group which is no longer related to African culture. They are now Americans and not Africans.

Somehow I believe that James S. Patillo must have caught some of the fire from the torch of Dr. Carver which enabled him to rise from the economic status into which he was born and to earn a position of respect among his neighbors and fellow citizens.

I didn't teach any of the Patillo children, but I know some of them and know of the outstanding record of Dr. Roland Patillo, M.D., of Milwaukee, Wisc.

The Patillo family stands as an example of what white and black Americans can accomplish if the spark of ambition and the power of the will to make the effort are within their hearts and minds.

## H.M. WELLS

Recently Mrs. W.W. Grimes called my attention to an item in the Fifty Years Ago column of the Lake Charles American-Press in which Parish Superintendent F.K. White announced a partial list of the principals of some of the Calcasieu Parish schools for the session of 1922-23.

In August of 1925 I was to meet all of these men and to serve in the school system with them. Of those named only two are still living: former Superintendent H.A. Norton and I.D. Bayne who in 1933 was the principal of the Bell City School but later was to serve for over 30 years as a principal of the Sulphur Schools.

Perhaps the name of most interest to DeQuincy people would be that of the late H.M. Wells who in 1922 was beginning his career as principal of the DeQuincy School which was to extend until 1928 when he resigned to become the principal of the DeRidder Schools. He held this position until the fall of 1929 when he was appointed as assistant-superintendent of the Calcasieu Parish school system. He remained in this position until 1934 when he resigned to accept the position of Parish Superintendent of the Rapides Parish School system, which position he held until his retirement several years later.

Mr. Wells was succeeded as assistant-superintendent of the Calcasieu Parish Schools by the late T.S. Cooley who had succeeded him as principal at DeQuincy.

In the news item Superintendent White referred to Mr. Wells as "a strong school man," a very apt description.

Mr. Wells was a big man physically who spoke in a rather slow Mississippi drawl but somehow you could detect the "iron" in his voice and knew that when he spoke he meant business. He was the type of Mississippian of whom it was said that, "They feared only God and the IRS." He attended college in Mississippi, Milsaps I believe, where he played football at a time when football players were equipped with very little protective gear. A lawyer by training, he somehow became involved in teaching and practiced law very little, if any at all. He and the late John McNeese, parish superintendent of Imperial Calcasieu Schools from 1888-1913, were alike in that they were both lawyers who became involved with school work and devoted their lives to it.

Mr. Wells had served as principal of the Clinton, La. High School where, according to the Rev. A.A. McKnight who was a student in Clinton High School during Mr. Wells tenure as principal. He became known as Hell-A-Mile-Wide.

During and just after WW I the DeQuincy School had gotten "out of hand" as far as discipline was concerned. The principal during those years was a scholarly man who, like many of that type, was not very well suited to administrative work and enforcement of discipline among the high school age boys.

The School Board employed Mr. Wells and instructed him to get the situation at DeQuincy under control. Supt. White also had deserved a reputation as a "tamer" of unruly student bodies as any former students of Sulphur High School before 1916 will verify, I believe. Yet, W.E. Pate, who was principal of DeQuincy High from 1945-1951, told me that he found in the old files in the high school office letters from Supt. White suggesting to Mr. Wells that perhaps he ought to ease up a little. Copies of replies from Mr. Wells mentioned that he had been employed to get the DeQuincy School under control and that he proposed to do just that by whatever means he saw fit to use.

Mrs. Edna Mills Willrich said that when she first came to DeQuincy to teach she saw from the high school schedule she had been assigned to teach a class in General Science. She started to tell Mr. Wells that General Science was not within her field. He said, "Come on, Miss Mills, I'll show you the General Science laboratory." She taught the course and if I know Mrs. Willrich she did a good job of it.

Mr. Wells lived in the present Phelan Hyatt home at the corner of Second and McNeese Streets and kept an eye on the school campus around the clock. It has been said that he even patrolled the streets in his car some nights to keep an eye on the activities of pupils and teachers. (The School Board had passed a set of rules regarding the activities of teachers on school nights which today would probably lead to a general walkout of the facilities of the parish schools.)

One story says that on the opening day of school in that September of 1922 Mr. Wells was standing on the stage of the auditorium of the original DeQuincy School building, the old Middle Building which was burned in 1943, making some routine announcements concerning school policies about pupil conduct when he was interrupted by a couple of loud guffaws from a pair of larger high school boys. Mr. Wells stepped down off the platform, without raising his voice or breathing any faster, walked back to the two, hauled them out of their seats by their collars, shook them up rather roughly, pushed them back into their seats, returned to the platform and continued his announcements. There were no more interruptions of any kind.

One student of those days told me a few years ago that he was caught with a package of cigarettes on the school ground and that Mr. Wells provided him with a shovel, conducted him to the rear of the campus and ordered him to dig a full size human grave and bury the cigarettes or face expulsion. He buried the cigarettes.

Another story which is still told, with slight variations as to the details, is one that I heard again a couple of months ago. A certain irate patron called up the school and threatened to come out to whip one of the teachers. Mr. Wells is said to have told the patron, "Come on out, I take care of all the fighting that is done here and I shall be glad to accommodate you." The irate patron did not come out.

Yet, in spite of all these stories, no principal was ever more willing to go to full lengths to help the student or teacher who was having problems and needed help. Older men and women who attended the DeQuincy School during those days say that, "If it had not been for Mr. Wells and his help I never would have made it." That "help" included anything that he could do to help the "struggler."

One cold winter day during the Depression, while he was assistant superintendent and elementary supervisor, when he was visiting the Starks School he saw a little barefooted girl whose feet were blue with cold. He took her to a store and from his own pocket bought her some stockings and a pair of shoes. This was when his own salary had been cut to the bone.

Hell-A-Mile-Wide when the situation demanded it but equally Heart-A-Mile-Wide when the need arose. There were not many like him and he belonged to a vanishing breed.

## PISTOLS

The recent attempt at enactment by Congress of law to control the manufacture, sale and ownership of small, short barreled revolvers commonly referred to as “Saturday Night Specials” brings to mind a number of things concerning the revolver and the history of the American west.

When Bill Carlisle, whose profession is that of technical instructor for the telephone company at San Angelo, Tex., but whose hobby is guns of all kinds, comes back home to DeQuincy for a visit we generally get together and talk about guns. Over 50 years ago when I was but a youth there were a number of older men still living in north and west Texas who could remember when a man did not feel fully dressed until he had belted on his six shooter.

The late Dr. Walter Prescott Webb, who taught western history at the University of Texas for at least 40 years and was an authority on the subject of the revolver and its influence on western history, said in his book THE GREAT PLAINS, that there were three inventions which made American settlement of the Plains possible. They were: the Colt Revolver, barbed wire, and the windmill. According to Dr. Webb, previous to the invention of the revolver Anglo-Saxons who “invaded” the Plains were virtually helpless in facing the Plains Indians.

Dr. Rupert Richardson, who was head of the History Department and later President of Hardin-Simmons University at Abilene, Tex., in THE COMANCY BARRIER TO SOUTH PLAINS SETTLEMENT develops the same idea still further.

According to these two authorities the white man, even the redoubtable Texas Rangers, were almost at the mercy of the arrow shooting Comanches and Kiowas when armed with a single shot muzzle loading gun. The only hope that the white men had was to be in a group large enough that they could make a stand and maintain enough discipline that all of the guns were not empty at the same time or to fire one shot and then turn and try to outride the Comanches until the white men reached a grove of timber and then stop to reload. The mounted Indians didn’t like to enter timber where they could not use their arrows effectively. Consequently, the Ranges and others who fought the Plains Indians hoped that their horses were faster than those of the Indians and the whites did not get very far away from timber.

When Samuel Colt invented a revolving pistol about 1830, it was still a very crude and clumsy weapon. It was still a cap and ball muzzle loader with the difference that there were five or six of its chambers which were loaded at the same time. One serious disadvantage was that the cylinder had to be removed from the frame to be loaded. This left the user with three parts to hold on to at the same time he was trying to manage a restless horse. If the rider happened to drop either the cylinder, the frame or the ramrod then he was completely disarmed as far as that pistol was concerned. In spite of that, however, the Texas Rangers made wide use of the Colt revolver.

About 1842 Captain Samuel Walker of the Texas Rangers went to New York, contacted Colt and suggested certain changes which would improve the weapon. One change was that the pistol remained in one piece while being reloaded, a trigger guard was added and the weapon made heavy and long enough that it could be used as a club in an emergency. The changes were made and the “Walker Model Colt” is now a collector’s item.

The development of “fixed” ammunition, brass hulled cartridges, made the Colt even more efficient. The first of the Colts were “single action”, that is, after each shot the hammer had to be pulled back which

cocked the gun and at the same time caused the cylinder to revolve so that the next loaded chamber was aligned with the barrel and the firing pin on the end of the hammer.

After a time the “self cocker” or double action feature was developed. With this pistol, pulling the trigger would cause the hammer to come back into firing position and at the same time the next chamber would come into position. It would fire about as fast as the operator could pull the trigger. This became the weapon of the “fast guns” of the West. (Be it remembered, however, that Matt Dillon and his contemporaries were very likely to have used a double barreled ten or twelve gauge shotgun loaded with buckshot in quelling the riotous Dodge City.)

A great deal is said about the Colt .45 as “the” pistol of the West but as soon as Colt’s patents expired a number of other companies both in America and Europe, started producing revolvers. Some of them were Smith & Wesson, Remington and Harrington & Richardson. While the .45 was popular there were a number of smaller calibers in use, the .32, the .38, the .41, and the .44 as well as others. One reason for the preference for the smaller calibers was that they used the same ammunition as a rifle of the same caliber and if the user carried both pistol and rifle, one size and type of ammunition would do for both.

I have a Colt double action .38 which uses the long “thirty-eight” cartridge which I believe would fit a .38 rifle. I have no idea how old the piece is but it was patented in 1871 and was old when it was given to me in 1925. While it has not been fired in over 30 years, it is still usable.

About 30 years ago Paul and Edward Berry brought to my American History classes, each one at a different time, a pistol which could have been well over 100 years old at that time. It had been in the family so long that no one knew who was the original owner; it had been well cared for and was in first class condition and still usable. It was a single shot muzzle loader using a percussion cap. It resembled in many ways the dueling pistols which most “gentlemen” of the pre-Civil War days used.

The dueling pistols came in matched pairs with the bullet mold, ramrod and sometimes the powder flask and cap box all in a fitted case. Visitors to the Hermitage, Andrew Jackson’s former home near Nashville, Tenn., can see Jackson’s dueling “set”, minus one pistol, on exhibition. After Jackson killed one man for making disparaging remarks about Mrs. Jackson she begged him to hold his temper and not get into any more duels and he promised her he would, but in 1814 when he went down to New Orleans to take part in the defense of the city against the British he took his dueling pistols along, “just in case.” He did not have to use them on that trip anyhow.

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A letter from Miss Bell Ford of Decatur, Tex., says that she enjoys the DeQuincy News very much, especially Lola’s AROUND TOWN column. She also says that the DeQuincy area has the prettiest girls she ever saw. Young ladies, that is a real compliment because Miss Bell spent a life time of teaching, beginning in 1910 when I was in her third grade, and also attends festivals of all kinds and has seen, no doubt, thousands of pretty girls and recognizes one when she sees one.

## SCHOOL OPENING

On this date, Wednesday, Aug. 30, the Calcasieu Parish schools will be opening for the new session and the Beauregard Parish schools will have been open since Monday of this week. The opening of the schools before September is comparatively new and still seems a little odd to older school personnel, but it reflects changes in the economic and social life in America.

In the colonial days when public schools were first established, about 90 percent of the American people were farmers and the boys, and to a less extent the girls, were an important part of the field labor force. The New Englanders boast that they were the first to establish public schools in America because they considered it absolutely essential that the men at least know how to read the Bible.

In 1648 in what is now Massachusetts a law was passed which required every village of 50 households to maintain at public expense an elementary school where the "three R's" at least were taught. A community of 100 households was required to maintain a Latin Grammar School which was the prototype of the modern high school or academy in that it prepared the boys, no girls to attend college where they prepared for the Christian ministry principally.

These early schools usually opened in the fall after the crops were harvested and closed in the spring when planting and cultivating time arrived again. This meant a school term of three to five months duration, depending on climate and the crops raised. This situation still existed in some areas within the memory of people of my generation.

Some have said, "It took thirteen months out of a year to raise a cotton crop." When it is recalled that frequently in January when farmers were still picking the "last pickin'" on the far side of the field, other hands or members of the family would be pulling up the stalks on the near side getting ready to plow the land and plant the next crop. This meant that there was little time left when cotton farmers were not busy and consequently the South tended to lag behind some of the other states in the length of the school term.

Be it remembered that on the large plantations worked by black slave labor the matter of schooling was not taken into consideration since black boys and girls were not sent to school. Indeed, in some sections, there were laws prohibiting the teaching of blacks to read and write.

I began my teaching career in October of 1921 in a small west Texas community where cotton was one of the main crops. Previous to that year the school had operated for seven months, generally opening about the first of November or even later after the main rush of cotton picking was over. Children of itinerate cotton picking families did not expect to get much school before Thanksgiving. In the summer of 1921 the Sagerton school trustees decided to try to operate the school for nine months and opened school in September. (The school had already been in operation at least a month when I was hired, but that is another story.)

For some reason the school funds proved to be insufficient to operate the school for nine months and it was closed down at the end of seven months at the end of March, 1922. One farmer remarked to me, "They just started school too soon last fall." I suspect that he spoke the sentiments of several of his neighbors. Some of the one room schools of the area were open for only six months.

As time passed more and more communities wanted a standardized school ("affiliated" was the term in Texas and "approved" in Louisiana) which would prepare their children for admission to college and nine months, or 36 weeks, came to be accepted as the normal term for such a school; the 36 weeks might vary from

place to place, depending upon the climate and crops raised. For example, in the Florida parishes of Louisiana where strawberries were the main “cash crop” and the pupils were needed to pick strawberries, the school opened in the late summer and closed during the early spring. I have known of cases where the schools opened during the late summer, ran for a month or six weeks and then closed for the harvest of some crop.

With the change from an agricultural economy to an industrial system, the development of mechanized farming, the passage of Child Labor laws plus the extension of the high school curriculum to include more subjects than any one student can complete in the school year or in four years of 36 weeks each, there is a tendency to extend the school year even more. It is also coming to be generally accepted that it is a waste of money to have millions invested in school plants and equipment which are used less than half of the number of days in a year. There is also the matter of wasted time on the part of the teachers and pupils.

I came to the conclusion several years ago that a school holiday is a problem to the working mother who must make arrangements for the care of her children while the school is closed but she must continue to work. This does not mean that teachers should become glorified baby sitters but that the school program should be expanded to make use of the time which in days past might have been spent working on the family farm.

