

Calico Rock and North IZard County from
1883 to 1914

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I hope that you will permit another "Old Timer" to pay you a visit and tell your readers some of the things I remember about Calico Rock and vicinity in the period between 1883 and 1914.

The Progress usually reaches me on Monday morning following date of publication. Although I have been away from Calico Rock for 42 years, the Progress is just like a letter from home. Many of the names mentioned in your news items are very familiar to me, yet for the most part the people who bear these names are total strangers to me. Their parents and grandparents were my associates and friends many years ago. Here are a few - Garner, Killian, Sanders, Mocdy, Lackey, Rodman, Smith, Hudson, Whitfield, McNeil, Conyers, Perryman, Matthews, Wayland, Caples, Stoner and many others.

I was born on September 15th, 1876 near Iuka about six miles North of Calico. My parents were Leander and Molly Gentry. I was eleven years old when "Topsy", your Iuka correspondent, and your "Bible Authority" of Wild Cherry were born. I was 25 years old before I was ever 50 miles from Calico Rock. I am sure that "Topsy" must have gone to school to me at Iuka in 1894 or 1895. If so I wish that he or she as the case may be would drop me a card here at Arlington, Texas. I should like to renew an old acquaintance. I will have something to say about "Bible Authority's" Bibles in IZard County and Calico Rock in 1887 before I have finished my story.

I should remember your "Old Timer", W.M. Finley, but so far have been unable to place him. Charley Finley went to school to me at Calico Rock in 1908. Possibly he was related to W.M. There was Uz Finley living in IZard County about 1870. He along with W.L. Aylor, Steve Wayland, and J.N. Trimble moved from IZard County to Baxter County in the eighteen seventies and bought White River bottom land farms. Aylor, Wayland and Finley's farms were just below Bul Shoals Dam, and Trimble's farm about one mile above. Several of Uz Finley's grandchildren went to school to me when I was teaching on Trimble's Flat in 1897.

A little more about these men who moved from IZard to Baxter. W.L. Aylor married an IZard County girl, Celia Ann Suggs, and they raised two boys, both of whom are still living. Robert the oldest lives in Mountain Home. Henry married a girl near Calico Rock, a daughter of George Bray. Henry is an auditor and travels extensively over North Arkansas. The Aylors of IZard County today are relatives of the W.L. Aylor family. The father of Steve Wayland mentioned above gave the land for church and cemetery purposes for what has always been known as Wayland Arbor, located about one mile Northeast of Iuka. For many years the Methodist had an active church there. Among its members were the Halls, Hivelys, DeWitts, Langstons, Landcasters and many of the Sanders family. Another member of this early congregation was Alfred Swafford after whom Mt. Alfred, the highest point in North IZard County was named. Uncle Alfred was noted for his loud praying. He must have had an impression that the Lord was hard of hearing judging from the power he put forth in his prayers. I remember several of the Methodist preachers who served the Wayland

Arbor congregation. One was W.A. Peck. Bro. Peck was a better school teacher than preacher. He had a big family, and since the Methodists like us Presbyterians did not pay their preachers very much in those days, Bro. Peck became Prof. Peck and taught school for several years at \$30.00 a month, to support his family. He was well educated and used fine English. He did more I guess than any other person to break me from using such words as we'uns, you'ns, ta'nt, has went, etc. I went to school to Prof. Peck at Iuka in 1889. When he quit preaching he made his home on Spring Creek not far from Macedonia church. Some of his children and grandchildren perhaps live in the same neighborhood to this day. Eugene and Lottie and perhaps others of his children went to school while I was teaching in Calico from 1905 to 1909. Another prominent Methodist preacher I heard often at Wayland Arbor was Rev. Gregory. His name is memorialized by having one of your section's prominent citizens, Gregory Matthews, named after him. Hayes Matthews, a cousin of Gregory, was named after an old time local Methodist preacher, Uncle Henry Hayes.

Now, I must refer to J.N. Trimble. Your Dolph correspondent never says Trimble's Campground, just Campground. J.N. Trimble once owned the land where Dolph is now located as well as the Campground property, and we always referred to the place as Trimble's Campground. The Church organization was known as Union Congregation of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. It was one of the few places where people really camped during Revival Meeting time. There were two sets of log cabins in the early day. One set North of the present church site where part of the Perryman families, the Dave Hudson family and the Bob Campbell family camped. South and a little East of the present church house were the cabins used by the McCoy and the James and John Perryman families. I would like to say more about Trimble's Campground, the dearest place on earth to me except my own boyhood home.

Calico Rock in the eighties hardly deserved to be called a town. It was a steamboat landing. Steamboats could come up the river only when there was plenty of water. When the river was low and the boats could not come, Calico was a dull place. As far back as I can remember there was a ferry across White River at Calico. When I was a boy we did not say Calico Rock, just Calico. The main business at the landing at that time was run by Bill and Charley Aiken. I am not sure whether they were brothers of Father and Son. They ran a general store, the only kind we had in those days, and were also agents for the steamboat people. Charley Aiken was also the ferryman. There was no wire cable across the river then and Charley would have to navigate the boat across by man power. Charley would pole the heavy boat two or three hundred yards up the river along near the bank on the Calico side where there was not much current, then haul across for the Stone County side. By the time he got across the boat would drift down to the landing place opposite Calico. On the return trip he would simply reverse the operation. Bill Aiken was Calico's news correspondent at that time. He wrote mainly for IZARD COUNTY'S newspaper, THE IZARD COUNTY REGISTER, published at Melbourne by Dave Craige. Incidentally, I have a copy of the last issue of the register ever printed. In it was his valedictory. A load of wood delivered to Uncle Dave was always good on subscription. Bill Aiken was a witty fellow and wrote over the pen name of "Ground Hog".

