

Family ties survive the crucible of hard Civil War

(EDITOR'S NOTE — Included here is another "Guffey Story" concerning the aftermath of the Civil War. The Daily Post-Athenian is pleased to present this recollection of a long-time McMinn County resident.)

By BILL GUFFEY

The one thing that never ceases to amaze me is the attitude my grandmother took of the horrors of the Civil War. Before the great Civil War she was a member of a beautiful family consisting of both parents, two brothers and six beautiful sisters..

Very few knew the awful persecution that family suffered because of their allegiance to the Confederate cause. Because of their thrift and ingenuity, they were by far the richest family materially and spiritually for miles around. They were a praying family that gave God full credit for every decent thing they had.



When an evil war comes to your fireside how does one know which side to support? Granny's family followed their conscience and defended what they thought was their home land.

Granny's brother, Obidiah, turned out to be a soldier of greatness. His deeds were talked about around the camp fires of both the Union and Confederate armies.

The Shell farm suddenly became the object of Union raids during the war. The Union troops carried off their stock, tools and grain. They even took their salt and in those days they had to go as far as to the seashore for salt.

How could they get salt now since their wagons had been confiscated as well as their stock?

Hard times

They had to dig up the dirt floor of the smoke house and render it to get the salt that had dripped from their meat over the years. That family suffered enough abuse to kill an average one. It did break the father down but the others managed to hold on and struggle tenaciously to live.

Now as we all know the war did end but strife did not. They were plagued by what some called carpetbaggers while others referred to

them as "bushwhackers." Granny lost an heroic brother and four lovely sisters through the cruelty of those evil agents.

I can testify to the beauty of these four sisters because when I was a boy, Granny had their pictures hanging in her parlor. That parlor was off limits to most people but Granny often allowed me to enter the huge heavily carpeted room where I would live for hours in the past.

I would stand under those four portraits and try to understand how such injustice could have happened in a nation so great at the United States.

Once, when I stood under the portrait of Great Grandfather Shell I noticed something so wrong I went to Grandma for an explanation. I said to her: "Grandma, did your father have the mumps when he had this picture made?"

"No, Willie," I remember she said. "He did not have the mumps. Dad was very sick when the picture was made. He had lost lots of weight and the artist advised him to puff his cheeks out with air to look natural and Dad must have puffed a bit too strong. But, Willie, I hadn't notice that before. Leave it to a child to notice these things!"

The old trunk

One day we went to Grandpa's trunk and she opened the big lid and handed me a pocket book containing currency and a picture of Grandpa hold a rifle at this side.

She said the picture of Grandpa was taken the day he left Somerset, Kentucky in late 1863. "Your Grandpa was a sick man at that time," she said. "The money you see is the exact amount he brought home from the war."

I helped her lift the big tray to one side where I saw a blue uniform neatly folded. She explained that it was the same uniform that Grandpa wore home when he was mustered out from the war.

It must have held many memories for her for she suddenly became silent and I dared not break into that moment of tranquility. That trunk held a treasure that I would not have traded for Fort Knox. I wonder what became of it. I do hope some of the family has it.

Although the huge log house was destroyed by fire some years later, I do believe Grandma had moved out of the old homeplace as she was a widow and getting frail in health.

I just can't imagine where that trunk is, but I do pray that it is in the hands of a grandchild.

Now Granny amazed me by the way she could cast the horrors of

war aside and appear to forget all about the many tragedies and heartaches the war gave her. She only talked of periods of the war that were amusing and one would be surprised there were any.



Family feud

Granny once told a group of us grandchildren a long story about two families of neighboring people by the name of Cannon and McKenzie. It seems that these two families were of Irish descent and had for many years been the best of friends. In each household there was a stalwart unmarried young man. Those two young men were bosom pals from the days of their childhood.

Jasper Cannon and Crockett McKenzie were the two strongest men in the area. Any mother around would have been proud to have had either for a son-in-law but neither of the two had shown any interest in the maidens of the neighborhood until one day of all things they both hit Granny's eldest sister for a date.

Her sister was carrying a torch for "Crock" McKenzie but she dared not give him a date for fear of what it might do to Jasper Cannon. Some big-mouthed kid blabbed it to Crock McKenzie why Dolly Shell would not date him and that started a feud that lasted until the start of the Civil War.

When war broke out the two of them were loyal to the Union and that improved their relations. Though the war took its toll, Jasper Cannon and Crockett McKenzie made it back. Still the two of them saw war in its most horrible form and they both seized every opportunity to be in the house of God.