Several plans to extend the school program have been tried with varying success. One plan is to divide the school year into four quarters of nine weeks each but still require only 36 weeks for graduation and permit the student to select, with certain controls by the school, the weeks that he shall attend. The student would either graduate earlier or be able to take subjects which they could not schedule under the present plan. Teachers might also choose the quarters they would teach if they wished to further their own education and needed a long period for “rest and recreation.” I understand that where this plan has been tried it has been only partially successful.

The most common plan is to close the school in the late spring as now and then offer a summer school of nine weeks to those who wish it. I taught summer school in DeQuincy High School for a period of 30 years or so and at first when a student enrolled in summer school it was because he had failed a subject and needed to make it up, but during the last 10 years or so the summer students were generally good students who were bored with nothing to do for the summer weeks and wanted to make good use of the time or to complete the subject, usually American History, in order to be able to schedule some other subject during the next regular session. The Home Economics Department usually has a summer program for the high school girls. Larger high schools carry a full program.

So, with modern air conditioned buildings and other facilities there is, in my opinion, no reason in a modern industrial society to close a school 185 days out of the 365 days in a year; 220 days of school would be about right.



## ADVERTISING IN THE PINE STUMP

A look through the pages of the advertising section of the 1946 edition of The Pine Stump, DeQuincy High School year book, reveals that a number of business firms which were in business then are still here; operated by the same people in several cases.

The first advertisement, a full page by the town of DeQuincy; it was not to be classified as a city for a few years more. The advertisement is in the form of a letter, printed on an official letterhead of the town. Listed at the top were: S.A. (Sid) Fontenot, Mayor, Virginia Burke, Town Clerk, (Mrs. Smith's son, Eugene was to serve as Marshal some years later.) The Aldermen were E.J. Forman, A.D. Brantley, J.D. Hayes and Dr. A.E. Douglas.

The advertisement is in the form of a letter calling attention to the features of the town and surrounding area. The Evangeline Highway, now La. 12, is referred to as "the shortest route between New Orleans and Texas." The two railroads, the KCS and the MOP, and eight daily buses are pointed out as outstanding transportation facilities.

The Newport Industries and the MOP shops along with farming and the sheep and cattle industries were the chief support of the community.

The school plant was called "one of the most modern in the state." These included the gymnasium, built in 1937, and the "new" Elementary School which had just been completed the year before. Both of these buildings were lost in the fire of Aug. 15, 1970.

There were 15 churches within the town city limits.

Another thing of interest was the old style, pre-dial system of the telephone numbers, usually low two digit numbers. In spite of the fact that the telephone company requested us to "call by number," if we were too lazy to look it up or did not have the phone book handy we just asked "Central" to "ring the National," or "Perkins," or "the bank," or one of the doctors and "Central" would oblige us.

The National Department Store, Inc. was operated by the late Mr. and Mrs. T.E. McNamara. It took two phones for their business, numbers 25 and 133. The business is still owned and operated by the family.

The DeQuincy News was published by Mr. and Mrs. A.F. Masingill. The News then, as now, dated its origin back to 1923. Next year the News will celebrate its Golden Anniversary.

The DeQuincy Flower Shop was in business then but has changed hands at least twice I believe in the past years.

The DeQuincy Drug Company is no longer in operation and I do not recall who operated it. Their phone was No. 159 and they advertised Drugs-Perfumes-Gifts and promised prompt delivery.

Floyd's Taxi, that would be Floyd Granger, offered 24-hour service with two phones, No's 21 and 1703. (I wonder how they "rated" that high number; they were rare in DeQuincy at that time.)

J.D. Allen, he was Mrs. Betty Allen Brown and Jimmy Dale's father, ran a grocery store and just said, "Fancy Groceries and Frozen Foods."

Adkins' Variety Store, now the F&S Store, had just a short time before bought out Hamilton's Variety Store which Mr. and Mrs. Henry Hamilton had operated for years. Mr. Adkins' advertised, "Where Ma Saves Pa's Dough." For the sake of the "ultra modern" younger generation, we were saying "dough" long before you started saying "bread," and dough always preceded bread.

Carl and Pete Perkins of Perkins' Pharmacy limited themselves to "Filling Prescriptions for Thirty Five Years." That makes them the oldest business in DeQuincy as far as I know.

The Phelan Company just said "Wholesale Grocers and Coffee Roasters" but took a whole page to present their compliments. They did not sell at retail. The "wholesale", as we used to call it, no longer operates in DeQuincy but the Phelan Company is still in business and their products are on sale in most if not all DeQuincy food stores.

I have forgotten who ran the Alert Cleaners, it would have been "Pard and Marge Rainwater or the Whatleys, but they took a whole page also. It also could have been the Bob Stalcups.

Mr. L. Farque ran Farque Grocery and stated that his business was based on "Quality and Service." Later he was to operate the coffee shop that is next door to Treme's today.

The late Mr. and Mrs. E.W. Rodgers who operated Rogers' Jewelry took a whole page to present their compliments to the Class of 1946.

Mr. J.B. Kilgore, manager of the DeQuincy Furniture and Appliance Company, took a whole page to extend his compliments and to remind us that they handled furnishings for the entire home.

The Lyons Lumber and Coal Company, then as now, owned and managed by Mr. C.E. Cline, used at their slogan, "Your Home Dealer." Their phone was No. 88. Mr. Cline had been recently, or soon would be, jointed by two young men just "home from the war"; Dennis and J.C. Lorene was also there later on.

Kelly's Red and White Grocery had phone No. 8. I believe that the Red and White was about the first franchised grocery store in DeQuincy.

Harper and Conerly Furniture extended its compliments to the Class of 1946 on a full page. Mr. and Mrs. Conerly were the parents of Mrs. Paul Fisher, Sr., of the Fisher Furniture factory in DeQuincy at present.

The last page, a full one was by the Service Drug Store which advertised "Two Pharmacist to Serve You At All Times." One of the pharmacists was Clyde (Doc) Walker, no less, and a young man, S.M. Austin who is no longer in DeQuincy.

On page 78 is a card reading, "Compliments of the Faculty." The high school faculty consisted of: W.E. Pate, principal; B.B. Hayden, coach; Joyce Baxley, history; Mrs. Anice Jones Mims, literature; Geraldine Live, commerce; Verna Mae Jones, librarian; Virginia Toms, mathematics; Marie Kilpatrick, home economics; Lillian Hall, English; and T.J. Ratliff, history and Spanish. There are some omissions in the list of subjects taught as there is no mention of science classes, yet some were taught. I may have taught a class in biology and Coach Hayden or Miss Toms had classes in science, I think.

There were 52 members of the senior class of which 39 were girls and only 13 boys. A number of the young men who normally would have been seniors were still in the service in September of 1945. Be it remembered that they were all volunteers.

This was the year that there was no freshman class as we had just begun the 12 grade system and no seventh graders were promoted into high school in May, 1945. It would be 1949 before we had a full four years of high school again.

There were 60 members of the junior class and 67 sophomores that year. It seems a shame that space does not permit naming at least the Seniors.

## HALLEY'S COMET IN SUMMER OF 1910

If on Wednesday, Sept. 6, you were working The Jumble on Page 20 of the Enterprise you may have noticed, just to the right, a news story with the headline "Halley's Return Won't Be the Same!" This referred to Halley's Comet which made its last appearance near enough to the earth to be seen with the naked eye and is due for another appearance in 1985.

The writer quotes Dr. Elizabeth Roemer, an Arizona astronomer, as saying if you saw it as a child in 1910 and have been telling your grandchildren about it you should prepare them for a disappointment. It will not come as close to the earth in 1985 as it did in 1910 and the fiery tail will not be as visible as it was in 1910. I have had both experiences. I saw it in 1910 and have been telling your children and grandchildren about it ever since.

About two years ago I was called out to DHS to do a day of relief teaching and part of the schedule was to supervise a group of study hall students in the cafeteria. A group of freshman girls were seated at one table and were turning through their General Science texts. One girl saw a picture of the comet made in 1910 and I told her that I saw the comet in 1910 and hoped to live long enough to be one of the few people who could say that they saw Halley's Comet twice. When I started describing the sight to her as I recalled it the girl said she hoped that she was dead before it came in sight again because it looked too scary to her. This was my cue to tell the group about my recollections of seeing the comet in 1910.

Men have been observing comets since the beginning of time and have usually regarded them with superstitious fear, even in modern times. Observations of Halley's Comet go back at least 2000 years, but it was not until the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries that the English astronomer Edmund Halley was able to predict with accuracy the return of the comet now called by his name. It was noted that it appeared in 1531, 1607 and 1682. Halley predicted that it would reappear in 1759, 1835 and 1910.

It was in 1910 that I saw it. I was nine years old that summer and had heard my parents and other adults talk about Halley's Comet but I had no idea of what they were discussing. It's sort of like that "statehood" subject which I had heard discussed in Indian Territory just three years before. Finally one Sunday afternoon people gathered in small groups and began to look and point in a southwesterly direction about 60 degrees above the horizon. Then I saw "the comet." It looked very much like a modern flood light looks burning in the daylight. It could be seen but not clearly.

Later that night we attended church down the street a short distance from our house and since my father and the other men of the church had some church affairs to discuss I started up the street by myself. It was then that I looked up and saw the comet streaking out across the sky and it was directly overhead, in all of its flaming splendor, with its long fiery tail streaming behind it. Years later I found out that the name "comet" is derived from the Latin word for "hair;" it is understandable. Perhaps the best comparison which comes to mind would be that it resembled a sky rocket or a space ship as the takeoff or holding a torch and waving it to and fro. To a nine year old who had already heard talk that it might strike the earth it was rather frightening. I did not exactly run home but I did not spend too much time studying the unusual sight that night. Later on several other nights when my father was with me I spent more time looking at the celestial visitor.

Some older people did not know or consider that the comet had been circling the earth in its orbit for thousands or perhaps millions of years and had done no harm. I recall hearing some older people talk about it striking the earth and destroying man and all of his works and others spoke of the tail dragging across the earth and burning the earth to a cinder.

Years later I discovered that some ministers used the comet as a topic for their sermons in which they warned their congregations that we might be approaching the End of Time and that God might be planning to use the comet as the means of destroying the earth and sinful man. How many “evil doers” repented as a result I have no idea.

Sometime during the summer the comet passed out of sight with no known harm done and a newspaper cartoonist, probably John Knott of The Dallas Morning News, drew a cartoon showing a rather ragged urchin of the Huck Finn type with the globe as a head and the comet disappearing in the distance. Earth is laughing at the comet, “Never teched me!

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A nice letter was received from Mrs. E.P. Glass, formerly of DeQuincy, but now of Baton Rouge. She asked about the possibility of writing a column about the late Dr. George Lyons and Dr. Howell. I was able to send her a copy of the column about Dr. Lyons which we did in August of 1970 and promised her that we might write a column about Dr. Howell in the future. She enjoyed the column about Mr. Wells.

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Recently Francis X. Tolbert who writes a column called Tolbert’s Texas for the Dallas Morning News has done a series of articles about Arthur Stilwell and the KCS. One of the articles was about DeQuincy. Mrs. Martina Brignac was kind enough to send the whole series which her daughter, the former Betty Hundley who now lives in Dallas sent to her mother.

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Mrs. Mary E. Burnett, in DeQuincy she is Eutha McFatter, of Denton, Tex., where she lives with her two daughters, was kind enough to send me Xerox copies of Mr. Tolbert’s columns. The older daughter, Eutha did not give their names, is enrolled in North Texas State University at Denton and the younger is in high school. She did not say so but I suspect that Eutha is teaching in the University.

To all of you wonderful people who have been so kind in saying nice things about these columns, again, “Thank you.”

## CITIZENSHIP DAY

Sunday, Sept. 17, was “Citizenship Day” and this week is Constitution Week in the United States. In my opinion those words, citizenship and constitution, are two of the most important words in an American’s vocabulary.

During the time of Christ, Rome ruled the area surrounding the Mediterranean in three continents, Europe, Asia and Africa, and the Mediterranean was “A Roman lake in which no man dared to wash his hand without Roman permission.” The Roman world was divided into two main groups, Roman citizens and subjects.

To be a Roman citizen was the proudest title a man could boast. Shakespeare in his play, “Julius Caesar”, has Marc Anthony in his funeral oration over the body of the murdered Caesar ask a rhetorical question, “Who is so base as would not be a Roman?”

Throughout the years I have frequently said that if I had been living in those times and had a choice, I would have preferred to be a Roman citizen with a Greek education. Such a person was St. Paul, the apostle. He was proud of his Roman citizenship, boasted of it and never failed to claim his rights as a Roman citizen. “Is it lawful to scourge (punish) a Roman uncondemned without a trial?” “I was born a Roman.” “I appeal to Caesar (the Roman Supreme Court).”

The Roman code, The Corpies (Juris Civilis) is, via the Code of Napoleon and the Spanish law (Las Siete Partidas), the ancestor of Louisiana Civil Law which makes it unique in American state law.

The traditional date of the “fall of Rome” is 476 A.D. when the Teutonic invaders captured the “Eternal City.” For the next thousand years, men were no longer citizens but vassals subject to the rule or whim of the man who claimed to outrank him. Every man was someone’s vassal, from the king to the lowest serf or slave, and you did not have to be black or brown to be a slave. Your ethnic background had nothing to do with your state of freedom.

In 1215 A.D. the English at Runnymede meadow outside London forced King John to sign the Magna Carta which restricted his power against the noble peasants; people who did the hard and dirty work were not included. They were still subjects and vassals.

But Englishmen had made a start toward becoming citizens with rights. When Charles II became king with a period in exile he was forced to sign the Petition of Rights and when William of Orange and his wife Mary were made joint sovereigns in 1688 they signed the Bill of Rights, which was another step toward citizenship.

In 1776 when the Declaration of Independence was proclaimed, it stated that “all men are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” In 1787 the Constitution of the U. S. and the Bill of Rights, the first amendments, gave American citizenship a proud heritage. But even this did not apply to all inhabitants. The phrase “excluding Indians not taxed” occurs in several places; women were “second class citizens:” and as for black slaves, they were hardly people, but “property.” It was not until the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> amendments were adopted that blacks became citizens and the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment that women became voters by Federal law.

It has been said that if we chose the poorest, most “oppressed” American, we could find he would still be better off economically and freer than two-thirds of the people of the world.

The thought came to me the other day that black Americans have been American citizens longer than the nearly 27 million immigrants (my estimate), and their descendants who reached America since 1870. They are American citizens, not Africans; Afro-Americans, if they choose, but then I am an Anglo-American by equal right.

