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Editor
The Floyd Press Floyd, Virginia

Dear Mr. Editor:

During the year 1938, my mother was telling me of some incidents which happened during her childhood and I ask her to dictate to me some of her recollections, which she did and I took down. Sometime ago, I came across this writing and am enclosing you a copy of same, thinking perhaps it might be of interest to some of your readers.

You will notice changes have taken place in our town during the 12 years (now 38 years) since this was written.

Yours truly,

Jessie Peterman

“Much water has run under the bridge since that Christmas week of 1856 when my father moved his family to Jacksonville, the County seat of Floyd County, which at that time, was not much more than a struggling village. No sidewalks, mud roads for streets, a red clay bank encircling the Court House Square on which at a later date, flag stones were laid. One church-the Presbyterian, which was used jointly by the Methodist and Presbyterians; two hotels, one kept by Bryant Hylton, on the present site of the Peoples Bank (now Ben Franklin) which was the last building on South Locust Street, and another kept by a Ms. Ferguson and after the surrender by Tom Williamson on the present site of the .Floyd Drug Store.

Our house was the last dwelling on North Locust Street and is still standing. The old brick academy was on the same site of the present high school (now our elementary school). And .a building known as the tobacco factory at that time, later used as a barn by my father, stood about where Dr. Ycatts office (Marie Wiliams house) now is, were the only buildings beyond our home.”

"A narrow strip of woods extended from the Academy to the present home of Mrs. B. G. Howard which was all in woods and was the play ground for the children of the town. The only buildings on the west side of North Locust Steet was one standing near the Everett Kingrea residence and occupied by Peter Banks, Floyd Edwards and others. Dr. Elliott's home came next. His first wife, Alice Hylton, daughter of Bryant and Nancy Hylton, dying there. Next came a large barn owned by Ira Howard, which was burned daring the Civil War. Then in the corner of Main and Locust Streets was the home and store of Ira Howard, the father of Mrs. Luke Tompkins, Mrs. Watt Shelton, Mrs. Campbell, Col. Joseph Howard, Asa Howard and others."

"On the east side of the street was the home occupied by John Gardner, father of Mrs. Johnny Crouk and Mrs. Trigg Sowers, when the Gardners moved, Peter Fishburne, a brother of Mrs. Andrew Stevens and Mrs. Alvin Graham lived for a while and later. Mrs. William Lewis, whose husband was killed in Indian Valley by deserters from the Army. Still later Alec Howell, grandfather of Mrs. S. J. Agnew, lived in the house. On the corner of the present Oxford Street, then called the "back alley" was occupied by Joe Winston, who afterwards moved to Montgomery County. Later, John Q. Brame, father of S. R. "Sam" Brame, lived for a number of years On the opposite corner was the large furniture shop of Flem Lester, whose dwelling house

came next and is a part of the house occupied by J. E. Proffit. The other house on the street was occupied by a Mr. Mosely who had a store located where Dr. M. G. Conduff now lives."

"Commencing at the "back alley" the first building was the Female Academy which was located just back of Peter Dickerson's house, and was a large one-room, frame building with a huge fireplace in one end and a stove in the middle. Among the teachers before the war were Mrs. Rogers, Mrs. Delia Huff, Mrs. Jack Kirby and Mrs. Pleasant Howell. Mrs. Rogers was my first teacher."

"During the Civil War, a Lutheran preacher by the name of Weir was principal and the school flourished under his care and many attended. Among those in my class were Gay Godbey, Bess Kirby, Sue Lester, Josephine Howell, Eliza Lesurer, Emma, Eliza, Sallie and Nan Shelor, Alice and Julia Godbey, Lou Howell, Octavia Simmons, Lucy, Mollie and Amanda Wygal, Mary and Ellen Phlegar, Berta Kirby. Laura Zentmeyer, Julia Kitterman, Laura Howard, Lizzie Howard, Lizzie Hylton, Sarah Tuggle and others. After the war Miss Maria Smith of Salem, Mass. who had been teaching a private school, was the most popular teacher who ever taught in the old Female Academy (1871-1872) and this was the last school taught in this building. Miss Smith had the distinction of being the first woman to teach in the public school in town. I well remember her telling us of her home in Mass., which was in sight of the Peabody home. Miss Smith was splendidly educated and was assisted in teaching by her sister, Mrs. Ellen Smith Stiacas, whose husband had been sent from his native land, Greece to be educated. He died before returning to Greece".