On this one particular night there was a revival going on at the neighborhood church and both McKenzie and Cannon were there. The meeting was getting off to a slow start when Crock rose to his feet to testify. Brocker McKenzie did not have to search for words. They came from his strong chest as if he was a

professional. This is about the way Granny remembered it:

"Dear God, I thank you for bringing me safely home. I am going to devote all my spare time to the service of your kingdom, God. I saw four years of war where I saw many bodies torn by cannonball. Dear God, I feel so happy to know that I am bound for a home that is free of strife and, thank God, there will be no cannons there!"

Granny was watching Jasper Cannon and she thought she saw a note of irritation in his expression. McKenzie continued by saying, "Dear God, I ask you to give me wisdom so I can better aid your cause for I can hardly wait to enter my heavenly home where — thank you, dear God — there will be no cannons!"

Jasper Cannon jumped to his feet and shouted, "I guess there will be as many Cannons as there are McKenzies!" It took a second or two for Brother McKenzie to realize what he had done then he walked to Brother Cannon with his arms outstretched saying, "Oh, Brother Cannon, I was referring to war cannons!"

In a moment those two big muscular giants were unashamedly locked in each other's arms. Their sentiments for each other aroused the congregation so

that in a moment's time there was bedlam of shouting and some souls were saved that night. I tried to tell this story right but somehow or other it just wasn't as good as when Granny told it.

'Granny Riggins'

Granny liked to tell about an eccentric old lady well known by all who was called "Granny Riggins." Granny Riggins lived alone in her well-constructed log cabin. She had a partly closed area in back where she kept a large broom of her own construction made out of rough straw.



It had been hinted around the neighborhood that Granny Riggins was a witch. Two different children

had vowed they saw her sailing high in the air on that knotty broom on a Halloween night. When Granny was confronted with the tales she would neither confirm nor deny them.

It was my grandmother's belief that Granny Riggins actually wanted people to think she was a witch. It had one great advantage — she was seldom bothered with ill-mannered kids for they feared her as they would a tiger.



Among Granny Riggins' odd tastes was a burning desire to watch a live battle. She had witnessed a small skirmish once and instead of curing her from wanting to see a battle it just seemed to make her desire all the greater.

When it just so happened that an ambitious young Confederate officer with a strong body of well-trained men began to camp right in her neighborhood. They were harassing the Union supply line. When this Confederate force became known to General Hooker he gave the report to an ambitious young Union Captain and told him to take sufficient men and arms to destroy the Confederate force. Now much to Granny Riggins' delight, the two forces prepared for combat right near her soil. As the two forces started their gory battle Granny Riggins took a seat on a zig-zag fence where she had a birds-eye view of the battle. It was just exactly to her notion. She was watching men fall from the shots of rifles and hearing the agony of death and enjoying every moment of it. The battle wasn't going well for either side as both were losing men they could not replace. The opposing officers decided to use the old army trick of out-maneuvering their enemy. Granny Riggins didn't know about that. She had no notion of moving for she had seen men die by the dozens and besides she was comfortable. She had just what she had wanted for some time.

The two enemy forces changed positions too gradually for Granny to

notice and the result was that she became caught in a crossfire. Both the Union and the Confederate bullets were taking chunks out of her calico dress. She let out a blood-curdling scream and began to run in the direction of her cabin. Both sides noticed her dilemma about the same time and they held their fire until she reached the safety of her cabin. Needless to say, she remained in the safety of her home during the remaining months of the war.

When death was hitting the soldiers so relentlessly Granny Riggins looked on with a certain amount of fascination. But when the moment appeared that she also might die, death became a thing of horror.

A curt reply

A couple of years ago I chanced to be out in that area where Granny Riggins lived and died. I talked to a handsome man in his late twenties, who told me he was a descendant of hers. I don't remember his first name, but his last name was Pettit. I believe he still lives on the same land Granny Riggins owned during the Civil War. He just might read this and remember me. I am the same man who came with the cab driver who drove him home several years ago. The cab driver was G.C. Kennedy.

Crock McKenzie was a 'character' in war period

(EDITOR'S NOTE — The Daily Post-Athenian is pleased to present yet another installment of the history of the Civil War in McMinn County as viewed by long-time resident Bill Guffey. Today's "Guffey Story," entitled "A Story of 'Crock' McKenzie," includes remonstrances toward good along with presented examples of the twisting effects of greed and revenge as predicated by the national strife)

By BILL GUFFEY

The War of the States spawned many characters. Some were as evil as a human could get. Others were brave and loved to risk life to see that justice was done to their fellow man.

My grandmother had just reached her teen years when that great war got underway, in the spring of 1861.