From one point of view I felt sorry for the two young black American members of the U. S. track team at Munich who were dropped from the team because of what was considered an improper attitude when the national anthem was played as they received the gold and silver medals for that event. Somewhere these two young men had not been taught or had refused to learn or practice the proper attitude for the occasion. As I understand it was not the American spectators who “booed” them. These young men normally will be American citizens long after they no longer compete in athletic events. American citizenship and the Constitution are magic, almost sacred, words. “Who is so base as would not be an American?” “I was born an American.” “Is it lawful to punish an American without a trial?” “I appeal to the higher courts.”

I realize that this is a highly idealistic view of the situation and may not seem to fit the conditions under which millions of Americans of all ethnic backgrounds live, but when one considers the progress which has been made in the past 200 years, especially since WW II, it is almost unbelievable. So, let us continue to study, work with a desire to improve, and above all have faith in the American dream. And who knows what progress we could make in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond. “God Bless America.”

## DEQUINCY GENERAL HOSPITAL

This is written with a sense of nostalgic farewell to another DeQuincy institution which is about to close its doors unless at the last minute a “miracle” will save it.

We older people can remember when DeQuincy General Hospital was established by Dr. David J. Drez, Sr. and his late wife, Mrs. Hester Bingham Drez. A whole generation cannot remember when the hospital did not exist; a great many of them were born there.

Forty years ago when we of this area spoke of going to “the hospital” we generally meant St. Patrick’s of Lake Charles. Some of the more serious cases went to New Orleans, Beaumont or Houston and sometimes to Temple, Tex. MOP people went to Palestine, Kingsville or perhaps Houston. Memorial and Charity at Lake Charles as well as Cal-Cam were still in the future. I do not know just when the DeRidder Hospital was built but I do not believe that it dates back to the time mentioned.

People of this area went to the doctor’s office if the patient was mobile for examination and treatment; otherwise, the doctors made house calls and only the most serious cases went to the hospital. I remember that the late Drs. C.R. Price, A.A. Kidd and W.G. Hart, all three of whom practiced at Starks, still carried the traditional “pill bag” of an earlier day and sometimes dispensed the medication directly to the patient. “The house call” was about all that could be used as there were no ambulances or hospital beds available, but it was extremely wasteful of the doctor’s time since he had to spend so much time traveling.

With me most of the people whom I knew just sort of “drifted” into my consciousness, but there are some of whom I recall my first meeting with them; Dr. Drez is an example of this situation.

I had heard that Dr. E.L. Landry was leaving DeQuincy and that another young doctor was assuming his practice; just who the new doctor was I had not heard. It must have been sometime in 1937-38 that I stopped at the old Magnolia Filling Station, now the Mobil Station, and the proprietor, the late Calvin McFatter, introduced me to Dr. Drez as the doctor who was assuming Dr. Landry’s practice.

Most doctors did some surgery in their own office operating rooms. I recall that Dr. Bishop and his then partner Dr. A.E. Witherington did appendectomies in their office over the Service Drug Store and that Dr. A.E. Douglas removed our daughter’s tonsils in the same office.

I do not know when Dr. Drez first met the late Mrs. Hester Drez. (She was just Hester to most of us who knew, loved and respected her ability as a nurse.) But she was one of the first R.N.s to practice in DeQuincy. She was a native of DeQuincy but had taken her training and practice in Houston; but sometime in the middle thirties she returned to DeQuincy and served as a surgical nurse for the local doctors. I do not know when Dr. Drez and Hester were married but it must have been sometime before 1938 because they did some surgery for me in the operating room of their combination home and office in what was later to become DeQuincy General Hospital.

Dr. and Mrs. Drez bought the red brick “airplane bungalow” which had been the home of the late Mr. and Mrs. John A. Jones and established their home in the upper “airplane” part of the building with the reception room, office and treatment rooms on the ground floor. There may have been two or three bedrooms which were the prototype of the modern hospital recovery room. It was sometime during these earlier years, Dr. David Drez, Jr., now of Lake Charles, was born and spent his earlier childhood in the combination home and hospital.



At first there was only the one hospital in town, (it was not yet called DeQuincy General), but later the late Dr. A.E. Douglas established his office in another former residence on Center Street which in time grew into the Douglas Hospital. When Dr. Douglas retired, Dr. L.D. Bishop, Sr., assumed the responsibility for operating the hospital. When the burden of his medical practice, plus the administration of the hospital became too great, Dr. Bishop sold the hospital to Mr. Green, who after some time, sold the hospital to Dr. Broyles of Shreveport who, after a time, closed the hospital and once again DeQuincy had only one hospital, now called DeQuincy General Hospital and Clinic.

Returning now to the earlier years, as the demand for hospital service grew, Dr. and Mrs. Drez moved to a new home on Yoakum where they lived for several years and then moved to a new home on Highway 12 east where Dr. and Mrs. (Donnie Young Carlson) Drez now make their home.

As time passed more expansion programs were undertaken as new rooms, laboratories and treatment rooms were added. With the advent of Medicare, still more improvements were made and modern equipment installed. Then the battle to find enough RNs and LPNs to meet the requirements for Medicare began.

Now the problem is that Dr. Drez and Dr. Bishop are no longer physically able to carry a full load of practice which leaves Dr. Shaheen overburdened with more practice than one man can handle, even with the aid of Dr. Stagg on a part time basis. There is little else to do but close DeQuincy General Hospital unless one or more doctors can be found who will move to DeQuincy and assume some of the load.

Even though we have not always used DeQuincy General Hospital for our hospital needs, there has been a sense of security in our minds because we knew that she was there and would do her best for us in time of need. We shall miss her and can only say, "Farewell and thanks for the past services and hope and pray that she still has a future!"

## INFLUENTIAL FRIENDS

Sometime just before WW I three young men teachers joined the Calcasieu Parish School system and for almost two generations were to exert an influence on the Calcasieu Parish School system and the lives of the students which will be felt for years yet to come. They were the late Mr. T.S. Cooley, the late Mr. J.I. Watson and Mr. I.D. Bayne now living in retirement at Sulphur.

Mr. Cooley and Mr. Watson were natives of the Singer area and may have known each other as boys; Mr. Bayne is, I believe, a native of Mississippi. Few teachers in those days had four-year college degrees but most had a two-year teacher training course which they later expanded into bachelor's and master's degrees. This was true of these young men. They began their teaching careers as teachers of one-room rural schools near Sulphur, as I recall the story. It was with this background that a warm personal friendship among the three had its origin.

Mr. Cooley told me that he and Watson each bought a bicycle while Mr. Bayne bought himself a horse and buggy. The story was that as a result Mr. Bayne married earlier than the other two and when WW I came along Mr. Cooley and Mr. Watson as single men went into the Army while Mr. Bayne, as the head of a family, was not called upon to serve in the armed forces. If Mr. Bayne has a different version of this story it might be interesting to hear.

After the war Mr. Watson and Mr. Cooley returned to teaching after a brief interlude on the part of Mr. Cooley as a merchant. His store was at Singer if my memory is correct. Mr. Watson became principal of the Iowa School where he was to serve until his retirement many years later.

Mr. Cooley became the teacher of the Hayes School and Mr. Bayne at nearby Bell City. In the early 20's the Calcasieu Parish School Board voted to build a high school somewhere in Ward II of the parish. After some rather heated rivalry between Bell City and Hayes for the site, the new high school was built at Bell City with Mr. Bayne as principal. To satisfy patrons of the Hayes school it was decided to build identical buildings in each of the communities with the Hayes School to offer courses through the ninth grade with Mr. Cooley as principal.

The three principals were as previously mentioned, close personal friends but the three schools were strong rivals for honors on the basketball court, track and field events and literary events at the annual parish rally. To win the "Rally" and the basketball cup were objectives which were never lost sight of during the entire school session.

Mr. Cooley was a baseball fan and a player of no small ability. In those pre-radio, pre-TV days, nearly every community had a local amateur baseball team. (Football was still more or less of a college or large high school sport.) While at Hayes Mr. Cooley organized and coached a baseball team about which older Hayes people still talk.

In the summer of 1925 the late J.J. Vincent resigned as principal of the Sulphur School to accept a position as principal of one of the schools of the South Park (Beaumont) school system and Mr. Bayne succeeded him as principal at Sulphur. Mr. Cooley became principal of the Bell City School.

The remainder of this story belongs to Mr. Cooley.

Since Bell City is only two miles from Hayes, the move did not sever the ties of friendship which existed between Mr. Cooley and the Hayes people. Sometime during the years at Hayes, Mr. Cooley met and married Miss Onieda Mack, a young lady teacher whose home was at Lake Arthur. They met at a basketball game at Lacassine. Their older daughter, Nelda, Mrs. Edward O'Connor of Lake Charles, was born in September of 1925.

I shall never forget my first meeting with Mr. Cooley. I had been employed to succeed him as principal of Hayes school and Mrs. Ratliff and I lived in the same house, the old Prosper Verret home, at Hayes. We had barely gotten moved in when I saw a man coming through the front gate with a hand thrust out in friendly greeting. He said, "I am T.S. Cooley. You are new here and I wanted to know if there is anything that I can do to help you." Those words, "If there is anything I can do to help you," became almost a symbol of our friendship for the remainder of his lifetime.

In the summer of 1928, due to the resignation of Mr. Wells as principal of the DeQuincy School, Mr. Cooley was appointed to fill the vacancy, and at the same time I was appointed as principal at Starks. Again I was a stranger in a community where Mr. Cooley was well known and had numerous friends. He told me, "When you get to Starks, look up the Constable Bill Buxton and tell him that you are my friend and I want him to help you all he can." Mr. Buxton became a warm friend and supporter during the following six years at Starks.

In 1934 Mr. Wells resigned as Assistant Superintendent of the Calcasieu Parish system and Mr. Cooley was appointed to succeed him. It so happened that I was in need of a job and Mr. Cooley made arrangements for me to have a job as a teacher in the DeQuincy High School, a post I was to fill for the next 35 years.

The stress and strain of the war years, trying to help operate the expanding school system, the shortage of school materials of all kinds, a restless student body, and above all the effort to find enough qualified teachers, which was Mr. Cooley's prime responsibility, proved too much for his overworked heart and he died in August of 1942. The T.S. Cooley Elementary School in Lake Charles is named in his honor and memory. Mrs. Cooley still lives in Lake Charles.

## COLUMBUS DAY

This should appear in The DeQuincy News on Oct. 11, the day before Columbus Day, which is the anniversary of the landing of Columbus on an island in the Caribbean Sea which Columbus called San Salvador but which was probably Watling Island of today.

In spite of the wide use of his name in the New World, the Republic of Columbia in South America, the poetic name Columbia for the United States, the District of Columbia, and the numerous towns, cities and other areas called by different forms of his name – he remains to a great extent an unknown.

Historians are not even sure about how he signed his name; in English he is Christopher Columbus, in Spanish he is Cristobal Colon and the Italians called him Cristafo Colambo.

Probably the most familiar story about Columbus is that concerning his difficulty in convincing Queen Isabella of Castile and Leon that the earth was a globe. There is the story that used an egg, striking one end of it against the table and flattening the end of the egg, so that it would remain upright. Modern scholars discount the stories of Columbus' problem and the egg demonstration.

About 700 years earlier, the Moslem Moors had come up from North Africa and conquered nearly all of Spain, all the way to the Pyrenees Mountains. The Jews were accused of aiding the Moors. For 700 years there was almost constant warfare between the Christians and the Moors; small boys in Spain still play a running "war game" similar to our "cowboys and Indians" which they call "Christians and Moors."

The Christians gradually, castle by castle, city by city, pushed the Moors back toward southern Spain and a number of small kingdoms and principalities were established by the Christians. Two of them were the kingdoms of Castile and Leon with a smaller neighbor on the east, Aragon.

Just about 500 years ago a young princess, Isabella, became queen of Castile and Leon while her husband, Ferdinand, was king of Aragon; her kingdom was the much larger of the two. Isabella was a most brilliant and energetic woman but possessed with one overwhelming obsession – that God had called her personally to drive the Moors and perhaps the Jews out of Spain.

In Columbus' search for a sponsor for his voyage to the West, it seemed that Queen Isabella was his best prospect. His problem was not so much that of convincing Isabella that the earth was globe shaped; scientists of the period generally accepted the idea but thought that the globe was about two thirds as large as it is and that the Pacific and Atlantic were all one ocean. Isabella just was not ready to discuss the matter until she completed the task of driving out the Moors.

Another point was that Columbus was not a Spaniard and was not planning to voyage either for the fun of it or the glory of Spain. It was a hard, cold business proposition with him. His terms were approximately:

1. He would be made an admiral in the Spanish Navy with full authority to appoint his subordinate officers.
2. The office would be hereditary in his family forever. (One of his descendants holds that rank today.)
3. He was to receive a percentage of any profits of any voyage he made.
4. He and his heirs were to receive one eighth of the profits from any voyage made under the Spanish flag forever.

There were some more terms of the contract but these were the basic ones.

In January of 1492 Isabella's forces, which she personally led, captured the City of Granada in southern Spain which was the last stronghold of the Moors. Isabella was ready to talk business with Columbus.

It has been suggested that Ferdinand, who was a crafty sort of individual, advised Isabella to meet Columbus' terms. Some Spanish sea coast town owed some back taxes to the crown so they would supply the ships and supplies for the voyage in lieu of the taxes. If the voyage failed, there would not be much loss; if Columbus succeeded, the "wealth of the Indies" would be Spain's.

As a sort of afterthought, Ferdinand suggested that they could watch Columbus closely and that in all likelihood they could catch him violating the contract and receive the benefits of the voyage without further obligation on their part.

The contract was signed; Columbus sailed and reached the Indies, so he thought, on Oct. 12, 1492. He was later accused of violating the terms of the contract and brought back from the last voyage a prisoner. He died in poverty.

## A VANISHING WAY OF LIFE

One Saturday about 40 years ago we were spending the day with the Jim Hamptons at the camp on Old River below Starks. While there I got into a conversation with a man whose name I have forgotten, but he was a member of one of the older families in that area.

He appeared to be about 60 years old at the time. He told me about the life as it was when he was a boy growing up near where he and I were at the time. He said that the population was thin and that people might go for weeks without seeing anyone from outside the immediate neighborhood. People were generally self-sufficient and anything they needed which could be made from wood they made themselves.

They were more or less "squatters" on the land, not knowing or caring to any extent about who owned the land. If a house was needed the men of the community selected the trees, cut and peeled the logs and fitted them together with notches at the ends. Wooden pegs were used for nails. Furniture, chairs, tables, beds and shelves were made the same way. Fireplaces were the traditional mud and stick type.

Cash crop farming was not generally used but each family had a garden or truck patch where vegetables were raised, usually corn, beans, peas, potatoes of both types and sometimes watermelons; wild fruits of whichever kind grew in the woods, mayhaws being a favorite. Apples, oranges, lemons and bananas were unknown, though wild grapes and plums were common.