I can faintly remember a few incidents that happened as far back as 1882. In 1882 Cyrus Creswell taught a school at Wayland

Arbor. He boarded at our home near by. I can remember his "little O'clock" as my sister and I called his watch, the first watch I ever saw. I think that Cyrus Creswell was the first Postmaster of the town of Creswell just below Calico Rock. The town was named for this Creswell family. Many of your readers can remember Dr. J.M. Creswell, a nephew I think but am not quite sure of Cyrus Creswell. Dr. J.M. Creswell had a good farm near Pineville and was one of the best Doctors in the country. He had a reputation of being the best doctor for pneumonia of the time. His daughter, Zella, went to school at Calico Rock while I was teacher. The next school teacher at Wayland Arbor was Mr. Grissett and he was followed by Prof. Eddleman. By the close of Mr. Eddleman's school I had learned to spell everything as far as "baker" in the old Blue Back Spelling Book. Others still living who attended these early schools at Wayland Arbor are: Robert Landcaster, Chess Gentry, Emma Campbell, Mrs. J.B. Roe, J.O. Caldwell, and G.W. Lackey. George Lackey and I roomed together while students of Mountain Home Baptist College in 1895.

In January of 1883 or 1884 we had a spell of the coldest weather I ever experienced in Izard County. White River froze over solid at Calico Rock. Young people from miles around went to Calico to skate and cross the river on the ice. There was a family by the name of Cunningham who lived near White River between Calico Rock and North Fork. The Cunningham boys cut a hole in the ice and caught several hundred pounds of fish. I remember that they came up around Iuka peddling this fish and spent the night at our house. It seems to me now that they must have had a wagon bed full of fish. On February 11, 1899 the thermometer skidded to 12 degrees below zero. Prof. J.P. Bingham and I were teaching in Mt. Pleasant Academy at Barren Fork and with the old fashioned wood stoves we had, keeping warm was out of the question. In February of 1886 we had the deepest snow I ever saw. It was 30 inches on the level. And while on the weather, in August 1912 in a period of about five hours time we had eight inches of rain in Calico Rock. Some day when the river is low, look down in the river about fifty yards from the mouth of Calico Creek and you will see a lot of rocks, some as large as salt barrels. The creek got on such a rampage that day that it washed those rocks out that far into the river. One more story and I will leave the weather alone. ## 1901 was the year of the great drought in North Arkansas. My father farmed for fifty years in succession and 1901 was the only year when he did not raise any corn. Since the people then grew most of their living on the farm they were faced with a desperate situation. Much relief came in 1902 when construction of the railroad began and men all along the river were able to secure work, and purchase food and supplies until another crop could be harvested. I taught a summer school at The Sanders school house in 1901

The principal product shipped out of Calico was cotton. On the trip up the river the boats could bring salt, coal oil, heavy machinery and other non seasonable articles, and return with cotton. Cotton was the cash crop of the country and nearly every farmer grew from one to three bales. I said cash crop; actually the farmer got very little cash out of his cotton. Steve Matthews at Pineville, Billy Swan at Iuka, Nick Rand at Wild Cherry, and a few other merchants in the Calico Rock territory ran general stores, and for nine months of the year, nearly everybody traded with them on credit. When the farmer harvested his cotton in the fall he took it to these merchants and settled up. If when his account was paid the farmer had anything left coming to him from his cotton he was paid in cash. My father

was a thrifty farmer and he was generally able to take home ten or fifteen dollars which he laid aside to pay his taxes when the collector came around. His tax ran from eight to ten dollars a year which was a big sum in those days.

Although we lived near Iuka, my father did most of his credit business with S.E. (Steve) Matthews at Pineville. Steve had a very simple way of bookkeeping. We could not say system. He used a big daybook, the pages of which were about eight by ten or twelve inches. When a customer bought a bill of merchandise Steve would enter every item of the purchase with its price on the customer's page in the big daybook together with the date of each purchase. When my father took in his cotton and "paid off" in the fall, Uncle Steve would write PAID in big letters across the page, tear the leaf out of the daybook and hand it to father along with the balance in cash if my father had anything left out of his cotton after his account was paid. Some system, but it worked very satisfactory.

These neighboring merchants shipped nearly all of their cotton from Calico and this is what gave the landing most of its business. My father had a good team of mules and did quite a bit of cotton hauling for Billy Swan. Two bales was a good load over the road we had from Iuka to Calico when I was a boy. There was no warehouse to store the cotton at Calico and so it was lined up in rows on the river bank to await the boats which often was two or three months, or until there was a rise in the river.

Besides cotton there was not much of anything else shipped out of the country by boat. We had a wealth of timber in the country but what little was shipped out went down the river by rafting. Most of the timber which was rafted out was cedar, some little pine oak, all in logs. No lumber was shipped out either by boat or raft that I remember. Many of these rafts originated far up White River as far away as Taney County, Missouri, miles above the present Bull Shoals dam. These rafts never stopped at Calico, just gave the town a hand wave and floated by. I have seen some of them that looked to me like they would cover half an acre. The crews taking these rafts down would sell at Newport, Des Arc and other places down the river and then make their way back home on foot. They returned through our section by way of the old Jackson Port Road which ran through Melbourne, Pineville, Iuka and on to Mountain Home crossing North Fork at Conley's Ferry. Now in the bottom of Lake Norfolk. So Calico missed out almost entirely on the early timber business.