The heartaches began when she watched her two handsome brothers, Obadiah and Thomas, march off to war. Her father at that time was a man of great vigor, being in his late forties. Her mother also was youthful looking. Her oldest sister was in love and had prepared to marry but had to postpone the wedding because her sweetheart, "Mac" McKenzie, had marched off to war.

Granny's brother, Obadiah, became a soldier of great fame. His fame brought on great persecution from the Union soldiers who often raided the Shell farm looting and carrying away everything that they could find. The Shell family learned to be very cunning with their wealth. They hid their food and other provisions in caves, and for some time they hid their horses and cattle in corrals in the deep woodland.

Once they were raided by vicious armed men who claimed to be working under the authority of the U.S. government. There were eight of them. They had rifles and each carried a big .44-caliber Colt pistol that had been very popular as a weapon then.

Obadiah, was in bed sick with the measles when a friend of the family rode ahead and warned them the group of eight men were coming after Obadiah to try him for war crimes.

These eight men were really renegades who were acting on their own authority. Actually, the authorities, what few there were at the time, had warrants for the arrest of these evil men. All this happened soon after the close of the war and the government was not well stabilized.

Obadiah escapes

Grandma's brother, Obadiah, made good his escape from the wicked bushwhackers but in doing so he had to leave his family to their mercy. It would have been certain death if he had stayed. Just before the renegades reached the Shell home they spotted a horse in a corral so one of them dismounted and haltered the horse and was bringing it to his companions when the owner of the horse came running toward him demanding him to release the horse.

The renegade pulled his big gun and fired one shot into the poor man, who fell mortally wounded. That was the kind of justice the bushwhackers dealt out.

When Grandma's brother made good his escape the bushwhackers returned to the Shell farm and entered their house, all eight wearing big heavy boots. They demanded food. The Shell women cooked them a big meal and the eight brutal men ate like starved hounds. Once they gorged to their satisfaction they arose from the table and began ransacking the house. It seems they were experts at that for the Shell women had hid a basket of eggs behind the chimney in the upstairs, which were found.

Due to the scarcity of eggs at the time, they were selling for \$12 a dozen. The big bruiser came bounding down the stairs holding the basket of precious eggs high when his boot caught into a snag on the bannister of the stairs tripping him up and he came crashing over the bannister, his head missing a huge fireplace only by inches.

Home ransacked

The basket of eggs that the Shell family had hoped to use to buy their winter clothing was a mess of shells and egg yolks on the living room floor. The man that fell from the stairs was able to walk away after lying on the floor for a few minutes.

When the men had ransacked the house, to their satisfaction they concentrated on the barn and other out-buildings. The Shells had hidden all their livestock in the woodland corral except two big fat hogs.

These scalawags butchered those two big hogs right in their pen and all eight carried away about 100 pounds of fresh pork each on their horses' backs.

Crock McKenzie, who had married Grandma's oldest sister, came to the Shell home just hours after the men had left. He had earned his nickname "Crock" when he killed a bear with his hunting knife. He was so named in honor of Davy Crockett, who killed a bear the same way.

Crock McKenzie was a great man of his day. He stood 6'6" tall in his sock feet and he weighed 280 pounds — all muscle and bones. During the war, in hand-to-hand fighting he could pulverize a half dozen Confederate soldiers. But he didn't learn to love his work; in fact, he got sick of war.

When he came home he was so grateful that God had spared his life he repented of all his sins and became a devout Christian. In all that Rogers Creek community no one individual worked any harder for God's Kingdom than Crock McKenzie.

Vengeance desired

When he witnessed the cruelty his mother-in-law had suffered through the eight men Crock left for home and retrieved his war weapons, a rifle and a Colt pistol.

This pistol was a .44-caliber and it only had one chamber for a cartridge — it had to be loaded each time it was fired. However, it was amazing how fast Crock McKenzie could load his gun and draw.

He rode from farm to farm and recruited 16 daring men and in no time they were on the trail of those men. He was driven with the idea of the havoc that had been wreaked by them, of the looting of his wife's family's home, of his wife's brother having been driven into the woods from his sickbed to hide out.

Among Crock's group of vigilantes were former officers from both the Union and Confederate armies. Their motive was to track down the eight men who were murdering innocent people and taking property from the poverty-stricken. They picked up the trail in the knobs just east of Athens.

Everywhere they went it was the same old story. The men had looted each farm along their path and on one occasion had shot down an innocent man in cold blood. The more Crock witnessed their evil deeds, the more he grew to hate the men he stalked.

and bring them before a judge for trial but he was beginning to hope the evil eight would put up a fight so they could be destroyed and the government would be spared an expensive law suit.