Some families kept a few sheep which were sheared for wool, though not every family owned a spinning wheel or loom or knew how to spin and weave. In that case they traded other products for cloth. I do not recall whether my informant mentioned cotton or not, but somehow I doubt that these people raised cotton due to the problem of "ginning" it or otherwise extracting the seed.

Dyes for cloth were made from natural products from the woods or soil. Shoes were generally of the moccasin type made from cowhide or hide from a wild animal.

For meat most families kept hogs which ran more or less wild in the woods. They also kept cows for milk, meat and work oxen. I presume that some people owned horses, ponies very likely, but my friend did not say so.

Hunting dogs were a necessity.

Things made of metal, knives, axes, guns, etc., as well as ammunition, coffee and some medicines had to be bought from stores. At intervals the men would cut pine logs, roll them into the Sabine and float them down to Orange, Tex., where they were sold or exchanged for store goods of all kinds. Nothing was mentioned about the ownership of the land from which the logs came.

Disputes were settled between the individuals concerned with fatal results in some cases. Sometimes the sheriff or his deputies arrested someone for law violation but not often.

Life was simple, but hard and sometimes short.

My friend said that this way of life was changed within a short time. Just as he was about grown the out-of-state lumber companies bought the land and started logging on a large scale. Lumber camps and sawmill towns sprang up on every hand. Men who had been going a whole year without seeing ten dollars in cash at

one time started to work in the woods and the mills for wages, sometimes as low as a dollar per day or even less. These wages were not usually paid in cash but in goods from the “company store” or commissary. Within a few short years people forgot their old ways of self-sufficient living and became dependent upon the lumber company jobs, and sometimes there were no jobs available.

This conversation took place in the days of the Depression and my friend went on to say, “how the pine trees have been cut, the logging camps and mills are closed, there are no jobs available and we have forgotten our old ways of living such as it was when I was a boy. We could not go back to it if we knew how because the conditions are not the same. There is nothing left but to go on the Relief or get a job on the WPA.”

I never saw the man again and I have forgotten his name, but his story is substantiated by the case of many others of the time.

## REV. PAUL LEEDS

Through the courtesy of Mr. James H. Cooper of DeQuincy, I have recently had the pleasure of reading the book "Patteran" by Mrs. Kathryn S. Johnson of Kinder.

"Patteran" is the story of the career of the late Rev. Paul Leeds who for 60 years was a missionary preacher in Allen and Calcasieu parishes with overlapping into other nearby parishes. The book is in two parts. Book I is called "Narrative" and is Mrs. Johnson's story as taken from the diary of Bro. Leeds and Part II is called "Memoirs" and is in Bro. Leeds own words as he wrote them in 1946.

I never met Bro. Leeds, but I knew about him and his missions for several years previous to his death in 1958. Right now it seems that a very interesting experience would have been that of sitting down and listening to Bro. Leeds and my old friend, the late Bro. B.F. Stegall, of whom we have written, concerning their experiences as missionary preachers in their different fields. The two had a great many traits in common, though I fear that they may have "locked horns" on some points.

Bro. Leeds was born in 1869 on a farm near Benton Harbor, Mich., and grew up there. His father was a native of Connecticut.

In 1888, like Sam Bass and thousands of other young men, Paul Leeds "roamed out to Texas," Dallas in Bro. Leeds case, where he had a half brother who was in the sawmill and real estate business. While in Dallas, Paul worked as a hotel clerk. There he acquired a trait of fastidiousness in his dress which remained with him until the last.

It was in Dallas that he was converted and became a member of what is now the Schofield Memorial Congregational Church. In 1893 he came to Jennings as temporary pastor of the Jennings Congregational Church and while there he began preaching to groups in the piney woods section of southwest Louisiana. He never left the piney woods except for brief visits to his relatives and vacation trips in his later years. His was another case of a young man who accepted a "temporary" task or assignment which lasted a lifetime.

The people whom Bro. Leeds served were of several backgrounds; there were the English speaking forest dwellers who were descendants of the pioneers from the other southern states, the French speaking "Cajuns," the rice farmers, generally people from the Midwest and perhaps the most unusual group was a branch of the Koasati Indian tribe who lived at Indian Village near Kinder and Elton.

Among these diverse groups Bro. Leeds found all sorts of individuals, ranging from devout Christians to wild toughs whose idea of religion was to get drunk and break up, if possible, any religious service. Bro. Leeds served them in any way possible; he preached to them, taught them, consoled them in time of need, served as doctor and nurse, fed them and acted as morticians, married them, baptized them and helped with manual labor when the need arose.

He travelled by the best means possible, he walked, swam the creeks when necessary to reach a destination, used boats of all kinds, rode horseback, used the trains when available and he had the price of a ticket. Later he was to own several cars, beginning with the Model T Ford.

Partly by choice and partly by necessity he became a do-it-yourself craftsman in several lines – carpenter, mason and auto mechanic. These skills he used on behalf of his congregations as well as himself.



The Congregational Church is of New England origin, dating back to the days of the Pilgrims, but was not well known in the South where it was looked upon with distrust as another Yankee innovation. In time as the people came to know, love and respect Bro. Leeds they accepted him and his beliefs. In later years one old woodsman perhaps expressed the sentiment of the majority when he said, "Bro. Leeds weren't no Yankee! He was one of us with ways like ours."

"Patteran" lists 58 preaching points, including one called Who'd-A-Thought-It. He is credited with organizing 28 churches. There is a long list of people whom he led to becoming Christian workers, among them Rev. E.S. Burnitt of DeQuincy.

One of the things which impressed people was his refusal to enter into doctrinal disputes with people of other faiths than his own. This was unusual in his early ministry when preachers were more or less expected to "light in on" their fellow preachers of churches of different beliefs.

In 1907 he married Miss Bessie Allen of Manchester and they became the parents of one child, a daughter Marie who later became Mrs. Heard Rogers. When "Patteran" was published in 1964 Mrs. Leeds was still living. I have no later information concerning her.

## **PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION PROCESS**

By this time next week the American people will have gone through the process of indicating their choice for President for the next four years. Constitutionally, the word indicating is correct; practically, it should be electing a president. The story is somewhat complicated.

When independence was finally acknowledged by the British government in 1783, the agreement as to the form of the new national government of the United States was underway. There were a few who favored a monarchy with George Washington as king and still others who suggested electing one of the younger sons of King Frederick of Prussia as king. Washington scorned the idea and the second group was overwhelmed with popular disapproval.

In 1787 when the constitutional convention was considering the election of a president, the important question was how should he be elected? The small states feared that they would be swallowed up by the large states and the large states did not wish to be governed by the small states. Finally the Electoral College system was adopted.

Under that system each state would be entitled to a number of electoral votes equal to the number of members in the House of Representatives plus the two more for the two Senators. This system is still in use and Louisiana has ten electoral votes, eight for our eight Congressmen and two for the two Senators. The next question was "How shall the Electors be chosen?"

There were two arguments against electing the president by direct popular vote. One was the office of President was to be of such dignity that a candidate should not belittle himself and the office of appealing to the mass of voters; only about ten percent of the adult public were voters, the other was more practical. It was reasoned that communications were so poor that a man in Massachusetts who would make an ideal president but he would be unknown to the people of Georgia, or the reverse.

It was presumed that the people of each state would know the political leaders of their own state and could select Electors; proxies might be the modern term, who would cast the vote of their state. That was the system adopted.

When we go to the polls next Tuesday, Nov. 7, at the head of one column there will be listed ten Democrats, under the Republican column ten Republicans and ten members of any third party or parties who may have a candidate in the field. In actual practice all the voter has to do is trip the main lever under his party and he automatically votes for the ten electors of that party.

Theoretically I suppose it would be possible for the voter to vote for the electors individually and divide his vote among all of the parties. So far as I know it is never done and the voter would be wasting his vote.

After the votes are counted the party whose Electors (or candidate) receives a plurality of the votes cast receives the Electoral vote of that state. In December following the election on Tuesday following the first Monday in November of the election year, the Electors of each state meet in their state capitol and cast the vote of that state. The returns are then sent to Congress where the Electoral votes are counted and the results announced. This is a constitutional formality, the results have been known for weeks by the public.

As far as the Federal Constitution is concerned, an Electoral once elected is a free agent and can cast his vote for anyone when the Electors meet at their state capitol. Thus, in case of the death of a candidate between

the November election and the December meeting of the Electors, the Electors would be free to vote for someone else, or if an Elector became disillusioned with his candidate he might vote for another. This has happened a few times.

The framers of the Constitution evidently did not contemplate the rise of opposing political parties with opposing candidates for president so the original provision of the Constitution provided that the person receiving the highest number of votes would be president and the person receiving the next highest would be vice president. This worked very well until the election of 1800 when Aaron Burr was almost elected President and Thomas Jefferson as vice president. By 1804 the Twelfth Amendment provided for separate candidates for each office. The story of the election of 1800 in which the House of Representatives chose the President as provided for in the Constitution in the event that no candidate received a majority of the electoral vote is too long for the space.

Originally there was no limit as to the number of terms a candidate could serve but following the precedent of President George Washington no president was elected for more than two terms. Following the election of Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt for a third term in 1940 and a fourth term in 1944 the XXII Amendment was passed which limits the President to two terms plus two years in which he succeeded another president as vice president or a total of ten years. There is one person to whom this does not apply, former President Harry S. Truman.

## VETERANS DAY AND THE ANTI-WAR FACTIONS

By act of Congress Monday, Oct. 23, was Veteran's Day but to those of us who remember Nov. 11, 1918, even though we are not veterans that date will always be Armistice Day, later called Veteran's Day. In 1970 I described my memories of that exciting day and I shall not repeat them.

Recently one of the nation's syndicated columnists referred to the Vietnam veterans as Viet Vets and said that he feared that due to the popular disapproval of our participation in that war that the veterans might find themselves discriminated against when it came to jobs and election to public office. He may be right, only time will tell, but I hope that he is wrong. This is not the first war of which there was disapproval by certain segments of the American public. Someone has said that, "The Americans were the most warlike, peace-loving nation on earth."

Pres. John Adams, (1796-1800) said that the American Revolution was fought by one third of the people; one third were British sympathizers and one third were neutral or opposed to the war outright. Some of the British sympathizers (Tories) fled to Canada or other parts of the British empire, but those who remained in the United States fused with the other Americans and became one of the important elements in the American people.

The New England Federalists opposed the War of 1812 against England and referred to it as Mr. Jefferson's War. They continued to trade with Canada, which meant England, during the whole war. They insisted that we were on the wrong side and that if we were going to be involved in the war at all we should have been allied with England against France (Napoleon). Though it meant ruin of the Federalist Party politically, these people in time "rejoined" America.

Historians still dispute the right and wrong of the Mexican War of 1846-48. People living north of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi referred to it as "Polk's War" and insisted that it was fought to satisfy the demands of the Southern slave holders for more room to expand the slave system. The New England poet James Russell Lowell in his Bigelow Papers expressed apparition to war in word that in 1918 would have caused him to be charged with treason. The men who served in this war were regular army men or volunteers from the South and Southwest.

Less than a generation later (1861-1865) came the most controversial war of them all. People in the North could not agree on what they were fighting for; at first the majority, led by Pres. Lincoln, insisted that the war was to prevent the breakup of the union (secession of the south). A smaller but very vocal group refused to support the war unless its avowed purpose was to end slavery. Finally, in 1862, partly to gain the support of this group in the Congressional election of 1862, Pres. Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation which actually freed few, if any, slaves. (Read it in detail and you will see what I mean.)

Both sides used a draft system which was about as unfair as they could be. In 1863 there occurred the Draft Riots in New York City which became so serious that troops which recently fought the battle of Gettysburg were sent to suppress the riot. In the South the draft evaders gathered in armed gangs and "took to the bushes" and became known as "bushwhackers" or Jay-hawkers. There was a rather large group of them in Calcasieu Parish and a large camp of them in the Big Thicket north of Beaumont. Opponents of the war raise the cry of "Rich man's war and poor man's fight."

The Spanish-American War of 1898 was another all Regular Army and Navy, plus Volunteers. While there was opposition to it, it was over so soon that organized opposition did not have time to get organized.

One of the most unusual opponents of WW I was a young college history teacher whom I met in 1924 who taught us that he was opposed to our entrance into the war because God was using the Germans to punish the Belgians for their cruelty to the natives of the Belgium Congo and that we must not oppose God's plan. There were other groups who also opposed the war.

In WW II we had "draft dodgers" and all sorts of opponents to the war.

Whatever our personal attitude toward the Vietnam War, maybe the men who have fought, suffered and died in it did so because they were members of the Armed Forces who must obey orders, "Theirs is not to reason why. Theirs is but to do or die."

So as we observe another Veteran's Day, on either Oct. 23 or Nov. 11, I hope that the syndicated columnist was wrong when he said that he feared the Viet Vets would be the victims of discrimination upon their return home.

## GRAVEL ROADS AND BRIDGES

People born since the 30's make trips by car to the West Coast or any other part of the United States with less concern than their elders of the 20's exhibited on a trip to the area of Beaumont.

Fifty years ago crossing the Sabine and the Neches was by ferry, and just a few years before the Calcasieu was crossed by the same means. The only paved highway in this area was the narrow brick road from Sulphur to Lake Charles via Westlake.

La. 27 intersects the road at the Elementary School in Sulphur. The remainder of the Old Spanish Trail, later U. S. 90, was graveled as well as some of the lateral roads.

The road from the Hayes-Bell City area was graveled as early as 1925, the DeQuincy-Starks road in 1928 and the DeQuincy-Sulphur road sometime in the early 20's, I believe.

When I came to Louisiana in 1925 the old bridge near the Port of Lake Charles was in use as well as a bridge across the Neches at Beaumont but there was no bridge across the Sabine at Orange.

A great many people who wanted to go to Orange, Beaumont or beyond went by train; the Southern Pacific from Lake Charles or the KCS or the MOP from the DeQuincy area.

The O.S.T. (Old Spanish Trail) was being extended to Orange with the dredge on either side cutting a channel through the swamp and piling the spoil, I believe that is the correct term, toward the center to make the dump. As soon as the dump was properly settled a new section of the road was opened to traffic. There was an open channel on the right hand side which connected with the Sabine at Orange.

Mr. W.T. Burton, now of Lake Charles, had the concession to operate a car ferry from the Louisiana side to Orange. I am not sure just how far it was from the ferry landing on the Louisiana side to Orange but my impression was that it was two or three miles, more or less.

The ferry would, as I recall, accommodate sixteen cars, four abreast and four deep. The ferry left the Louisiana side, "on the hour" and the "trick" was to be there "on the hour" and not be so far down the line that there was not space on the barge for you, otherwise you would have to wait for the next trip.

It was no fun to sit in the heat or rain and fight mosquitoes while waiting for the ferry.