"Miss Smith, who it is said was Edgar Allen Poe's sweetheart and to who he dedicated his poem "To Annie" and her sister Mrs. Stiacas are buried in the town cemetery. No better Christian woman ever lived than Miss Smith and I am sure her teachings and noble example followed her pupils all through their lives."

"In 1872 the two academies were made co-educational. The teachers then being Mr. Obenchain, Dr. A. J. Ho-back, the Rev. J. K. Harris and Miss Maria Smith. Before they were combined, Dr. Hoback and Mr. Obenchain would come across the lot to teach some classes. Among those attending the Female Academy were Addie Howard Vaughn, Kittie Lane Ellis, Marcella Dillon Carter, Jennie Stevens Wells, Julia Griffith, Nannie Williams Keith, Nannie Phlegar Smith, Eugenia Edwards Harman, Mary Edwards Latham, Leak Lancaster, Hester Lancaster, Sallie Elliott Ivic, Belle Elliott Wright, Margaret Jewell Weeks, Aggie Lewis, Octavia Whitlow Poage, Jennie Dobyns Jett, Fannie Dobyns Dickerson, Annie Jett Stevens, Carrie Howard Dobyns, Maude Howard, Mary Elliott Proffit, Retta Phlegar Summers, Alice Atkins, Dean Pedigo Martin, Cynthia Grayson, Annie Stiglemen Mullins, Mattie Stigleman Baird, Octavia Jett Martin, Nell Edwards, Linda Smith, Eliza Huff Norris, Lillie Turnbull, Annie Smith, a niece of Miss Maria Smith, Annette and Flora Overstreet, all of who I so well remember."

"Among those attending the Male Academy in 1871-72 that I remember were Homer, Tap, Waller and Asa Howard, John Taylor, Wade Thompson, Joe Ridinger, Davis Lancaster, Posey G. Lester, Albert and Charlie Williams, Charles Sowers, Claude and Ernest Stevens."

"It is with pleasure that I recall some of the incidents of those school days. In times after the

Civil war, a Miss Lackey came to attend school, bringing with her a large roll of jeans which she had woven and expected to sell to defray the expenses of her board and tuition. She was 30 or 35 years of age and the pupils resented her presence, so she did not stay long. One day nearly all of the girls were throwing rocks at her as she went to the boarding house and one thrown by Julia Godbey struck me on the ankle. The yells I gave broke up the rock throwing for that time."

"A revival was being held at the church in town and we concluded we would conduct a revival of our own during the noon hour. Watchers were placed in order that we might know when Mr. Weir was coming. Some of us would preach, imploring the smaller children to come to the moussier's bench, singing and praying until some would be crying. Bess Kirby was considered to be one of our best preachers. One day, the watchers were so interested in the sermon, they forgot about Mr. Weir and when he walked in, I leave that for your imagination. We moved our preaching place to a hay pen in a field behind the Academy and there we continued to hold services."

"Commencements were exciting times, being held in the Presbyterian Church. At one commencement, when Gay Gobbey and I were about 10 or 11 years old, we spoke against each other. Our speeches were taken from McGuffey's fourth Reader, hers being the first verse of the classic: "Ben Battle was a soldier brave, and used to war's alarms. But a cannon ball took off his legs, so he laid down his arms." The first verse of mine was: "There is a calm for those who weep. A rest for weary pilgrims found. They softly lie and sweetly sleep. Low in the ground." I don't remember what effect such speeches had on the audience but in later years, we did better, I do remember that I got the Laurel wreath. The prizes were made of ground pine, decorated with cranberries which we got from Piney Fork."