Prior to 1890 there was very little lumbering carried on. Construction of homes and business establishments then was very limited and then in the cheapest way possible compared with our building of today. Hence only a small amount of lumber was used. Both of my grandfathers built their homes of logs when they first settled and this was also true of perhaps the great majority of the early settlers. Even the first two court houses of Izard County were built of logs, one of which I presume is still standing. About the only lumber used in these log houses was for floors and doors. The first saw mill in the country that I knew anything about was located about three miles East of Calico on Piney Bayou. It was a jig-saw affair which of course could not produce much lumber. I can remember seeing some of the planks sawed at this old mill. My Grandfather Reed got the boards to floor the log house he built near Iuka before the Civil War. This old Jig-saw mill was located about two miles below the

old Benbrook water mill and was known in my boyhood days as the Byrd Smith mill. In the eighties there were several circle saw mills in Izard county. One on the Jacksonport Road near Newburg. Something went wrong with the safety valve on the boiler of this mill one day and it blew up killing two men. Jess Thrasher built a small saw mill at Iuka about 1886. He sold quite a bit of lumber but did not get much for it. Wagons would often drive down to Iuka from Salem, camp over night, and take back a load of this rough lumber. The price was 50¢ per hundred compared with \$8 to \$10 per hundred today. The first band mill of the country was established between Wild Cherry and Pineville by Mr. Scott, father of Clarence Scott who I think still lives in the vicinity. Mr. Scott had complete finishing machinery and so our local carpenters never after had to use so much elbow grease in pushing the old time hand planes.

Lumbering became a real industry of the country on the coming of the Railroad in 1902. Several big band mills were soon in operation. One near Newburg was known as the Band Mill. Thomas and Maddux had a big planing mill at the east end of the railroad switch in Calico. Thous ands of car loads of lumber were shipped out of Calico Rock and Creswell. If my memory serves me right Steve McNeil, the president of your bank today, shipped lumber and cross ties from Creswell for several years after the railroad came. There were other thriving timber industries. There was a Peg Mill near Trimble's Campground. Dots of oak and hickory for wagon timbers was shipped from Calico. There was a big stave mill at Mount Olive. I have heard that Mt. Olive is now a ghost town. I have been there when it was on a boom. Let me digress just a little and say a little more about Mt. Olive. Two of Izard County's leading families, the Jeffreys and Dixons first settled at Mt. Olive. Philip Jeffrey of Mt. Olive was an early Cumberland Presbyterian preacher. He was pastor of our Congregation at Trimble's Campground for several years in the late eighties. Of the Dixons I knew more of Gus and Jeffrey than of the others. These two were brothers and ran mercantile establishments both at Mt. Olive and Melbourne. Gus was also for several years Clerk of Izard County, and Jeffrey Dixon served a term or two as County Treasurer. Mt. Olive was once County Seat of Izard County and when I last visited Mt. Olive there were still some signs of the old court house building. Now back to timber for just a bit more. The timber industry by which the greatest number of people profited was the cross ties. It was no uncommon sight in 1907 to see 100 or more wagons any day except Sunday drive into Calico loaded with lumber, cross ties, cedar posts and other kinds of timber.

I have told you that cotton was the main crop of our farmers in the time of which I am writing. The country never had a modern gin such as we see in the cotton producing sections of our country today. The machinery consisted of a simple gin stand without feeder, condenser, or any other labor saving device. These early gins were powered by tread wheel power. I will not attempt to describe one of these early wheels. If you are interested ask Ed Perryman. His father operated one of these early gins. There were some better gins in the country after 1890. Uncle Andy Kialian and his brother ran a good gin in Calico Rock after the railroad came.

From 1885 to 1890 the teacher who perhaps had the most influence in our early training was P.H. (Harry) Caldwell. He was the Father-in-law of Dr. J.B. Roe, a prominent Calico Rock doctoor from 1902 to 1912. Uncle Harry, as he was familiarly known, taught at Iuka,

Wayland Arbor, Wild Cherry and other district schools of the country. He did not teach us much in a cultural way except an everyday lecture on our moral conduct. On the other hand he gave us such a good shot of Blue Back Speller, Rays Arithmetic and McGuffey's Readers that many of us youngsters who attended his schools thought we had a very good education. Nearly all of our schools then in the Calico territory were summer schools held in July, August and September between cotton chopping and picking time. The schools procedure then was almost the opposite to that of the present. Then the teacher's duty was to hear us recite our lessons to find out how much we had learned ourselves from the books, and in addition to see that the rules were enforced. We had rules of conduct in those days which we had to obey or suffer the consequences which was not having our grades marked down, but our backs marked by a good switch which was always handy.

We hear a lot these days about segregation and integration. Well, we had plenty of segregation in the eighties, not of the races for we had no negroes in our section of the country, but of the sexes. In the schools, the girls all sat on one side of the room and the boys on the other. On the playgrounds the boys and girls had separate yards. When Prof. Bingham and I taught at Barrenfork in 1899, the girls were all in one room under him and I had the boys in my room. Mrs. Ida Smith of Calico Rock today was one of the girls in Prof. Bingham's room. At church the men and boys sat on the right side of the room facint the preacher and the women, girls and babies on the left. Lots of babies went to church then and I have heard them crying all over the house. Their crying didn't seem to bother the parsons of those days. This custom of seating did not change until after the turn of the century. In fact, when I taught in Calico from 1905 to 1909 I seated the young ladies on one side of the schoolroom and the young men on the other.