Some "public benefactor" had built a sort of café on the left side of the dump. The building was screened and refreshments such as coffee, cold drinks, hamburgers, chili and gumbo could be bought. There may have been cigarettes, candy bars and perhaps other foods and refreshments but I am not sure.

The fee for crossing was \$1 per car.

The T.S. Cooleys lived at Bell City where he was principal of the school but Mrs. Cooley's mother lived in Beaumont. Sometimes on Friday afternoon the Cooleys planned to drive to Beaumont for the weekend. In this case, Mrs. Cooley would have the Model T Ford sedan loaded, she and Nelda would be ready in the car, waiting for Mr. Cooley to finish his work at school and then they started the drive over the gravel road via Lake Charles to "make the six o'clock ferry."

So far as I know they always made it.

Model T travelers over gravel or dirt roads were always confronted with the possibility of a flat tire with a delay of thirty minutes or more.

By 1928 the road was completed and the bridge over the Sabine at the end of Greene Avenue in Orange was ready to open. A gala day was held with celebrities from both states present. I am not sure but I believe that the governors of Texas and Louisiana were among those present.

It would seem that all was clear for an uninterrupted trip from Lake Charles to Orange and Beaumont, but, as Robert Burns put it, "The best laid plans of mice and men gang aft agley."

A ship, The City of Joliet, came into the Port of Lake Charles and due to someone's miscalculation the ship crashed into the bridge and put it out of commission. There we were with a new bridge over the Sabine and a wrecked one over the Calcasieu. Fortunately, the equipment from the ferry at Orange was still available and it was brought to Lake Charles and put into service. This served for several months until the bridge could be repaired.

Eventually the new bridge on IH 10 was built and the old bridge at Green Avenue was dismantled and a group of young people on both sides of the Sabine have grown up who do not remember the old bridge.

## THANKS TO GOD

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Mrs. Dorothy Ricketts and Mrs. Doris Blackwell, daughters of the late T.J. Ratliff, wish to share with News readers the last work of their father who had delighted readers for more than three years with his columns.)

(Dorothy and Doris have prefaced the article with a note of explanation and also said Mr. Ratliff mentioned several other articles he had written but which had not been published. Should they find these, they will give them to the News for publication.)

Those of you who have followed Daddy's column over the past three years might be interested in the following incomplete column that he intended for publication the week of Thanksgiving.

He carried it with him to the hospital and planned to finish it there. Unfortunately, he was never well enough to complete it following his surgery. After reading it we thought that it would be appropriate to publish it now, even though it was not complete.

Daddy had many problems over the past seven weeks and several times we thought he was on the road to recovery, but it was not meant to be. We "count our blessings" that we had such a wonderful husband, father, and brother these many years but all of his family will miss him dearly.

We deeply appreciate the many cards and letters that you all have written to him while he was writing the column and during the time he was in the hospital. Your friendship was a great source of happiness and comfort.

## THANKS BE TO GOD

One of the minor problems of writing these columns for specific days, such as Thanksgiving, is to find different words for saying "Thanks to God" at this time; there comes to mind the words of an old hymn we used to sing at Sunday School more than 50 years ago:

"Count your blessings  
Name them one by one  
And it will surprise  
What the Lord hath done."

Then there is a story about a man who went to a great deal of trouble and expense to go down to the marsh to hunt ducks. The weather was cold and rainy and the hunter was miserable. On the way out he complained to his guide about the situation.

The guide told him, "Count your ducks, mister, count your ducks." The expression "count your ducks" has become a folk expression meaning, "count your blessings."

Most business people set aside a certain day or days for taking inventory at which time they check on the amount of goods on hand, or compare their cash assets with their liabilities.



Thanksgiving is, or ought to be, a time of spiritual stock taking, a time to count your blessings or to count your ducks. Sometimes the liabilities or misfortunes stand out with such prominence that they seem to outweigh the blessings and we may be inclined to follow the advice of given Job, "To curse God and die."

Any family in any year will have problems and some of them may be extremely serious, to the point of appearing to be unbearable.

They may be spiritual, emotional, mental or material. All you have to do is read one issue of any daily paper or listen to any other of the news media and you will gain some idea of the tragedies and problems of our fellow man throughout the world.

Sometimes, but not always, our own problems seem insignificant by comparison. This is not always true, however .....

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Although our long-time columnist T.J. Ratliff died in December, the News is happy to report that his daughter, Mrs. Doris Blackwell, has found six of his unpublished columns in his files. One of these follows, with the others to be published later.)

## **SINGERS OF OLD SONGS**

I cannot claim personal acquaintance with Woodward "Tex" Ritter, the noted western and country music singer, but he and I were students at the University of Texas at the same time during one summer of the middle twenties. I saw and heard him perform at least once on the campus during that summer.

If my information is correct he is a native of East Texas, the Nederland area, and his name, Ritter, would indicate it since it is derived from a Dutch word meaning "knight or horseback rider."

The late Prof. J. Frank Dobie of the University of Texas faculty taught a course called "literature and Folklore of the Southwest" which included singing and listening to the old songs of the West. Dr. Dobie was always on the lookout for students who could sing these songs.

I do not know if "Tex" Ritter was ever in Dr. Dobie's class but I suspect that he was. Somehow Dr. Dobie discovered Ritter and his musical talent and had him singing for his class. Dr. Dobie was so impressed with Ritter that he presented him in an open air program on the campus one night.

The reception of "Tex" by the audience, seated on the grassy slope of a hill on the campus, was enthusiastic. At about that time, whether before or after the above mentioned program I am not sure, Dr. Dobie took Ritter to San Antonio and presented him in a program before the old trail drivers and cattlemen's reunion. In the audience were some of the old trail drivers who had heard and sung these songs as they drove cattle "up the trail."

It is said that there were both whoops and tears from these old timers. I understand that Ritter was later presented in a program at the Fort Worth Fat Stock Show. (It has a different name now.) After that his career was launched.

At least three people have made collections of these old songs, the father and son Lomax team and Miss Ina Syres who started her work in the early twenties is the third that I know of, and there are probably others, including Dr. Dobie.

During the school session of 1924-25 I was teaching at the Chillicothe Texas High School when Miss Syres visited our school and presented her program of western songs accompanying herself on the guitar. She asked the students if they knew of some old timer cowboy, a grandfather perhaps, who might know a song she had not recorded.

She had a crude sort of recording instrument and proposed to have the singer record the song. She later published her work under the title of "Songs of the Open Range."

Let it be remembered that these songs were to be the authentic songs actually sung by the cowboys at work and not those synthetic ones composed by professional song writers from Nashville or elsewhere.

Several years ago I was riding the bus from Shreveport to Alexandria to attend a session of the Louisiana State Teachers' Association. When the bus stopped at Natchitoches three new passengers boarded the bus and took up seats just ahead of me.

Two of them were Catholic nuns who were teachers in the parochial high school at Natchitoches and the other was a young lay teacher in the same school. I entered into a conversation with them and discovered that the older of the two nuns was a graduate of the University of Texas and had taken Dr. Dobie's course. There was a story about the campus that if a student could produce an authentic Western song that Dr. Dobie had not heard that it was good for an "A" in the course.

In a sort of teasing tone I asked the Sister if she was able to produce such a song and receive the desired "A". She told me that her surname was Williams and that she grew up on her father's ranch near San Antonio, and that she was able to give Dr. Dobie not one but two songs that he had not previously heard.

She asked me if I would like to hear them. I, assuming that she would refer me to a recording somewhere, answered "Yes." To my astonishment she began to sing one of them in a clear soprano voice. My astonishment was mild compared to that of a bus full of people upon hearing a middle-aged nun singing a western song on a public bus.

The two songs, like many of the earlier authentic songs dealt with the tragic love theme. In one song a young saddle tramp met and fell in love with his employer's daughter. She returned his love but her brothers lured the young cowboy off on a trip with them and killed him.

In the second song the young man left the ranch for Mexico, promising the girl he would return when he had made his fortune. She promised to be true to him and wait for his return. He made the fortune, returned to claim his love, only to find that she had given up hope of his return and had married someone else.

I was also astonished to learn that the Sister had never heard "The Yellow Rose of Texas" which is one of the oldest of the western songs, being composed shortly after the battle of San Jacinto of April 21, 1836.

It was made famous as the marching song of Hood's Texas Brigade of the Confederate Army and was enjoying a revival of popularity at the time of my conversation with the two nuns and the young lady on the bus. When the bus reached Alexandria it was noon, so I ate lunch in the bus station café.

I looked around and there were my three traveling companions seated at a table not far away. I looked at the titles on the "juke box" and "The Yellow Rose" was listed. I put the proper coin in the machine and Sister Mary Alma, I believe her name was, heard the modern version, if not the original version, of "The Yellow Rose of Texas."

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Here is another of the unpublished columns of the late T.J. Ratliff that were found among his papers by his daughter, Mrs. Doris Blackwell, following his death.)

## PIPE LINES

I have never worked at any form of the oil production business and never had any connection with it except for a disastrous investment of all of \$20 in a wildcat drilling operation about 1919, but I have been an interested observer of the operation since I first heard about “Beaumont Oil” when I was in the fourth grade in 1911-1912.

I was growing up on an airline between the old field around Wichita Falls, Tex., and the market for oil and gas at Fort Worth and Dallas, consequently I saw some of the first pipelines built.

The ditches for the lines were dug by human muscle, using picks, shovels, crowbars, and blasting powder in the Decatur area where solid rock was just beneath the surface of the soil. The pay was \$1.50 to \$2 per day for ten hours. I knew men older than I who worked at these pipeline jobs.

The pipe, as I recall, was about 12 inches in diameter, or could have been larger, and about 18 to 20 feet long. The pipe was shipped by rail, sometimes on flatcars with stakes on the side and sometimes in coal cars.

When the pipe arrived at the railroad siding any man who had a wagon and team strong enough to haul five or six joints of pipe could get a job at \$5 per day, for himself and his equipment. Farmers who could get away from their crops for a few days frequently took these jobs.

Before starting to work the wagon owner, if an ordinary farm wagon, would have a longer stronger coupling pole installed, usually an oak 4X4 or a 4-inch steel pipe was used. The bolsters, front and rear, were reinforced with extra braces on the standards. Across the bolster between the standard pieces of 4X6 oak were added. A special brace was put on the rocking bolster back to the coupling pole. (I realize that town reared people and those not over 40 may not recognize some of these terms but those people who have driven a wagon will.)

Having his wagon in condition and his team “fed up” and rested, the hauler was ready for work. When notified by the contractor, the teamsters reported at the railroad siding to load pipe. This was done by hand, the teamsters helping each other until the last wagon was loaded.

A load was usually five or six joints of pipe, depending on the size. Usually there were three joints on the bottom tier, running lengthwise of the wagon, then two on the next tier, and if this was a six pipe load, one joint on the top tier. Then a binder chain was put on very much like a modern log or piling truck.

When the loaded wagon reached the spot where the pipe joints were to be used, the driver drove on down the line, and when the last wagon reached the start of the pipeline the wagons were unloaded, again the drivers helping each other.

At this point the pipe was taken over by the “tong gang.” This was before the days of welded pipe; they were threaded and used coupling like the ordinary smaller diameter water and gas lines of today. Perhaps the most important man on the “tong gang” was the “staffer” whose job was to see that the joint about to be installed was properly lined up so that the threads would mesh properly.

When the “staffer” gave the signal the men with the tongs, a large wrench-like tool, gave a heave on their tongs to the right in unison. The members of the “tong gang” were the elite of the crew and were professional full-time workers, some of the haulers were temporary and dropped out and were replaced as the pipeline moved on. They had some songs somewhat like the old sea chanteys with which they timed themselves, the words of which were usually unprintable in a family newspaper.

After the line had been tested for leaks and found solid, the pipe was then coated with some sort of asphalt-like material and then the ditch was refilled. Sometimes, if the terrain permitted, a scraper pulled by teams did this, otherwise, it was back to the pick and shovel again. There were men who later became wealthy pipeline contractors who started as teamsters or members of the pipeline gang.

These men, especially on the “tong gang,” had to have strong arms and backs and a willingness to work or they did not stay long. Someone once said that America was settled by the brave and the strong, the cowards never started and the weak died on the way. This might well apply to early day pipeliners.

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Note: While I can’t claim to be under forty, I was reared in DeQuincy and never drove a wagon that I can remember, so any terms referring to wagons could very well be wrong because I have misread the words. These columns are being typed from rough handwritten drafts that were never corrected and put aside for some reason. Daddy’s handwriting is not always easy to read so I will have to depend on the readers of these last columns to correct any errors made.

DRB (Doris R. Blackwell, Mr. Ratliff’s daughter)

(Following is another in the series of columns written by the late T.J. Ratliff before his death. His daughter, Mrs. C.A. (Doris) Blackwell of Shreveport, has typed the rough draft Mr. Ratliff had written in longhand and put aside for a later “polishing” when he was ready to use it in a regular column.)

## WRITING INSTRUMENTS

I usually write these columns with a ball point pen, sometimes students call them ink pens or ink pencils, and then type them later. The story of writing materials is a long one, going back to when man carved rude characters on tablets of stone or even on the side of a cliff. The Greeks and the Romans used a slab coated with wax on which they wrote with a pointed pencil type article called a stylus.

My knowledge of writing material does not go back to the feather pen as a serious writing object, though I have experimented with turkey feathers as such. At one time one of the qualifications for teachers was to be able to “cut a pen properly using a pen knife.” It might be interesting to note that in Spanish the same word, pluma, means a feather or a pen, and many years ago a Jewish friend told me that in Yiddish the words for ink and pen were “tint” and “fedder.” “Tinta” is also the Spanish word for ink.

The slate and slate pencil were going out of use when I started to school in 1907, but a few of us owned them more as toys than serious writing materials. We used rough tablet paper and pencils. The pencils came in about three grades; each student provided his own. The cheapest was the “cedar” pencil which sold for about one cent. These were not very satisfactory as the lead was hard and did not make a clear mark. Some people tried soaking them in kerosene to soften the lead. The next best grade was the “two for a nickel” grade which was the kind most students used. These were about the quality of the pencils supplied the students by the state of Louisiana today. There was the best quality which usually sold for a nickel; students seldom used these. At one time pencils were really made of lead, but the so-called lead in pencils today is a compound of graphite.

About the third grade we began to use “pen and ink” in our writing lessons. These pens used a removable steel point mounted in a wooden shaft. These points came in several styles and degrees of fineness of point. In time these points rusted or corroded and had to be replaced. Each writer had to have a bottle of ink at hand and dip his pen into the ink at the end about every two lines of writing. At school, ink bottles constantly were being upset, so the student desks usually had an ink well recessed into the top of the desk. These wells served another purpose; if there happened to be a little girl with long curls sitting in front of some “bad little boy,” he thought it great fun to slip the end of a curl into the ink well.