"At one of the commencements, Mr. Wier had a banjo and a violin brought in the church as well as a melodeon belonging to Pleasant Howell. Such a thing as a banjo or a violin being used in church had never been heard of. It was considered almost unpardonable and there was much talk of having him resign from the church."

"Going back to the homes in town before the War, next to the Female Academy was an old house occupied by Asa Bumett, Amelia Howard and a Mr. O'Neal. Where the Methodist Parsonage now stands, there was a small house and John C. Repass, a Lutheran Minister lived there while I was in school. Next came the Presbyterian Manse, made of stucco and among the pastors, I can remember was a Mr. Wilson. For a while, during the War a Methodist minister, B. W. Bishop, who married a Miss Goodykoontz lived there. Rev. Bishop is the one who shot at the deserter when they came to rob the home of David Goodykoontz, now the home of the late Jacob Alderman, father of S. B. Alderman. The Willis home was then a log house and was occupied by Miss Maggie Willis' great grandfather Abraham Phlegar. Although a small child, it was of interest to me to go there and listen to Mr. and Mrs. Phlegar speak "Dutch". Where Mrs. Carrie Dobyms lives (now the Baptist Parsonage) was an unfinished dwelling and across the street was a small log house. Andrew Stevens had a harness shop on the site of Dr. Harman's office, and his dwelling house was in the same yard William Reynolds lived in a house situated about where Ben S. Pedigo's home is. In the southeast corner of the Dr. Stigleman yard (now H. Winston Spencer's home) was a tall building occupied by Jerry Prichett, afterwards by James Gardner, father-in-law of Dr. C. M. Stigleman, whose home was on the same lot."

"On the opposite side of the street was the tan yard and dwelling house, which is still standing of A. J. Kirby. Just above this was a small house painted red, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Arundel, usually called Arnold, who kept the P. O. for a while."

"Where the Floyd Motor Co. is now was the home of Alvin Graham, the village blacksmith, whose shop was near his house. Matthew Scott's dwelling house came next with a jewelry and gun shop near Henry Jones, a fine shoemaker, owned part of the house now belonging to Mrs. Etta Boyd Harless, which was a two-story, one room upstairs and one down and a shed for a kitchen. His shoe shop was where Fred J. Agnew has his store. The Hones family moved to Missouri, where, it is said all of the family died of tuberculosis. Samuel Dobyms lived in the present Lee D. Rutrough house and is one of the buildings that shows little change."

"On "the lot beside th« Presbyterian Church was the old rambling home of David Kitterman, who was the father of ten children, five boys and five girls. On Sunday evening, the young people of the town would gather under the two large walnut trees which grew in the front yard, and many were the good times we had there, singing, laughing and talking. One daughter, Malinda, was considered one of the most beautiful girls in Floyd and who was married to a Mr. Thomas."

"The Presbyterian Church was the only church in town, the Presbyterians using it two Sundays and the Methodist two (2nd and 4th). The walls and roof of the present Methodist Church were erected prior to the Civil War and during that time the building was used as a store room for baled hay for the soldier's horses. It was finished and dedicated in 1870.. Next to the Presbyterian Church was the home of Jackson Godbey, who was County Surveyor and Clerk of Court for a time. The former "Aspen Hall" was the home of Pleasant Howell, who traded in slaves. Where the hospital now stands, the former home of Monroe Proffit was the home of Col. William Shelor, at one time Sheriff of the County."

"Several old buildings, the post office and a store belonging to Jack Carter, the hotel kept by a Mr. Ferguson and a store building on the corner completed the block on the south side of Main Street."