There was but little chance of getting much of what we would call High School instruction in Izard County in the eighties. Prof. M. Shelby Kennard had the LaCrosse Institute, John W.C. Gardner did some High School work at Philadelphia a few miles east of Melbourne, Barren Fork had it's Mt. Pleasant Academy, and as far back as I can remember Melbourne had a good school. Calico Rock did not pass the one-room stage until 1905 when Miss Emma Campbell and I opened the first two room school the town ever had. We had a new frame two room building on the east side of town where the present school buildings are located. I was Principal for five consecutive terms. By 1909 we had four teachers and a full High School Course of Study as of that time.

I taught my first school in 1894 at the Dillard School House not far from Pineville. The place was named after Uncle Joe Dillard Squire Dillard as he was called. He was one of the Justices of the Peace of Union Township and these officers were commonly called "Squires". Jess Drowns and Charley Estes were my School Directors. He paid me the princely sum of \$20.00 per month for my teaching and I paid Mrs. Drowns \$1.00 per week for board. Two of the best pupils I ever had attended this little school - Nora Drowns and Essie Estes. They both again were my students at Calico Rock. Nora did not have to change her name very much when she married. By substituting a B for the D in Drown she became a Brown. I haven't heard of Nora for many years but very likely she and a number of other Browns by now still live near the Brown School House, or Cross

Roads as the place is now called. Ossie left Izard County not long after I did and attained notoriety as a lawyer in Oklahoma City. Referring to my \$20.00 per month salary I might add that before 1915 very few teachers in Izard County received more than \$40.00 per month, and then only from four to six months of the year.

Before 1890 there was not a college nearer Calico Rock than Batesville where the U.S. Presbyterians had a school, Arkansas College. About 1890 classes began at Mountain Home Baptist College. Prof. Johnson was its first President. M. Shelby Kennard closed his school at LaCrosse and moved to Mountain Home and headed the Foreign Language Department. After three years Prof. Johnson left and Prof. Kennard became President for the rest of the short life of the school. Mountain Home College never had an enrollment at any one time of more than 300 and after running for about seven years closed up for want of financial support. Among those who attended this college were Homer and Oliver Goodman of Calico Rock. Miss Johnny Gardner, Miss Fannie Rand, R.R. Ramey, W.R. Hudson, George W. Lackey, J.O. Caldwell, and myself. While I could say a lot about these old College mates of mine I am sure that those of them still living will pardon me if I refer to only one, W.R. Hudson. Bob, as we called him was the son of Uncle Dave Hudson, and Elder in the Cumberland Church at Trimble's Campground, and the Patriarch of you Hudsons of Calico Rock today. Well Bob became a Presbyterian Preacher noted for his oratory. He could preach a sermon which we thought equal to Dwight L. Moody or DeWitt Talmadge. Bob's father was a real old fashioned AMEN Elder. And I would like to say to Rev. Young Whitfield, if he happens to read this sketch, that his father, Uncle Allen Whitfield, could match Uncle Dave with his AMENS. When some preacher happened to get going strong in an evangelical way you could hear their AMENS all over the house unless they were drowned out by the shouts of some of our good Cumberland Presbyterians sisters of that day.

Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians all had what we called Protracted Meetings or Summer Revivals in the eighties and nineties and they all followed very much the same pattern. In many instances these meetings were held under arbors. Most often these Arbors were covered with brush, hence the name Brush Arbor. The meetings usually lasted five or six days, depending on the manifestations of the Spirit. No meeting was a success in those days without a "mourners bench" with plenty of penitents and a lot of gospel singing and shouting. The singing at the beginning of the altar service would generally start off with a song something like "O Turn Sinner Turn, May the Lord help you Turn, O turn Sinner turn, why will you die". And after awhile if some of the mourners "came through" or got converted, the singers would swing into "Shout, shout we've gaining ground, halle halle lu yah. For the love of God is coming down oh halle halle lu yah" etc. I have known some of these altar services to last late into the night or until the worshipers were almost worn out. We had another kind of meeting in these old time revivals not known now. These were "Grove Meetings". The congregation would meet at the church or under the arbor a short time before sundown. After scripture reading and prayer by the minister, the congregation would divide, the women going off into the woods on one side of the church and the men on the other. There they would hold a service very much like the regular altar service of the church and at "early candle light" would return to the arbor for the regular night service.

8

The Methodists had a service known as an experience meeting where individual members of the congregation would stand up and testify. I have heard some of them tell how that they had constantly to be wrestling with the Devil in order to keep in the strait and narrow way, and others who were always so filled with the spirit that they were ready at any time to soar away on flowery beds of ease.

Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists all seemed to have more religion in the summertime than in the winter. Their religious tempo cooled down with the weather. The Methodists had us Presbyterians and Baptists bested in that they had "local preachers and exhorters" in their church, which kept the morale of their members up between the visits of the regular pastor, the Circuit Rider as he was called. Hand shaking was a common way of stirring up enthusiasm at these Local Preacher's meetings. I knew one who could not close his meeting without a hand shaking.

The common procedure was like this; If there happened to be some old member present the exhorter would say: "Now here is Uncle Johnie with one foot about in the grave. He will soon be gone to the better world. Now I want every one of you who want to meet Uncle Johnie in Heaven to come and give me and Uncle Johnie your hand". Then generally there was shouting on the part of the women and maybe a few tears by the men.

A little more about the arbors of that day. They were generally bedded down with straw for the Revival Meetings to keep down the dust. Frequently these arbors were not fenced and hogs would bed up between meetings. The place would become infested with fleas and you can imagine the rest. The arbors were lighted by means of "stack light". Platforms about three feet high on three sides of the arbor were covered with dirt on which big fires of lighted pine knots were kept going during the service. While all I have said about our church worship seventy years ago may seem a little out of date at present, the best men and women of that day believed in and worshipped that way.