The first fountain pens were filled by screwing out the point and using a “medicine dropper,” like a modern laboratory pipette. These pens were tricky to use as they were not leak-proof and were given to flooding. In time someone developed the “self-filler” pen with the ink held in a rubber sack inside the barrel of the pen which was equipped with a lever device to compress the bag, thus creating a vacuum which filled with ink when the point was submerged. Even these pens were not leak-proof or flood-proof. The best ones were not cheap, five dollars was a medium price, and the Sheaffer Company brought out a pen which was guaranteed for “life” including loss from any cause. It was also guaranteed not to leak or flood. The usual retail price even during the depression years was sixteen dollars and fifty cents.

Since even with these pens a convenient supply of ink was necessary, the Sheaffer Company shortly after World War II brought out a cartridge type pen in which the ink was carried in a small sealed cartridge about two inches long. It was dropped into the barrel of the pen and when the point was put back in place there was a small hollow tip which punctured the cartridge. The cartridges could be carried in a purse, pocket, or brief case in any number. These pens are still available and used.

Everyone is familiar with the modern ball point pen which can be bought for prices ranging from a few cents to several dollars, with two or three grades of points and in several colors. The refills are readily available and convenient to carry and the ink is “instant drying,” thus eliminating the once familiar blotter and before that the sand which men of George Washington’s time used to dry ink.

(Following is another in the series of columns written by the late T.J. Ratliff before his death. )

## **WHAT DID YOU DO FOR PASTTIME?**

I have been asked frequently in recent years by young people, "What did you do for pastime before the days of television?"

There are several answers, one of which is there was not as much free time as now. Before World War I the "short" work week was sixty hours, ten hours per day, with six and sometimes seven days per week. More people farmed and their workday was from sun to sun. There was a saying,

"Man works from sun to sun  
But woman's work is never done."

People read, visited friends, and church attendance was a social as well as a religious experience. Then there was a silent black and white movie in most towns. After World War II radio became popular.

Owners of sets boasted of being able to hear stations all the way across the continent and some foreign countries. If you had any sort of talent that could be broadcast you stood a good chance of "getting on the radio," as an unpaid amateur, of course.

About as far back as I can remember, towns the size of DeQuincy and Decatur had an "opera house" in which road companies produced drama and sometimes vaudeville shows. I remember, I must have been about eight years old at the time, of going to the opera house in Decatur to see a play "Lena Rivers" produced by a road company. Ed Blythe's Majestic Theatre (movies) was beginning to compete with the live stage plays, and when the opera house burned about 1914 that ended the rivalry.

For a period of several years, just before and after World War I, there were several tent theatres touring the South, not to be confused with the Chatapua or Lyceum Courses. They consisted of a tent with seats, benches and reserved section chairs, and a portable stage with a full complement of stage scenery and a curtain. The actors and actresses were professionals, some young and some mature men and women.

I have since wondered if any of the younger ones ever made "the big time or if the older ones made it at all, or had passed their prime and were on the way down. The tent theatre usually spent two weeks in a town and presented a different play each night. The actors roomed in private homes and became known by name to local people.

One of these road companies was Harrison Theatres, billed as a "Texas show for Texas people." Harrison wrote and produced his own plays; later his plays became available for school and other amateur performances.

One of his more popular plays was "Saintly Hypocrites and Honest Sinners" with a religious motif. The climax came when the "honest sinner" was converted in a very emotional scene in which the audience joined in singing a hymn, "Just as I Am," or some other old favorite. Sometimes a local minister was invited to come to the front of the stage and invite local "sinners" to come and accept Christ. I never saw it happen, however.

Another popular play was "Signal Fires," a western whose hero was an Indian chief named Eagle Eye. In this one just as the hero or the heroine was about to be put to death by the villains, white "outlaws" as I



recall, Eagle Eye and his warriors, summoned by the signal fires, entered and cowed the villains, meanwhile rescuing their victims, by announcing in a deep voice, "Eagle Eye has come."

Sometimes local people, like modern TV "soap opera" fans, identified the actors in their roles with reality. As I recall, during a visit of Harrison Theatres to Decatur, one night the villain had horribly mistreated the heroine in the play. The next morning as the actor who played the part of the villain passed the Morris Blacksmith Shop, some customer remarked, "I would like to break his neck for the way he treated that little girl last night." Texans of that era believed in protecting their "women folks" even on the stage.

Another popular tent theatre was Joe Baird's Comedians. The last tent theatre I knew about was in the twenties, I believe, operated by Harley Sadler of Stamford, Tex. He boasted of being a "West Texan" and traveled only in West Texas.

There was another type of "road show;" the "medicine show" produced by a "doctor" and one or two other performers who performed in the open air with no admission charge and earned their way by selling some sort of "cure all" that was usually described as being of Indian or Oriental origin.

That, young ladies and gentlemen, is part of what Grandpa did for entertainment before the days of television.

(Following is another in the series of columns written by the late T.J. Ratliff before his death. )

## EARLY OIL

As I wrote in an earlier column, I never worked in an oil field but I lived near some of them and knew who worked as rig builders, drillers, roughnecks, pumpers, gaugers and pipeline walkers.

One of the pioneer geologists, the late W.M. Affenstranger, told me they worked largely by surface indications, such things as the shape and size of hills, the presence of fossils, and best of all the traces of petroleum, sulfur and other minerals in the springs and creeks. He said that it was mostly experienced guess work.

There is a story to the effect that one of the early gushers in Wichita Falls, Tex., area was drilled in that spot as a result of a wagon breakdown. The first wagon load of derrick timbers was being hauled to the proposed location when the wagon broke down. The driver unloaded the timber about a mile from its original destination; the following drivers seeing the first load on the ground unloaded their loads there also. The rig builder who followed built the rig where the timbers were; a gusher resulted. The story says that a well was later drilled on the site originally selected and it was a dry hole.

The first seismograph work I knew about was at Hayes in 1925. When one of the shots was heard some local person would remark, "That's the Germans doing that." In my ignorance and my first thought was that the people at Hayes do not know the war (World War I) is over. Later I found out that the men were actually German scientists hired by the oil companies to work in the area.

The first derricks I knew about were built of wooden beams about two by twelve inches and as long as needed. The derricks were built on the spot by rig builders. There was a story that at Vinton there lived a rig builder who was illiterate and could not even read the figures on a steel square. He had a long pole, or perhaps more than one pole, with certain marks on them which he alone understood. By using these poles he could lay out and cut the timber for a rig as well as anyone. He worked in the Vinton, Ged and Edgerly oil field for years. My old friend, the late Jim Hampton, who spent his working years working for the Gulf Oil Corporation is my authority for the story.

The early rigs were powered by a steam engine which was fueled by oil or gas if in a proven field, or by coal or even wood in a "wildcat" area. The drilling was done with the old fashioned cable drill which literally pounded its way through the formation. It was the job and skill of the driller to know just how high to raise and drop the drill at each blow. It was a reciprocal rather than a rotary motion. A second cable was the baler, a long slender steel bucket with a valve on the bottom. At intervals, whenever in the judgment of the driller it was necessary, the drill was pulled up and baler sent down. When the slush was all pulled up, drilling was resumed. There was not much these early day crews could do about preventing a well from "blowing in" when an oil sand with gas pressure behind it was hit. In fact, some companies, especially if they stock in the company, wanted the first well at least to be a gusher.

At first there were no regulations as to spacing of wells and some derricks in rich fields were so close together they were in each other's way. I had a college classmate who was a bookkeeper in a bank in a small town near Wichita Falls, Tex. He felt that he was called upon to preach, but feared that he needed some college training before entering the ministry. Since he had a wife to support he could not leave his job to return to school. They owned a small house with a back yard large enough that some oil company leased the lot, drilled,

and brought in a producing well. My friend left his job with the bank, enrolled at Decatur Baptist College, and became a successful minister.

The DeQuincy News. Remembering With Ratliff... DeQuincy Louisiana, March 7, 1973

(This is the last of the six columns written by Mr. Ratliff and found by his daughter, Doris Blackwell, following his death.

Doris wrote, "It is sort of appropriate that it be published at the time of his 72<sup>nd</sup> birthday, March 5. I saved it for last because it was about the town and people he cared so much for. I'll never forget his instructions for me to call the Sniders to come and take him "home" when everything was over."

We now shall have to write "30" to a column which was written for four years by a man who loved people and history and wanted to share that history with people, and which was read and enjoyed by hundreds of people throughout the United States, wherever the News goes.

Our thanks go to Doris for editing and sharing these final columns with us.)

## **WORLD WAR II VETERANS IN TRANSITION**

Following World War II Congress passed the law, commonly known as the G.I. Bill of Rights Law, which entitled any veteran of the war to go to college or vocational training at any school of his choice on a month for month basis. Thousands of veterans took advantage of the opportunity.

Here in DeQuincy Edison Jones established a school to teach furniture repair and upholstery. He was assisted by Harold Nichols, now a barber in the Philip Royer shop, and C.L. Adcock, principal of the DeQuincy Elementary School. Both Mr. Nichols and Mr. Adcock were combat veterans of the South Pacific.

The school was first located in a building about where the F&S Variety Store is now. When the Veterans Administration decided to add classes in Related Subjects, I was employed to teach these subjects in the evenings after the regular school day; Mr. Adcock also did his teaching in the evenings.

At first, in keeping with the law at that time, the school was operated on a racially segregated basis with the black veterans being taught in a building on Douglas Road. Later all of the men of both races were taught in a building across the street from DeQuincy General Hospital on the lot where Dr. Shaheen's office is now. This building later burned. Theoretically, the school was still segregated; there was a railing down the middle of the building from front to back, with the black veterans on one side and the white veterans on the other. As I recall, the school remained "segregated" about fifteen minutes. Men who had trained together and fought together all over the world were soon exchanging memories, swapping ideas, tools and lending each other a hand as if the idea of segregation had never existed.

We soon found out that the Related Subjects, with the tacit consent of Mr. Jones and the VA could be made to include practically any subject taught in a high school. It was revealed that a number of the veterans did not have high school diplomas. By passing the G.E.D. (General Education Development) Test, a veteran could qualify for a regular high school diploma if he had completed as much as two years of high school, or a Certificate of Equivalency if his educational experience was below the two years of high school. As a result, the "Related Subjects" taught were largely those a veteran would need to pass the G.E.D Test.

A number of the men took the test and passed it. When one of them received his diploma or certificate I was as proud of him as I have ever been of any "straight A" student among the approximately 5,000 high school students I taught in 48 years.

There was considerable criticism of these G.I. Schools over the nation, alleging that the veterans were attending them just to receive their subsistence payments. I would not say that there were not some, perhaps a great many, in the category; but I have known some regular high school and college students who were in school for equally un-noble motives.

Mr. Jones, Mr. Nichols and Mr. Adcock did a good job and if a man really wanted to learn they could turn him into a skilled craftsman. As the need decreased the VA began to close down the schools, keeping open only those that were doing a good job. The VA approached Mr. Jones with the idea of keeping his school open, even bringing veterans from other sections of the country. Whatever plans Mr. Jones had for the school, they were ended when the fire in 1951 or 1952 destroyed the building and the equipment.

As for myself, I still get a warm glow when some middle-aged man, now getting gray, approaches me and says, "Hello, Mr. Ratliff, do you remember me? You taught me at the trade school between 1946-51." Sometimes he may add, "My son (or my daughter) is a senior this year."

\* \*\*

(Note: That "warm glow" caused by his sincere interest in his students and all that happened to them, was one of the reasons Daddy left a note among his papers requesting that the following lines mark his final resting place. They were taken from "The Canterbury Tales" but he used present day spelling:

"Gladly would he learn and gladly teach."

It is a consoling thought that some of his knowledge lives on in the minds of his students.

Doris Blackwell)

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## HOW DID DEQUINCY

### GET ITS NAME

By T. J. RATLIFF

At last the mystery of the origin of the name of DeQuincy may be near a solution. After several years of effort to locate the origin of the name I had just about decided to abandon the commonly held theory that the name was of Dutch or Belgian origin in favor of an English origin and now some evidence has appeared that seems to substantiate the latter theory.

The city of DeQueen, Ark., has been celebrating its seventy-fifth anniversary this year and the DeQUEEN BEE and DAILY CITIZEN printed on July 20, 1972 a special anniversary edition including stories about the founding of the city in 1897.

Don Wynn, historian for the Port Arthur Historical Society wrote a full page story for the paper about Arthur Stilwell and Jan De Goeijen of Amsterdam, Holland who was one of Mr. Stilwell's chief backers in the building of the Kansas City, Pittsburg and Gulf, now the KCS.

Through the courtesy of Mr. H.D. Millwee of DeQuincy, a retired agent for the KCS and former resident of DeQueen I had the privilege of reading Mr. Wynn's story. Mr. Wynn quotes a news story from the DeQueen paper under date of Friday, Oct. 15, 1897.

"In the afternoon of Friday of last week the special car bearing some of the high officials of the K.C.P. & G, side tracked here and the town had as its guest some of the most distinguished individuals in its short history."

"The party was composed of Mr. J. DeGoeijen (in English Mr. J. DeQueen) for whom the town of DeQueen was named and his estimable wife, Mrs. Mena DeGoeijen of Amsterdam, Holland, Mr. Theodore Gilissen of Amsterdam, Mr. L.R. Gratama of Leeuwarden, Baron A. Von Nagell of Amsterdam, Mr. E. DEQUINCY of LONDON, ENGLAND." (Capitals are mine.)

## DO YOU REMEMBER NEWPORT PLANT?

**By T. J. Ratliff**

The DeQuincy area, including south Beauregard parish, is full of people who know far more about the operation of the old Newport plant which operated in DeQuincy between the years of the early twenties and the late fifties. This memoir will be based solely on my experience of three months duration during the summer of 1944 while I served as a sort of relief scale operator and clerk in the office of Woods Superintendent R.L. Douglass and his First Assistant, Carroll Cole, Sr.

Due to the war time demand for naval stores products (I seem to recall that Newport was classified as sixty-five percent war essential) and with the shortage of labor Newport was making some changes in the method of getting out the stumps and sorting them. Since the first the stump contractors had used dynamite to blast out the stumps and on the trucks there were usually two men, the truck owner (contractor) and his "shooter". Most of these men were independent contractors, owning their own trucks fixing their own days and hours of work. There were however, a few "company trucks" whose drivers and "shooters" were employees of the company. This was to be an important issue when the plant was unionized. Under this system stumps that were considered too small or not rich enough in resin to be worth drilling or worth a charge of dynamite were by-passed.

