

THE BLIGHT OF TIME

(Published in the Cherokee Scout, Oct. 31, 1893...Republished in the Cherokee Scout January 22, 1926...Written by W. H. Meroney and published in 1893 by his son, J. S. Meroney, who was the Publisher and owner at that time. Typed by Margaret Meroney Warner, (Mrs. Ben Warner, Jr.) and Retyped by Louise Axley Bayless, Mrs. John H. Bayless, July 29, 1964.

In 9th month, the month of September, I was called on business to the Marietta North Georgia Railway depot. In passing through the nearest way, by foot-path that leads through a beautiful woodland on the Hitchcock property, once owned by Co. Hunter, and after crossing a brook I found myself on the old road that led by and through Fort Bulter more than half a century ago I was aroused as if by inspiration, and the question unwantonly propounded itself to me: How long since you first passed this old lonely and now abandoned highway? For a few moments I seemed riveted to the spot, and my mind flew with lightning speed back to the year and month, for it was September and for aught I know it may have been the very day of the month, fifty-four years ago, and with distinctness did I remember the scene at my first coming over that identical spot of the road down grade to the brooklet. How the leaded wagons pressed the team with all the worldly possessions of a man and woman in the prime of life, with a girl nearing womanhood, two little boys, six and eight years old, and a baby girl. This was the family of W. H. Meroney.

Could I be mistaken? No, it was 1839, and as we neared the log cabins that had lately sheltered the troops for the removal of the Cherokee Indians west of the Mississippi River, we took up our abode in a cabin a few rods above the spot that now leads to the remains of Col. Archibald R. S. Hunter and wife.

In a few days we crossed the Hiawassee into what was intended to be the town of Murphy, we being the first white family that had lived in the town proper. There was but one house, aside from the house we moved in, which was a heavy

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log structure - one of the first houses, the other was the store of King & Thomas, (Will Thomas), which was not completed. It stands on the Cooper corner yet. (Esso Standard Oil station is now located.)

Soon there was a Hotel commenced near by, and the stables were exactly where our new Court House now stands. The building was begun by Col. Archibald Hunter, father of Mrs. Martha Hitchcock. He was also improving the property just across the river, but lived down at Old Huntington, near the bluff below town, and well do I remember that good, old kind hearted gentleman on his Indian pony, with his white locks. He would ride into the infant village as regularly as the morning came.

He sold the Hotel soon after, however, to William Cunningham, from Macon county, who completed it sold it and removed West, where he died.

Ramsaur & Summey built a Hotel on the corner where the elm tree now stands.

We learned the alphabet in a little log house above Fain's office from Drewry Weeks in 1840. I cannot recall a man that was a resident of the town at that time that is now living, and but a few that was there up to 1844.

I remember the first grave that was dug in the church yard. It was the first wife of G. W. Hayes. She was the mother of Mrs. Rolan.

Not only was the town quite different then from the present time, but all the surroundings were different. The stock lived fat the winter through on the cane brakes, on the creeks and rivers, and the mast and winter range in the mountains. The rivers were alive with fish and the woods, abundantly supplied with game.

The pastimes and amusements were different. The settlers were mostly from the Western part of the State, and they were intelligent and well to do farmers, and were like a band of brothers. The bear hunt and the deer chase was most common; other wild animals were plentiful; the wolves could be heard howling on the mountain tops at a fearful rate, and it was no strange thing

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to hear the war whoop of the red man, for there were hundreds left who had concealed themselves in the fastness of the mountains, so the vigilance of the soldier could not reach them, and squaws could be seen on the streets of the new town trading for ammunition and begging for bread every day in the week, and when they would chance to get a little "fire water" they would start out single file, about ten paces apart, and would think nothing of running ten miles without a halt to their home at the foot hills near the valley.

The most exciting amusement, and one that was patronized by all, or nearly all, ages and sexes was the horse race. There were fleet and fine stock from several states, and well do I remember when Sleepy Pete of Tennessee ran against the big headed filly of North Carolina. There were more than two thousand people present, and little fortunes changed hands. South Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee were well represented, but the old "Tar Heel" State pocketed the stakes.

The Race Tracks were along where the Richmond & Danville depot stands. Many a gold watch went home in a strange pocket, and many bridles were tied and the less fortunate walked home. No one was killed or hurt on such occasions and repeaters were not carried in back pockets in those days.

"Many Days" and Fourth of July celebrations and one week for Christmas were as regularly kept as the Sabbath is now observed. No man shucked his corn, rolled his logs or raised his own house without the neighbors joined him, while the young ladies helped the good wife quilt or made one in the frolic at the corn shucking, and when the last ear of corn was finished, which had been divided between the two parties headed by captains, the one that completed his part first was hoisted on the shoulders of friends and carried around the pile of corn victorious.

They then repaired to the farm house, the older people to look on and the

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MAIDENS

and maidens would engage in the play of the dance. Homespun dresses and calico's were worn by all and in reach of all. Contentment, yea happiness, was in the grasp of all, for ~~no~~ ^{no} silk and satin dresses vied with each other's, no diamonds or brilliant gems sparkled on the bosoms or hung in the rosy ears or against the peachy cheeks of the child of nature in that frontier of primeval age.

Education then consisted in the spelling book, arithmetic, a smattering only of grammar a thorough knowledge of history and the sacred Scriptures, and any further knowledge was drawn from the book of nature, which was so lavishly and grandly spread out before them from mountain peak of lowly valley, from the grand robling river to the tiniest brooklet--all was peace, friendship and sociability.

But where are we now? (Year 1893) - More than half a century has passed like a dream, and we are living in the fast age. The humble, comfortable home no longer satisfies our craving. Our desire for hundreds has given in to a wish for thousands, and from thousands to an insatiable thirst for millions, and our once humble, quiet willage has caught the inspiration.

The carryall changed to the buggy, to the hack, the carriage, the phaeton, and now nothing less than the electric car and the locomotive speed and a mile a minute will satisfy the wants of this generation.

The half Century that has passed on the wings of the wind has brought us from childhood to gray hairs and age ere we were aware of the fact, and that the next half century will bring forth no mind can fathom, no inspiration can conjecture.

"Oh, happiness, not to be found ^{'N}unattainable treasure, Adieu".

W. H. Meroney