"Above the Samuel Dobyms' residence was his store and above that was the Tom Mosely store. The building in later years being called the "Sealwry House". The extreme lower part of the Jett Hotel property was used as an office by Squire Harvey Deskins. Just above this was the store and above that on the corner where the Floyd County Bank now stands was Mr. Deskins' dwelling house, the former house of Rear Admiral Robley D. Evans, and where he was born. The Court House is the same building as when I was a child."

"In going out our present South Locust, after passing the hotel, the present site of the Peoples Bank of Ployd County, we passed the hotel stables, where the shirt factory now is was the cooper's shop run by my father. There was no building except a small cabin further up on the street. A tin-pen alley was on the opposite side of the street, which was a mud road. Those mud roads were given distinction of being called streets and at each crossing, stepping stones, several inches high, were placed to enable people to cross without getting stuck in the mud. We children derived much pleasure in skipping from one stone to another."

"Down West Main Street, the Maberry house, during the Civil War was occupied by Dr. Campbell. whose children were named Walter, Edgar, Willie and Emma. Davis Howard had a store in the brick building in corner and lived in the room above. In 1856-1857 Dr. Haden lived in the house now occupied by Mrs. Maudie Howard and her family. At the begining of the War, Major Lane, father of Cook and Kitty Lane live in the house. Major Lane died during the early part of the War and his body was brought back home for burial. His wife was a sister of the Johnny Headen. and after Major Lane's death, she returned to her mother's home, Mrs. Ellen Howard, who was usually called "the widow Ellen Howard"."

"Dr. John Stuart, a brother of General J. E. B. Stuart, next occupied the house and practiced his profession. Before coming to town. Dr. Stuart, at one time, lived in the country on what is known as the Henry Lawrence place, near where the old Mt. Ruffner school house used to be. Fred Winston lived across the street and was a cabinet maker. I know of a few pieces of furniture he made that are in existance today. Henry Dillon's, who was a brick mason, house came next, and further down the street was the house in which I now live and consisted of two rooms and was owned by Tilhnan Overstreet, a blacksmith. The Manessa Tice family live, and had for many years, in a house up in the field. Mrs. Tice was a widow, Mr. Tice having died before we moved to town but the Tice boys and my brothers were great friends. A few gnarled apple trees which were near their .house still stand." "This about completes a descripyopn of the buildingswhich wer in existance when I was so young, so many years ago. We could not and did not visualize the coming of telephones, radios, electtricity, automobiles and all of the things that go to make up life now, but we had our pleasures and excitements as every generation has. As I remember ."Big Muster Day" was the biggest event of the year. In Aug., every man between the ages of 18 and 45 was required to come and 'muster', the muster ground being the high school (later the Elementary School and now 1976-Stop and Shop), the Dalton, Bedsual and Kingrea homes now. Everybody came, horseback, wagons, ox wagons, walking, any way they could but they came. Our yard and barn lot was always full to overflowing with watchers. Col. William Shelor, Major Austin Harman and Major Henry Lane were some of the officers."

"When the War came, men between the ages of 18 and 45 were called, later from 15 to 17 were called. Only the old men with the women and children and colored people were left. Flour was very scarce. No sugar, sorghum or honey being used. Salt was really the scarcest commodity, each family being allowed only so much which came from the salt works."

"At the beginning of the War, my brother, Asburg, took our team and went for a load. For soda, I remember my mother boiling down wood ashes lye for a long time and a small lot of this could be used in place of soda. Rye was parched and used for coffee, and to this day I do not like the smell or taste of rye bread. Specewood, hyme, sassafras, and such things were used in place of coffee. One great terror of our lives was the fear of an uprising among the Negroes. One time, my father and brother were gone and in the night, we heard a great moaning and crying, someone asking the Lord to have mercy, imploring someone to have pity, etc. and we were sure we could hear many people passing on the street. There had, we felt sure. had been an uprising. My mother walked the floor and how we children were frightened! There was no sleep in our home that night. What really happened and what was the cause of that night's terror, a man by the name of Peter Banks, a lawyer, was drunk and having delirum tremors, his home being on

the site of Everett Kingrea's house, and on the opposite side of the street. A baby was very sick and its mother rocking the cradle on an uneven floor, high off of the ground sounded like someone walking.. Of course, we were so frightened, every sound was magnified, unless it was Mr. Banks' praying and yelling."