Sometimes during this period Newport began using the bull dozer system of getting out the stumps. Two caterpillar type tractors were bought and the Letourneau Company developed a huge steel fork which was attached to the front of the tractor and with this machine the stumps were literally "rooted" out, "bull dozed" was the phrase for it, I believe. This system made it profitable to extract stumps which would have been ignored under the old system. Indeed, some land that had been shot over was reworked with the machine to such an extent that the land was relatively free of stumps and could be cultivated without much trouble. Due to the high price of stumps and the new system land owners began to come to the office wanting to contract their stumps immediately. This could not always be done as Newport could not use the stumps that fast, a circumstance which probably contributed to the building of the Newport plant at DeRidder. During this summer a Texas man who owned some dirt moving machinery wanted to try using the common blade type bull dozer to "dooze" out the stumps. Mr. Douglass told him that he might try it at his own risk, but that he (Mr. Douglass) did not think it would work.

The dynamiting system was still in wide use since the two dozers could not get out enough stumps and were still in the experimental stage anyhow.

From my standpoint one of the more enjoyable features of the summer was getting to know and associate with people that ordinarily I might not have known at all or at the best only casually. One of them was one of the older contractors, Mr. Eli Drake. After his truck had been weighed and was being unloaded Mr. Drake liked to come by the scale house and visit. One day he told me that he was getting too old for the hard, rough and dirty work of hauling stumps and that as soon as the war was over he was going to retire. Within a few weeks he was killed in some sort of blasting accident out on the job while making his contribution to the "war effort".

Another operation that was changed was the method of unloading and stacking the stumps. Under the old system the trucks were unloaded by hand, the wood stacked in long rows like cord wood, then reloaded onto trucks and hauled to the conveyor chain which took it to the grinder, called the "hog" and then, now in the form

of chips, into the plant for distillation. Getting the wood to the chain was under the supervision of Mr. Felix McDonald who had a relief man the late Mr. Custer Gimnick. Someone worked out a system which required less labor. A sort of chain network was laid over the bed of the truck and the wood stacked on the chains. These chains terminated in a steel ring at the front and top of the truck load of wood, then a tractor with a crane was attached to the ring and the wood dragged from the rear of the truck. The tractor had a huge multiple toothed claw at the end of the crane which picked up the wood and piled it into a huge pile suggesting an old fashioned wood pile or hay stack. The same crane was used to reload the wood onto trucks to be hauled to the chain, or if the distance short the crane loaded the wood directly onto the chain.

Another change brought on by the war and the stepped up production at the plant was the use of more feminine workers in the office. Two of them were Miss Fannie Sue Robinson, now Mrs. Heard of DeQuincy High School faculty and Miss Jackie Nichols; in addition to Mrs. Grady Grimes who was a regular employee. There may have been others but these are the ones I remember.

Ordinarily when a stump contractor needed to go to a certain tract of land in Louisiana Mr. Douglass or Mr. Cole would give him the section, township, and range numbers and the contractor could find the land without much trouble. In the case of a large land owner the land might be designated by the owner's name, such as Rice University land or Four C land. Not so in east Texas, where the old Spanish, Mexican or Republic of Texas head right system was in use and in the deed the land would be described being in such and such a survey bearing the name of the original grantee who might have been a soldier in the Texas Revolution of 1836, with no indication as to size, shape or location of the land that meant anything to a person not familiar with the system. Raymond Pickering had an "interesting" experience while shooting stumps on what he thought was the Hankamer land in east Texas. I overheard his report to Mr. Douglass and recalled that I met Earl Hankamer, Jr., in Orange the previous summer. Mr. Douglass contacted Mr. Hankamer and arrangements were made to help Raymond locate the land and he was able to continue his stumping operations.

If I had ignored the men who worked inside the plant it is because I never was inside and have no memories of it. Some of you who have the facts should write the story for the benefit of the younger ones who have no firsthand knowledge of the Newport plant and its operations.

**RAILROAD HISTORY IS TOLD** (writer unlisted in Ratliff Booklet, Mr. Ratliff likely would have loved this!)

Gentlemen:

You have carried many fine write-ups concerning the history of DeQuincy. Mr. Ratliff, Glenn Blackburn, Shorty Cash and for a short time now Robert Smith. I have enjoyed all of them.

However, one of the greatest industries of DeQuincy could, I believe, stand a little historical nostalgia. And that is what the next few pages will do.

## THE RAILROAD

Let's just call this industry the RAILROAD. It has had more influence on DeQuincy, or at least as much influence on DeQuincy, as any other industry ... Maybe we should say that the ACME plant and the RAILROAD share an equal place of importance in the life of DeQuincy.

## THE DEPOT

As you would leave "town" and look for the DEPOT you could go down either Hall or Coffee street to its end at Yoakum Ave. Turn south on the short paved street and you would look right at the two-story frame building known as The Depot. Going down the short street you would come to the shell/gravel parking area. In the middle you would see the turn-around circle, besought on all possible places with beautiful flowers very carefully manicured by one Frank Minor. At least his name was Frank, the spelling of the last name may be wrong.

On the right you would see the Standard Oil bulk plant which was operated by the father of one of the best athletes to come from DeQuincy – the father of Ralph Newell.

Going on in the Railroad property you could either park on the right, park in front of the "yard office" or park close to "the house track." At any rate, after you parked your vehicle you could go in the Depot into a door under the stairs which led to the second floor. As you entered this door you were in the office of the "chief dispatcher." I remember that H.R. "Shot" Moyer was the chief dispatcher. Best I remember one of the lady secretaries was none other than the present Mrs. Lucille Francis.

Over the southwest corner of this office you saw the person known as "the car distributor." The first one I remember was a fellow loved by all DeQuincy and at one time its mayor ... the mighty fine S.A. "Sid" Fontenot. Now Sid had a fine family – wife Artice and son "Sonny" and daughter "Sugar Plum". Later on in this office of the chief dispatcher we saw "Rat" Ratcliff move in and become "Chief" and over in the corner of Car Distributor came along "Happy" Vaughn – quite a fellow all the way from Sour Lake, Tex. "Sid" and "Shot" became "trick dispatchers."

When you left the chief dispatcher's office you went toward the east through a door into what was the Trick Dispatcher's Office. Here you found two men on duty at all hours of every day in the year. There was a divider on the big desk fixed to where neither man could see the other ... nor hear him very well. If one wanted to talk to the other he had to stand up or go to the end of the big table.

They were known as the East Dispatcher and the West Dispatcher. This described which end of DeQuincy Division that they gave engine or train orders for.



In front of each man was what was called (best I remember) the Train sheet. This large sheet was about 18" high and about 48" wide. It had all information on it for the movement of all trains on either the east end or the west end. The men would put on this train sheet whenever a train arrived and left any station on the road.

Some of the men I remember working in this room were Dave Speeg, "Pops" Wilson, E.O. Ivey Sr. (father of Evans), a man by name of Merchant, Sid and Shot. The DeQuincy Division had one man for each direction for each shift plus one man known as "the Swing Man." "Dispatchers" were usually promoted from "telegraph operators." There were usually about 8 or 9 qualified to be dispatchers at one time around DeQuincy.

The Trick Dispatcher's office was about the only place on the railroad where silence was almost demanded, all the time, except the voices of the two dispatchers on duty who were giving orders for the movement of all the trains.

Leaving the dispatcher's office, going back toward the west, you passed back through the "chief" office and then through a door to the telegraph operator's office. This is the office through which all orders and information was given and received for the operation of the DeQuincy Division. "Telegrams" or wires for supervisors in each department were typed on a piece of paper about 5 X 8 inches and delivered to its destination almost immediately upon completion of the wire. Don't misunderstand the telegrams were inner-office and inter-office messages concerning the daily and almost minute by minute operations of the entire railroad.

I remember the "dean" of operators – a man by name of C.I. Haynes. He could listen to the click-click of the Morse code over the wires, carry on a conversation and type up the messages, all three at the same time. I believe his nickname was "Capt" Haynes. He lived over on the street alongside the present post office. In fact I believe right across the street from where the post office is today.

Another operator was a man by name of Bruce; later on another young man by name of P. Savoy was an operator. All of the telegraph operators used empty Prince Albert tobacco cans in their receivers so the sound could be amplified. It sure did the job.

Now, when you left the operators small office – it was small – you went through a door on the west of the office into where the agent had his office. In the agent's office you had the agent and one clerk who was the freight clerk. On the west side of the agent's office you saw the two ticket windows. The one on the south was for the white waiting room and the window on the north was for the colored waiting room. Just before each passenger train departure you could see quite a few people in each waiting room.

The agent I remember was a Mr. Copeland – he had a squinty eye and one bad leg. But his eye and leg did not keep him from being a stern taskmaster. He also delivered all payroll checks to employees. Best I remember he lived on Yoakum Avenue, close to where Marvin Kent lived, somewhere across from where J.C. Vinson lives today.

Also in the agent's office there was a large counter and two small boxes – a west box and an east box. All company mail would be put into these boxes all day and just before a passenger train left town it would be bundled up and put on the train.

You could leave the agent's office by a south door which led out onto the platform or you could leave through a door on the north side. As you left out the door on the north side you came out right next to the stairs leading to the second floor. When you went up the stairs, you turned to your right off the stairs and into a large room. The first person you would see was a redhead by name of A.E. Humphreys, called Hump by his friends.

Now Hump had a fine wife called Ike and a son called Red, or little Hump. Now big Hump always had his pipe. He was called Chief Clerk, and that he was. I believe that Hump could have run the railroad by himself, only he didn't have to.

To his back, which was to the east end of the second floor, you first saw an area of work and in this area you saw a fellow by name of L.A. Gregory, who was the Division Trainmaster. Now Mr. Gregory also had a squinty eye, but it was said of him that he knew more railroading than any other three or four men around.

Now just to the east of L.A. Gregory you walked into a large office with a good east view of the tracks. It was here that DeQuincy's best "pusher" held forth. His name? Mr. J.L. Kendall. He was the superintendent of DeQuincy Division. It was Mr. Kendall who brought the baseball team to DeQuincy.

Robert Smith has talked about the baseball team but did you know that Mr. Kendall also had a semi-pro basketball team? Some of the players were Don Motlow, Clint Hanchey, Clint's brother, and one of the best loved men in southwest Louisiana a big league baseball pitcher by the name of Ted Lyons. They too were known as The Orleanians. If my memory serves me right, at one time there was an Orleanian Band, with uniforms and all. One fellow that came to town to play in the band was "Butter" Denham. He met, wooed and won Frances Moxom. She was Frank Moxom's baby sister. In latter years Butter was hired as a flagman and then I suppose later on as a conductor.

As you would leave the superintendent's office and go back toward the west upstairs you would pass, on your right, Mr. F.E. Farris, Lloyd Pharis, Toby Word, and Jimmy Froelich. Mr. Farris was chief timekeeper. He would take the "timeslips" prepared by the engine and train crews, check them against the "train sheet" and send in the "payroll." In most cases people were paid "two weeks late." This meant that for the time you put in the first 15 days of the month you got your check at the end of the month, the time you made during the last two weeks of the month you got paid on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

Now it was this same F.E. Farris that also was mayor of DeQuincy at one time, at least I think he was mayor at one time. Mr. Farris has a very pretty daughter, Lillian.

As you would go farther toward the west end of the second floor you would come across Mr. J.P. Yates and Mr. C.S. Colvin. These fellows were the "engineers" of the Division. Many people worked under these two but two names I remember were Herbert Mack and Pete Lipscomb. Pete came to DeQuincy as a bachelor young engineer. He wasn't here long before Walter Bishop's older daughter, Inez, changed that. Yep, she married Pete.

When you would come back to the entrance way, go back downstairs you would be facing what was called:

## THE YARD OFFICE

The man I remember in the Yard Office was the Yardmaster, a man by name of Fred Lowery. It was his job to get all trains in the yard, make up trains to leave, handle waybills, get crews called and set the trains in order to leave. The conductor had to give the All-Aboard! call for passenger trains. The conductor had to wave his hands/arms to the engineer on the freight trains to get the freight trains moving.

Mr. Lowery had two or three "switch" engines to see that the trains were lined up right.

In the yard office there was a man by name of V.S. Rembert who saw to it that all waybills were in order and the right waybills got to the right conductor. Now each shift had what was called an "engine foreman." I

remember two Kellys – Big Bill Kelly and Little Bill Kelly – they were brothers. I suppose that Little Bill was considered one of the best. Also, W.E. Montague was an engine foreman.

It was from the yard office that the call boys operated. They called all the crews, engine and train crews. Each man had to be given at least one and one half hours' call on the time of his departure; each member of the crew had to check in 30 minutes before departure. The conductor was the boss of the train.

In the yard office there was a conductor's board with slots for little cards for each man's name and the crew or train he was signed to, as well as a group on the extra board. Best I remember the conductor's extra board was run from strictly seniority dates, the man with the most time of service went to the head or top of the board.

Some of the call boys were Skeeter Robertson, Verbal Jones, Doc Price, and Ross Lindsey. There was a call boy on duty for each 8-hour shift. He had a call book and he was supposed to get the crews to sign their names in his book when he called them. If the Call Boy phoned the crew, then he put the time of his call on the book. At one time Ross Lindsey was one of the clerks at the yard office.

Now right behind the yard office was a little building which housed the "car knockers." Such men as H.N. Little, A.P. Lounsberry and Mr. Guilliot held forth here. Every time a train would come in they would go up and down the train to check it to see if all journal boxes had plenty of waste and oil to keep the car from having a hot box. They also had to inspect every passenger train that came through DeQuincy.

After you returned from the car knocker's building you would go along the house track and into the freight part of the depot, which was the east end of the first floor, with its raised platform to accommodate the trucks loading and unloading freight, as well as the high station cars used to take freight from the freight place to the train. Eddie Chachere held forth in this department and he really could keep up with LCI shipments.

As you would leave the freight portion of the depot, going east, you would pass along in front of the section house. This place was always neat and very clean; this was due to Mrs. A.C. Blackburn who was the wife of the section foreman. They were the parents of one of the finer athletes in DeQuincy's history, Glenn Blackburn. I remember a series of articles in the paper called "The Cow Pasture" written by Glenn. These articles were to inspire the Tigers. And they did, too. Also, a part of the neatness of the section house was due to the same Frank Minor who was the grounds caretaker. And he was good.

Across the street, eastward from the section house was the loading shed. It was here that carload lots of freight were loaded and unloaded. I can remember Philip Bordelon from the Ford dealership unloading Fords. I believe four to a car was what he unloaded, and then the thrill to see the men drive the new cars up town to the shop and showroom. These new cars were squeezed into a freight car like sardines in a can. But Philip never did scratch up a new car.

Leaving this shed we would go to:

## THE SHOPS

When you spoke of the Shops, you included storeroom, round house, back shop, rip track, turn table, master mechanic's office, round house office and anything else associated with engines and repair box cars.