Two articles in common use in the eighties and nineties are practically museum articles now. They were cradles - baby cradles and grain cradles. Mothers would not attempt to raise babies in those days without a cradle. It was a boxlike affair mounted on two rockers. Papa could build one for 50¢. Mama could place her little darling in the cradle, rock it with her toe, and go right ahead with her sewing, darning, or knitting. It was a very satisfactory arrangement. Of course the future American was born right in the home, delivered by some good old fashioned country doctor who more than likely rode horseback several miles in the dead hours of night to do the work. His charge for the job? Well, \$5.00 and maybe he collected it, but about half the time he didn't. For hospital born babies of today you pay from \$100 to \$150 in cash, money on the barrel head, before the mother enters the hospital. Back home she has to have a handsome bassinet which costs her hubby another half month's wages, and in addition an ornamental push buggy which must outclass her neighbor just a little, and cost dad another week's wages. And as a rule when school days arrive the youngster is so delicate and pampered that he cannot walk a half mile to school but Mama has to deliver him to the school house door in the family car while father walks to work. Now, mothers, please pardon me for greatly exaggerating a lot but the problem of raising youngsters has certainly changed a lot in the last three quarters of a century.

Now for the grain cradles. Nearly every farmer raised a few acres of wheat and there were no reapers, binders or combines with which to harvest it. I don't suppose that even until today there has ever been an acre of grain in IZARD County harvested with a combine. If I am wrong, will somebody please correct me. The farmer cradled his grain. The grain cradle consisted of a long curved metal blade about five feet long called a scythe. This blade was attached to the end of a crooked handle about four feet long. To these was fastened a light frame consisting of several slim wooden fingers the length of the scythe blade and so arranged as to catch the grain when the operator swung the scythe. Using one of these cradles was a real he man job.

About the year 1888 Uncle Rod Thompson who had a good creek bottom farm about three miles northwest of Iuka, bought the first reaper I ever saw. Farmers came from miles around to see it. Even with it, the grain still had to be bound into bundles by hand. After the wheat was harvested it had to be thrashed. When I was a boy this was done with a groundhog thrasher. It was a very simple machine consisting of a big chest like box containing a cylinder with rows of steel teeth so arranged as to pass between another row of teeth fastened to a metal plate in the bottom of the box. The machine was run by a cog wheel arrangement powered by horses. The only one of these "groundhogs" I ever saw was owned and operated by the Sanders boys. About 1888 Bill Killian, Henderson Wayland, James Thrasher and my father bought the first Grain Separator thrashing machine in our part of the country. It was a ponderous affair and I still wonder they could haul it around from farm to farm over the kind of roads we had in that day. It was as great an improvement over the Sanders boy's groundhog as Uncle Rod's reaper was over the cradle.

There was but one flour mill in our part of the country before 1890. It was the old Benbrook water mill on Piney east of Calico. It was built back before I can remember, perhaps in the seventies. After the Benbrooks the mill was operated by Buck Vest and was then known as the Vest Mill. The last that I knew of this mill was that W.J. Copp and I sold it in 1913 to a Mr. W.B. Pearson from Illinois. In the eighties farmers came from long distances to this mill with their grain. Often the mill would be days behind and they would either camp and wait until their turn came or else go home and come back later for their flour etc. It was always fun to go with father to this mill and camp over night while waiting for our grinding. There was once a beaver dam a little way up the creek from the mill. I always enjoyed seeing samples of their work like where they had cut down saplings, etc. with which to build their dam, but I was never lucky enough to see one of the animals. This was the only beaver colony that I ever saw in Arkansas.

In 1890 W.H. Redus built a roller mill in Mountain Home, and in 1899 Albert Moore and brother built one in Barren Fork. In the late eighties a dam was built across Spring River just below Mammoth Spring. A cotton factory was built at one end and a big roller mill at the other end of the dam. After the building of these modern roller mills the patronage of the Benbrook mill began to fade away and it is possible that the old mill site today may be just a ghostly reminder of the past. But of one thing I am sure, No modern steam mill will ever be able to make better meal than the old Benbrook Mill.

Now I would love to go back and tell you something more of the people I have mentioned in my story of cradles, thrashers, mills, etc.

Rodney Thompson, who bought the first reaper in the country, Uncle Rod as we all called him, was one of the most progressive farmers of the country. He loved good horses and other farm livestock. He and his neighbor, Squire DeWitt, brought in the first pure bred hogs. Most all of our hogs until then were "razor backs" like the ones you may have read about in the funny books. The Post Office of Rodney was named after him. Uncle Rod had a daughter, Mary Jane, who married F.E. (Ewing) Hall. Ewing and Mary Jane raised a large family and many within a days drive of Calico today can call them Grand or Great Grand Parents. I do not know but it is probable that the Halls of your Hall Funeral Home may be descendants of Uncle Rod.

Next for the Sanders family who ran the "Groundhog". I went to school at Wayland Arbor with George, Andrew, and Henry and in 1901 their children went to school to me at the Sanders School House. Mike Hively lived in the same community and he had a large family of girls. ##### Result was that nearly all the Sanders boys married Hively girls. There was one exception that I remember; Elihy Sanders married a Whitfield, a sister of Rev. Young Whitfield if I remember correctly. Dave Sanders of this family went to school to me at Calico. One of the Sanders boys I am told now owns the home of my childhood near Iuka.