"In 1865, when part of Shermans Army came through Floyd, about 7000, arriving one morning and staying until the next. At first we were scared. The cannon was put in the Academy lot and the soldiers went everywhere, seeing what they could find. I remember, my brother was expected home and my mother had made what she called, "Snowballs" in anticipation of his visit and wanting to prepare the best she could for him. One soldier came to the door and ask for something to eat. Of course, we were scared but my mother told my oldest sister to get him something to eat. Imagine our displeasure when she brought and gave him the "Snowballs".

"How well. I .remember seeing a man shot to death, a young soldier. He had been drinking and had given an officer some impudence, and when they went to arrest him, he ran. When nearly to Mrs. Morgan's he turned and looked back. Just then, they shot him. He was buried in the old cemetery but later, his brother from Nebraska came and got the remains from interment there. When the soldiers moved on, they left a broken down, worn out old horse in our barn lot. We children were delighted to feed and water him and felt we were rich to have a horse. He responded to the feed, rubbing, watering and attention we gave him, but to our regret. We did not have many pleasures in those days compared with today, but we enjoyed what we did have and I think, appreciated, them, Now,as I. think of the opportunities, especially in the way of education, children have today, such golden opportunities for obtaining a good education and so many not realizing it. My heart aches. I married soon after finishing school and .taught my first school near the old David Harman place. Now owned by a Mr. Belcher and boarded with Mr. and Mrs. Riley Hylton, whose goodness and kindness I have never forgotten. We had slab benches and no desk as was the case in so many school houses in which I taught. In a few of the houses we had fireplaces but later, we had stove. School opened at 8 o'clock a.m. and closed at 4 p.m., with one hour at noon for lunch. Our lunches were taken from home, cafeterias were unheard of. In one school I taught, a couple of children attended and their lunch consisted of a piece of corn bread and a piece of beef. Whenever I could, I tried to divide my lunch with them. What if such were the case now. Many of my pupils were older than I, as free schools had just come into existence and grown men and women were delighted to have the opportunity to go to school for the 5 months session that being the length of the term, and some would have to walk three and four miles. I remember one incident which, to me, was very laughable, as I was young and full of life.

"I had my back turned and on hearing a noise, looked around just in time to see a bench on which sat 12 or 14 grown boys or men turn over and it seemed to me that all of their legs were in the air at the same time. I always had an idea the legs of that bench may have been tampered with."

"Spelling matches were much enjoyed and in later years, when Holmes blue back speller was used, a great many of the pupils could spell every word from beginning to end, especially those attending the old Ruffner School."

"I have lived so much longer than many of my pupils, but as I have gone through life with its sunshine and shadows it has been such a pleasure to meet those long ago pupils, some of them old and some of them middle-aged, and I am very proud of the good substantial citizens they have made."

Note: On Aug. 11, 1940, Ray Hulburk of Oak Park, 111. came to see my mother, seeking information about Mr. and Mrs. Rogers. Mrs. Rogers was my mother's first teacher before the Civil War. She remembered Mrs. Rogers quite well and was able to give him information concerning her. He was very appreciative and wrote mother several times afterward. Mother died Mar. 31, 1946, at the age of 95 and of all the people mentioned by her, so far as I know, there are only two living at present, her sister Mrs. Nannie Williams Keith (Mrs. Chris Keith) of Amsterdam, Va. and Mrs. Nannie Phlegar Smith (Mrs. John Smith) of Ephrata, Pa.