You would walk into the shops area and over on the left was the rip track or car foreman's office. The men I remember are a man by name of Dietz and a Mr. C.D. Hooper. It was in this office that a Ruth Miller worked. That is, her name was Ruth Miller until a single, good looking druggist came to town. His name? Clyde F. Walker. Clyde came to town in a hupmobile automobile. Clyde was a fellow of firsts. Best I

remember he had the first auto air conditioner unit in DeQuincy. I saw Clyde one day showing off his new pen – a brand new ballpoint pencil – it was the first one in town – cost \$15. We were amazed at what Clyde could do with this new and marvelous writing instrument. Ruth took Clyde out of circulation though, she married him.

As you would leave the rip track and go across a number of tracks you would get to the storeroom. It was here that the master mechanic had his office. L.L. Allen was the man who had this important job. Of course, he had help, a fellow by name of M.M. Smith, chief clerk, and Emily Chesson, secretary. Emily is the young lady who married the illustrious Pete Perkins. Pete was Aunt Mag's pride and joy. Now M.M. Smith is the father of Robert Smith who has written so ably in the DeQuincy News the past few weeks. One of the fixtures in the storeroom was a fellow by name of Lonnie Smith. I think that is where Lonnie held forth.

Leaving the storeroom you went further east to the round house office and the round house. Now this was a true round house, with a turn table right in the middle. This is where all the engines got inspected and minor work-overs. To the south sorta like was the back shop. It was in the back shop that the engines got the big overhaul jobs. Some of the fellows I remember in and around this area were Frank Isdale, roundhouse foreman, (He was grandfather of Billy Ellis who was a member of the "Blue Angels.") a Mr. Irwin, Hal Glasscock, L.O. Manning, Frank Parker, C.H. Venso, Gene Chatelain, O. Backlund, the Krogers, the Nichols, as well as Raymond Allen, son of L.L. Allen, Homer Chitwood's son, and a fellow by name of Kirby.

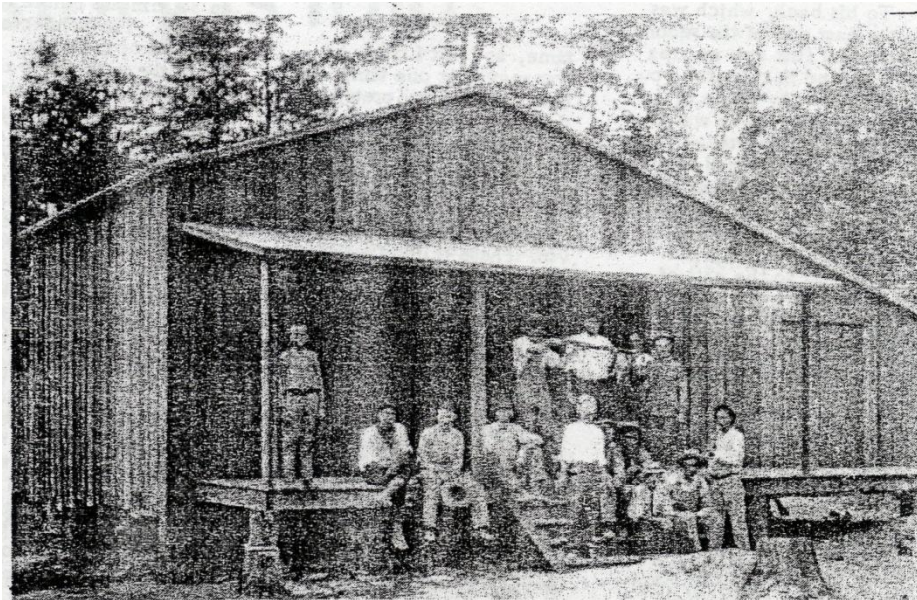
There was also another job in the shops, a job called Hostler. It was the hosteler's job to see that all engines were out and ready to go on their runs as well as put all incoming engines in the place where they should go. The hostler of way back was Dave Miller.

At the shops there was also a sort of two-story building right next to where the engines were before they left on their run. It was the house where sand was kept. An engine would need sand to put on the tracks if the wheels would not roll right or if they slipped or on icy track. I guess that this is where the term "sand house talk" came from.

There were a lot of engine and train men that I remember, such as Hogsheads (engineers) as Pops Wilson, Ed Clunan, Dills, McCollough, Morrison, Smith, White, Bredehoeft, Higdon, Reid, Lambert, Ellis, and Mason. Some of the conductors I remember were Bloodworth, Majors, Rozzell, Dorman, O'Dell, Jordan, Kitchell, "Jack" Moore, Perkins, Francis, and Roberts. I know there were lots of others but the memory just won't bring them back.

## END OF RAILROAD

Of course, out at the Acme Products Company we remembered such people as the manager, Mr. W.B. Logan, George Lemerise, Mertz Hanberry, Bob Douglass, H.N. Warren, Bill Hanberry, Ralph Carrol, Henry Kroger, Burton Core, Harry Smith, several Cooleys, E.G. Vinson and others including stump haulers... all of which goes in to making a beautiful heritage for DeQuincy. A town that will not die because of the people that call it home.



**DO YOU REMEMBER?** This old photo shows workmen on the front porch of the company commissary (store) at Green and Mare, a logging camp and sawmill town in the Starks area years ago. Some of the persons in the photo were Charlie Ashworth, Simon Mericle, Albert Drake and Gene Statum.



May 1, 1969

#### RATLIFF DAY SET HERE

Thursday, May 8, 1969, has been proclaimed "T. J. Ratliff Day" in DeQuincy by Mayor Henagan in honor of Mr. Ratliff's 48 years as an educator.

Open house will be held at the high school from 3 to 5 p.m. Calcasieu Parish school officials and teachers have been invited and an invitation is extended through the press to the citizens of DeQuincy to attend.

Mr. Ratliff will retire at the end of the school session.

## GOODBYE, MR. RATLIFF

1969

Everybody knows the familiar gray figure at the end of the hall. Mr. Theodore John Ratliff is the last of the marvelous Southern gentlemen, an enthused and delightful Social Studies teacher, a legend. It is with honest regret that we say goodbye as retirement forces him from our midst at the year's end.

He is honored by the townspeople for such things as upstanding character and civic-mindedness. Oddly enough, we consider none of these in connection with our Mr. Ratliff. We will remember other things... like his ancient and honored portrait of Robert E. Lee above the blackboard; the musty books that line the walls of his classroom, the intriguing tales that made history come alive for one brief hour a day. We will recall amusement at his countless funny stories and awe for his vast knowledge.

For Mr. Ratliff is a very special kind of teacher, the kind that takes a subject and equates it with life. Thirty years from now we will not remember the exact date that World War I started, but we will recall the airs of anxiety and triumph when the bells of churches announced the armistice had been signed. Because Mr. Ratliff was there, and he told us about it. History had indeed come alive for an instant.

Yes, Mr. Ratliff is a very special kind of teacher. We are proud, as Seniors of 1969, that we are one of the classes that heard him teach.





Veteran teacher T. J. Ratliff, center, is flanked by DeQuincy High principal Ralph Holmes and student council president Anita Ableson, at an open house at the school Thursday, honoring Ratliff who is retiring this year after 48 years as a teacher. (Enterprise photo by Kathleen Malloy)

5-11-69 Bea, Tx.

May 11, 1969 – Beaumont Enterprise, Beaumont, Texas

#### NINE DAYS OUT OF 10 DAYS T. J. RATLIFF WOULD RATHER BE TEACHING SCHOOL

DeQuincy (Spl) – “Nine out of 10 days I wouldn’t want to do anything but teach. And right now I wouldn’t trade memories with anyone.”

This is what T. J. Ratliff said when the faculty and student body of DeQuincy High School where he has taught for 35 years gave him a retirement party Thursday.





MR. AND MRS. T. J. Ratliff proudly display the Civic Service Award plaque presented to Mr. Ratliff at the Chamber of Commerce Banquet Thursday.

#### MR. RATLIFF RECEIVES CIVIC SERVICE AWARD

T.J. Ratliff, who has taught three generations of students in DeQuincy schools during the past 36 years, received DeQuincy's highest community award Thursday night – the Chamber of Commerce's Civic Service Award.

Characteristically, after Ray Hyatt's eloquent summary of the reasons why the retired teacher had been chosen for the award, Mr. Ratliff responded by telling the story of the widow who had listened to the flowery eulogy of her deceased husband by the preacher and then turned to her little son and said:

"Johnny, slip up to the front and see if that is your father in the coffin."

Hyatt said that Ratliff had touched the lives of almost every person present and cited the thousands of students that he had taught at DeQuincy High School.

He also noted that the honoree had been a Sunday school teacher for 45 years and the Sunday school superintendent of the Methodist Church for 25 years.

Mr. Ratliff, also, he said, is recognized as the historian of the DeQuincy area and in recent months has begun a local history column in the local newspapers.

Mr. Ratliff was born March 5, 1901 in Valley View, Texas and lived in several places in Texas and Oklahoma.

He graduated from Decatur Baptist College in 1921, attended Texas Christian University that summer and started teaching at Sagerton, Texas in 1921. He taught at several other Texas schools before graduating from Abilene Christian College.

DeQuincy News, October \_\_, 1972, DeQuincy, Louisiana

#### ABOUT MR. RATLIFF

Mr. T. J. Ratliff, who underwent surgery Oct. 12 in Schumpert Hospital has been transferred to Willis-Knighton Memorial Hospital in Shreveport. Mrs. Ratliff is asking that friends remember Mr. Ratliff in their prayers.

DeQuincy News, October \_\_, 1972, DeQuincy, Louisiana

#### TJR STILL IN HOSPITAL

The latest word from Mr. T. J. Ratliff was received Saturday when a former DeQuincy resident, Jim Boatman, of Joyce, called Mrs. Donnis Hines to say he had talked with Willis-Knighton Hospital and was told Mr. Ratliff was still in intensive care. Friends may write him at the home of his daughter, Mrs. C. A. Blackwell, 205 Roma, Shreveport, La. 71105.

A card from Mrs. Ratliff last week said their daughter Dorothy (Mrs. John C. Ricketts) came from Lakewood, Calif., to be with her father. Also visiting were Mr. and Mrs. Paul Pearson of Orange, a sister of Mr. Ratliff.

DeQuincy News, October 12, 1972, DeQuincy, Louisiana

(Front page of DeQuincy News)

#### MR. RATLIFF IMPROVING

Readers of the News will with this issue read the last column of "Remembering With Ratliff" until the author, T. J. Ratliff, improves from recent surgery.

Mr. Ratliff, who has written the column more than three years, underwent surgery in Shreveport more than a month ago. Prior to his leaving for Shreveport he had looked ahead and had prepared several columns to be ready for print through his recuperation period. However, he has not improved as satisfactorily as he had hoped and the last article is appearing this week. This was sent from Shreveport by Mrs. Ratliff who sent the following information about Mr. Ratliff:

"He wishes to say 'thank you' for the many cards, prayers, phone calls and all expressions of sympathy and concern including flowers and visits tendered him.

"He is slightly improved but still critical. We hope with heavy hearts that each day will show more improvement on the premise that as long as there is Life there is Hope."

DeQuincy News, October \_\_, 1972, DeQuincy, Louisiana

LETTERS TO EDITOR

MR. RATLIFF'S SISTER EXPRESSES HER THANKS

Dear Editor,

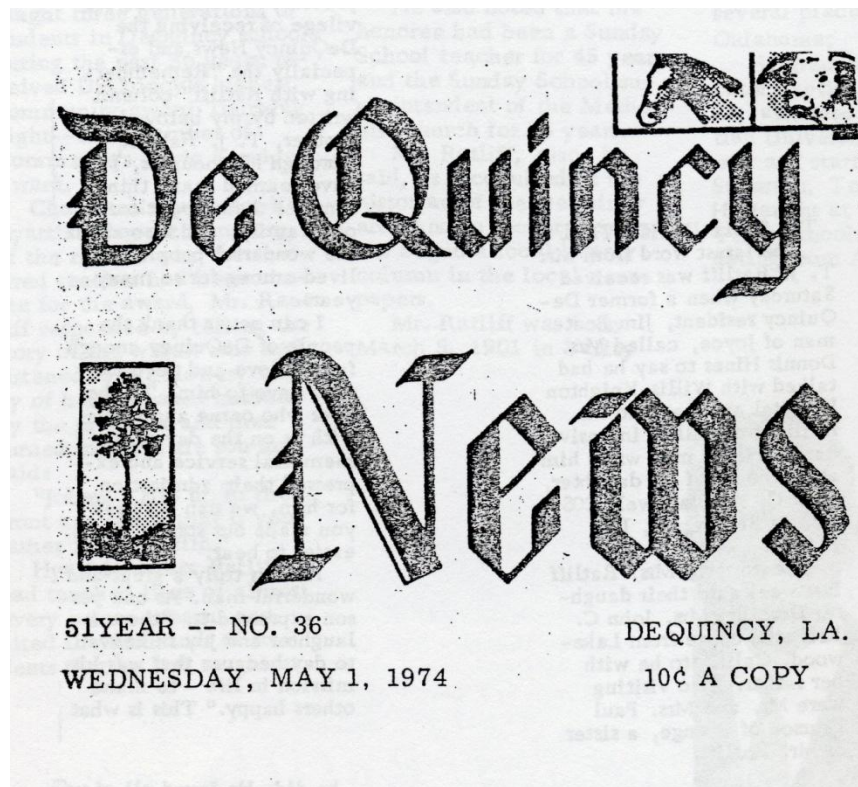
I have enjoyed and appreciated so much the privilege of receiving the DeQuincy News and especially the "Remembering with Ratliff" column written by my beloved brother, T. J. Ratliff. Through his thoughts, I have learned many things, some of them about our own family, and also about the wonderful people he lived among for so many years.

I can never thank the people of DeQuincy enough for the love and devotion they gave to him. To the ones who came and spoke with us on the day of his memorial service and expressed their admiration for him, we can only say you made our sorrow much easier to bear.

He was truly a great and wonderful man. As one person expressed it, "there is laughter and joy in Heaven today because that was his mission in life – to make others happy." This is what he did. He loved all of you so much and we loved him.

Thank you for everything and God Bless you.

Mrs. Lynn (Marjorie) Pace, Jr., Haskell, Tex.



## T. J. RATLIFF COLUMN WINS

The late T. J. Ratliff, veteran DeQuincy High School teacher and the writer of a column of local history and recollections, was the posthumous winner of an honorable mention in the "Best Local Column" contest of the Louisiana Press Association at the LPA's annual convention in New Orleans.

The columns entered in the contest were some written by Mr. Ratliff prior to his death in December, 1972. They were found among his papers by his family and published in the News in 1973.

The column, "Remembering with Ratliff" ran in the DeQuincy News and DeQuincy Journal for about three years.

Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Wise, publishers of the News, attended the New Orleans convention. Mr. Wise was elected second vice-president of the association.