Next the Killians. I have you that Bill Killian was a partner with my father when they brought the first separator into the country. In the past year I have read in The Progress of the deaths of two of his boys, Andy and George. Bill Killian had another son, Dave, who I believe now owns what was once my Uncle Bill Reed's farm about one mile east of Iuka. These Killian boys and I were youngsters together around Iuka. I knew Andy better than the others. He was a Mason and I worked with him in both Pinevill Lodge #306 and Acacia Lodge #625 at Calico. We were both in the processions at the funerals of Capt. R.C. Matthews and Billy Swan and others that I do not call to mind. I am related to one of the Killian family by marriage. My Grandson, J.J. Gentry, married Lillian Killian who was a daughter or Grand Daughter of one of these three boys.

The Benbrook family, one of which built the old water mill of which I have spoken, has been prominent in the Piney Bayou section of the county since its first settlement. I remember a few of them. There was Asas who was cashier of the Bluff City Bank when I was a teacher in Calico. He later moved to Fargo, Oklahoma and I think still lives in that part of the country. Hervy Benbrook was an Izard County teacher and later moved to Texas. I think he was a relative of the Bailey family. I last met him at the Bylam Bailey funeral in Fort Worth about fifteen years ago. After the railroad came Euing Benbrook moved to Calico and ran a transfer business. Elbert Benbrook was for many years county Surveyor of Izard County. He was also a prominent Mason. I have sat with him many times in Pinevill and Acacia Lodges. --- I mention other families of the section before I am through.

I have told you something of cradles and babies of yesterday. Well, it was no more expensive then to pass out of this world than it is to get in. There were no hospitals in Izard County then. Sick people were cared for in the home by relatives and neighbors. It was seldom that any ailing person suffered for want of help. Now we can hardly get help for love or money. Oh yes, there are plenty of flowers and sympathy cards today which of course are appreciated, but flowers and cards do not go very far when it comes to making beds or sitting

by your bedside when you are sick. There were no funeral homes to pretty us up and give us a beautiful funeral fifty years ago. When the end came, friends of the family would "lay out", wash and dress the body. Some carpenter of the neighborhood would build a nice pine coffin, cover it with black sateen or velvet, and ornament it with nice bright metal screws and handles. Jim Bunch of Iuka made most of the coffins in our neighborhood and my Uncle Jim Perryman and his brother Dave in the Campground vicinity. \$5.00 was the usual price for a good coffin. There were often two services for the deceased. One a graveside service at the time of burial and another several weeks later at some church and called "Preaching One's Funeral". I knew one instance where a man got married again before time came to have his wife's funeral preached. Another custom in putting away our dead then was the use of a "Winding Sheet". Before the body was placed in the coffin, a large white sheet about the size of a bed sheet was spread across the top and the body laid in on the sheet. Then just before the lid was finally closed, the sides of the sheet were folded over the corpse completely enveloping it. I am glad that we have our beautiful funerals of today.

You may ask what we did for fun and recreation when I was a boy. Well, we did not have any picture shows, radios, televisions, or anything of that nature at all to amuse and entertain us. The first contraption I ever saw to throw a picture on a screen was a Magic Lantern. I never saw a moving picture until I had left Calico. I was thirty five years old then. Maybe once a month when school was not in session the old folks would let us have a play party, always at the home of some one where we would be closely chaperoned. We were allowed to laugh and talk and play sitting around games. No romping plays like "Shoot the Buffalo" or "Ride old Boby down to Town" were allowed. Neither was any kind of "kissing" play permitted. We had lots of singings, spelling matches, literary societies, etc. Some localities permitted dancing, mostly of the square dances to the music of the old rag time fiddling of that time. It often happened that some of the young bucks at these dances would have a fight before the night was over - these dances lasted all night as a rule. No one was usually hurt very much; and what were these fights about? Possibly too much Ozark Moonshine. Maybe girl trouble.-- After crops were layed by in the Summer there was often a picnic or reunion of some kind. At these picnics we had swings, square dancing, maybe a speech or the reading of the Declaration of Independence by some one. There was always a picnic dinner and plenty of red lemonade. Often the Odd Fellows would have a part in these gatherings and parade all dressed up in their flashy regalia. I remember one of these at Iuka when Uncle Tom Hively, some of you remember him, made us a big speech on the virtues of FRIENDSHIP, LOVE, and TRUTH. In the late eighties the Civil War veterans held a two-day reunion near Oxford. The war had been over twenty years and the animosities of that struggle were largely forgiven, and the Veterans, both Yankees and Rebels, met together. During the afternoon of the second day they had a sham battle and for ten or fifteen minutes I heard more shooting than I had ever heard before. The Melbourne band furnished marshall music for the occasion. I think that Bob Harris of Melbourne was a member of that band - brass bands, we called them. When I was ten year old, half the men of the country were Civil War Veterans. I remember some tall tales that they told us boys, all of which were overdrawn or purely fiction. I heard Uncle John Perryman, an uncle of Ed, say that he was at the battle of Lookout Mountain near Chattanooga, Tenn., and when the Yankees charged up

up the mountain to attack them he ran so fast down the South side of Loodout Mountain that he could feel the Yankee musket balls hitting him in the back. At the Oxford Reunion I saw one of the first talking machines ever made. It was a wax cylinder gadget and could not be heard without the use of ear phones.

We also had log rollings, cotton pickings, quiltings, etc. where the people would get together and combine work and pleasure.

At the time of which I am writing there was not a foot of paved road in North Arkansas. Only a few roads were designated as Public Roads. One of these roads was the old Military Road over which the U.S. Government moved part of the Cherokee Indians from East of the Mississippi to Indian Territory before the Civil War. Another was the # Jacksonport Road which ran across Izard County from Dry Town to Iuka. None of these roads were graded and were impassable to traffic when rainy spells came. All able bodied men between 18 and 45 were required to work these roads under the direction of an Overseer appointed by the County Court. (I am not sure that I have given the correct age limit). Every man when warned out to work was required to bring a tool of some kind - an axe, shovel, hoe, etc., to remove the rocks and fallen trees from the road so that wagons could get by. All travel was by wagon and horseback. A very few buggies for luxury travel by those who could afford them. Some of you may have heard the expression - Hanley's Hack. Capt. Hanley, a Melbourne lawyer often made the rounds of the Circuit Court traveling on foot from town to town, carrying his law books on his back. Hence traveling by Hanley's Hack. Another museum relic now was a woman's side saddle. If a woman had gone to church riding astride she would have attracted so much attention that no one could have quoted the Parson's text when they got back home. My wife rode in one of these saddles thirty miles, from Amos to Iuka, the 16th day of March 1898, the day after we were married.

Getting married was even different then from what it is now. A young man did not go courting then, but went "Sparking". When a young man asked a girl if he might see her home from church and she refused, he was said to be "sacked". Weddings nearly always took place at the home of the bride, followed by a big wedding supper to which all the kinfolk of both bride and groom were invited. There were no honeymoon trips in those days. The bridal pair usually spent the wedding night at the home of the bride and the day following journeyed to the home of the groom where there was a big "Infare Dinner", attended by about the same group as at the wedding. These festivities were usually followed by a charivari (shivaree), a noisy demonstration given the young couple after they had set up for themselves. The bride's dowry was quite often a Big fat feather bed.

Before closing "My Recollections of North Izard County in the Eighties and Nineties", I cannot leave unchallenged a statement made in the Feb. 2nd issue of The Progress by Bible Authority who says that he was born at Wild Cherry in 1887. This was his statement, "There were but few Bibles in Izard County and none at Calico Rock at that time", (1887). As I read between the lines he must be a preacher of some kind and that he meant the statement simply as a play on words and not for the literal truth. I will venture to say that in proportion to the population there was as many Bibles in Izard County then as there are today, and as for there being no Bibles in Calico Rock then (1887) that is almost too silly to consider. Dr. Goodman, a citizen of Calico then and one of the founders of Mountain Home Baptist College, no doubt had several Bibles.

I have told you that Andy Killian and I were together on many Masonic occasions, one of which was the funeral of Capt. R.C. Matthews. Capt. Matthews was the Grandfather of Hutson Matthews, the present secretary of Acacia Lodge #625 of Calico Rock. Hutson's father was a loyal Mason and the leading member of Pineville Lodge #306. I tiled Pineville Lodge the afternoon when Hutson Matthews was made a Master Mason. All the principal offices of the Lodge were filled that afternoon by Matthews men. Uncle Steve, Hutson's father was Secretary. It might be interesting to note here that Gregory Matthews, a Brother of Hutson, and I are the only surviving Charter Members of Acacia Lodge #6

The other Charter members of Acacia Lodge were: R.F. (Frank) Matthews, O.S. (Oliver) Goodman, Sam Watts, J.H. (Henry) Garner, A.B. (Byram) Bailey, W.H. (Henry) Bailey, W.C. (Walter) Rodman, J.H. (James) Rodman, and Rev. I.D. McClure. These men had very much to do in the development of the young city of Calico Rock. Frank and Gregory Matthews were General Merchants and cotton buyers; Sam Watts was foreman for the railroad; Oliver Goodman was cashier of the Bluff City Bank; William Garner ran the Garner Hotel; Henry and Byram ### Bailey were salesmen. Walter Rodman was in the hardware business. Walt Rodman used a pair of tin snips and made the first set of Jewels for Acacia Lodges. (I just wonder if these jewels are still in the archives of the Lodge or were they destroyed in Calico Rock's big fire). Other prominent Masons whom some of our readers may remember were Henry Buerclin who lived on Spring Creek near Baden Springs, named after his old home in Germany; and there was Dave Callison, J.J. Chastain, J.C. Thrasher, Henderson Wayland, R.A. Campbell, Dr. James B. Roe, Dr. Harlan H. Smith, Robert H. McSpadden, James Wood, Arhh Garner, and many others.

Mrs. Gentry and I were Charter Members of the O.E.S. Chapter of Calico. Other charter members of the Chapter still living are Mrs. J.B. Roe of Camden, Ark., and Mrs. James Wood of Searcy, Ark., and I think that Mrs. Ida Smith of Calico was also one of the Charter Members. For myself, I was made a Mason in old Barren Fork Lodge #181 in June of 1899. By dispensation I was given all three of the degrees in less than thirty days. Walter Rodman lived in Barren Fork at that time and taught me the lectures. So far as I know all witnesses to my being made a Master Mason have gone to the Grand Lodge above.

After finishing my summer school at the Sanders School House in 1901, my wife and I moved to Lincoln County, Oklahoma. There I taught small schools and farmed on the side for four years. In April of 1905 the School Board at Calico Rock sent me an invitation to return to Arkansas and take charge of their school. Calico was just beginning to whoop it up then. The railroad had been completed. Saw and planing mills were going up all over the country. Hundreds of farmers were driving into the town with loads of cross ties and going home with flour, coffee, sugar, clothing and nearly everything else that they needed without having it "charged". In the Fall the cotton wagons would roll in, some from as far away as Elizabeth, Viola, Oxford, and Newburg. Garner Bros, S.E. Matthews & Sons, and other firms were waiting to bid on their cotton and pay the farmer all that it was worth. But with all this activity, Calico had only a small one-room school for the term of 1904-05.

When I arrived on the scene in June, 1905 the School Board had just finished a very good two-room frame school building. It was on the hill in the East part of town where the present school buildings now stand. In the first week of October, 1905, Miss Emma Campbell, now of Mountain Home, and I opened the first two-room school ever taught in Calico Rock. At first we had only a few rude home made seats which had been brought from the old school house in Cedar Grove. Quite a number of our pupils sat on planks arranged around next to the walls of the building. After building the new house, the Directors found that they did not have any money in the school fund to buy furniture. The community decided to have a box-supper to raise money to buy desks. As it happened, a number of young fellows from Pineville, Creswell and out of town came to the supper. It seems that they had formed a conspiracy to out-bid the Calico boys and get their girls' boxes. Young Dr. Harlan H. Smith, seeing what was happening, quickly organized the Calico boys and bidding became so spirited that enough money was raised to nicely furnish one room of the building. Our school was a success from the first. As the school developed, young people from miles around came as students. The Conrad and Seay children rode in from Engle; the Harbors from Flat Rock; the Creswell, Ducker, McGinnis, and Matthews from Pineville. Then there were also Lackey, Moody, Drown, Sanders, Schoggins, Russell, Brown, Jennings, and others who came to our school. In Calico among many that I would like to mention were Jewel and Esta Roberts, Lora and Audra Garner, Ambrose Smith, Calbert Rodman, May Crews, the Craig sisters, and many others. The school at Calico Rock from 1905 to 1909 was one big happy family. I have always considered my work there as the apex of my professional career. Other teachers who worked with me in the school beside Emma Campbell were James Wingate, Zada Roe, Lillie Mashburn, and Amy Jones.

Joe Garner and his brother, Arch, were setting up their mercantile business in Calico even before the trains began to run. Mrs. Neill Brooks, daughter of Joe Garner, may have the distinction of being the only woman in Calico today who saw the first train run on the White River Railroad. Other representative business concerns of the new city were E.N. Rand & Sons; S.E. Matthews & Sons; Tome Matthews and his son Hayes; Evans Bros., Gruggists; C.F. Locke Jewelry; W.H. Wad Photographer; Walter Roberts Barber; W.C. Rodman Hardware; the Bluff City Bank with O.H. Goodman as Cashier; Calico Rock Commercial College with Prof. Guthrie as President; the Thomas & Maddux Planing Mill; a Gin and Grist Mill run by Addy and Bill Killian; Calico Rock's first telephone exchange by Brown Hutcherson; D.C. Shaver and William Garner had their hotels; Ed Bass was our Produce man; and Andy Whitfield ran the Livery Business. S.L. Guthrie and Son, Bob, came later and established The Calico Mercantile Co., and about 1907 Ed Parsons and Ed Baker came from Melbourne and established a large General Mercantile Business. The Peoples Bank was organized in 1912 with Steve McNeil as President. This bank and the Bluff City Bank afterwards merged and formed the present bank in Calico of which my old student, who knew more history than any other pupil I had in Calico Rock, Calbert Rodman, is cashier.

Others in and around Calico Rock in its early life whom I should mention were W.H. Stoner, farmer and stock buyer; George Berry, after whom Berry's Switch was named Bill Caples, a son-in-law of W.H. Stoner.

Bill Caples had a son named Newt who went to school at Calico when I taught. Possibly he is the Newt Caples whose name I see in the Progress at the present time. If so, I knew his Grandfather when he ran a store at Iuka about seventy five years ago. Bill Caples had a sister, Ollie, who married Dr. T.N. Rodman, an Uncle of C.C. Rodman. Drs. James B. Roe and Harlan H. Smith were our leading doctors in the new town. I must mention Bob Wayland who moved from Pineville to Calico in 1914. As a young man Bob had his business training at Pineville under S.E. Matthews and bought the pineville store when Uncle Steve quit. He ran the store at Pineville until he moved to Calico. He was an active leader in the establishing of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church at Pineville and was one of its first Elders. He was also a Director of the Peoples Bank of Calico Rock.

I was followed in the Calico Rock School in 1910 as Prof. J.T. Byram of the Byram family whose home was, and still is, in the Flat Rock Community. John (Prof. Byram) later was Principal of the Salem High School and finished his teaching in the Melbourne schools. He and his brother, Arthur, established and operated the Byram Mercantile Company of Melbourne until his death. He married my sister, Elsie, who lives in Melbourne at the present time. Prof. Byram was succeeded in the Calico Schools by Prof. Campbell. I think that Prof. Campbell is still living, a resident of Mountain View.

I will finish this sketch by reverting back to my old home neighborhood around Iuka and Wayland Arbor. I want to mention Chester Gentry and his cousins, Bob and Smith Landcaster, who all live near Rodney. These men still live on or near the farms where they were born. Their Grandfather was Jesse Landcaster, who lived on a farm just East of Rod Thompson, whom I have already mentioned. Uncle Jesse Landcaster was one of the founders of the Methodist Church at Wayland Arbor. Incidentally, Chess Gentry is the only member of our family left in North Arkansas bearing the name Gentry. My Grandfather, Samuel M. Gentry, moved from Middle Tennessee and settled on Mill Creek near Melbourne in the eighteen forties. If Chess does not get married and start raising a family very soon, the markers in the graveyard at Trimble's Campground will be all that is left to remind people of the Gentrys of Izard County.

There are many more incidents and memories of people of Calico Rock and vicinity which I would like to mention. Amid the whirl of events which are going on here in the Fort Worth - Dallas area at the present time, I have to give my mind a little shipping to think of events of fifty and sixty years ago. Cards from friends of those bygone days will be appreciated and acknowledged. Goodbye and God bless you all.

William Messick Gentry
P.O. Box 229
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June the eighteenth
1956