The vigilantes were drawing nearer and nearer to the outlaws, who were loaded down with loot, which they hoped to sell in Tellico Plains. As the hunted men came to the level and cleared land just this side of Tellico, though, they decided to battle the vigilantes, hoping their marksmanship would better the two-to-one odds by which they were outnumbered.

Well, it didn't turn out that way. It would appear that the vigilantes also were dead shots, especially Crock McKenzie. Every time Crock fired his target lay mortally wounded. They killed three of the eight and the other five chucked their loot to the ground and ran their horses in desperation. The vigilantes chased them through the town of Tellico on up the Tellico River to the North Carolina line where the renegades scattered and hid.

Crock McKenzie and his vigilantes returned to Athens disappointed because five of the eight escaped, but happy to report that they did fix three of them so they could never cause trouble on this earth again.

Bad ways taken

During that area of time one day of the week was set aside in Athens for the horse traders. Crock had great knowledge about domestic animals so always he made good on that day. When the horse trading was over Crock always had his pockets full of greenbacks and silver coins.

At that time there were two saloons in Athens and it was legal to drink and sell whisky. Crock had three small children at that time ranging in ages from three to six. I can tell you that year it was for my dad was eight years old and dad was born in the year of 1868, so the year I am telling about had to be 1876.

Crock would go to the horse traders fair. Always he seemed to prosper in horse trading and after it was over he would go on a binge and spend a portion of his horse trading money.

Crock had been informed that a black man had given the eight evil bushwhackers directions to Obadiah Shell's home. He was so angry with the black informer he suddenly became what we hear lots of today as "racist." After Crock patronized the two saloons and satisfied his thirst he would walk to the part of town where the black man lived and challenge any two black men for a fight — fist and skull. Black men were noted for their courage in those days so Crock always got challengers.

Two would advance on to Crock who waited until they were in good range then he would kick one of his challengers with his size-18 boot and

that he never failed to render a man unconscious when he scored a hit with his foot or his ham-like fist.

Murder in his heart

Crock was living on his father-in-law's farm. Jim Shell had a peach orchard right on the same ground that Fred Wankan has a beautiful home on Spring Creek ridge. Crock's wife had sent her three lovely children to the orchard to get peaches for a pie.

The black man that had been credited for giving the eight bushwhackers directions to Obadiah Shell's home lived at the foot of the ridge just below the Shell peach orchard. He had three children that were three or four years older than the McKenzie children. When the little McKenzie children reached their grandfather's orchard, they were roughed up by the black

children who were uninvited guests in the Shell orchard.

Crock McKenzie had wanted to punish the black man for informing on his favorite brother-in-law, Obadiah Shell, but he had suppressed the great desire because he knew very well it would get him in great trouble with the sheriff. When he came home and found out his children had been abused he angrily went to the black man's door.

The man's wife barred the door, saying her husband was in bed sick with the gripe. Crock could be a gentle man if he tried so he told the black lady he must talk with her husband to see if he could help him.

Crock entered the "sickroom" with the purpose of talking to him about counseling his children to be more gentle with his. The black man agreed to talk to his kids then Crock's eye caught an opening in the quilt covering over the black man and saw he was wearing boots.

Crock goes crazy

Crock with his long reach seized the quilt that covered the black man revealing him lying there in full dress with a pick handle gripped in his right hand. He swung the seasoned handle at Crock's head but he warded off most of the blow, grabbing the black man by his long sinewy arm and snatching the pick handle from his grip.

In Crock's great anger he beat the man savagely, ignoring the screaming wife and children in the doorway. Crock satisfied his lust for vengeance and returned home with lots of the man's bloodstains on his coat and pants.

The sheriff took out a warrant for Crock's arrest as the black man charged him with forceful entry and attempt of murder. Crock talked it over with his wife. At that time the doctor had told my grandparents that it was imperative that they move to a higher altitude for both their lungs were very sore.

where Dayton now is, on Walden's Ridge. Dayton was only a couple of farms that year but they began to build that Southern Railroad for Dad was a lad of eight years, so the year was 1876. Crock told his wife he was going to seek sanctuary with my grandparents on Walden's Ridge until he could pay off his prosecutors.

Crock kept in touch with his lawyer at Athens and in the meantime he helped Grandpa farm. When Grandpa heard that a huge construction camp was located right where Dayton now is he gathered a wagon load of green beans, potatoes, apples and other vegetables to see the camp. Crock helped to load the produce but he feared to go along as he was a fugitive from justice.

Crock's lawyer had made some progress negotiating with the black man who was prosecuting Crock. The black man acknowledged that he himself had provoked Crock into attacking him. He told Crock's lawyer if Crock would pay him damages for the savage beating he gave him in his own house he would withdraw his suit against him.

The big hat

There is another story of Crock I left out that I am sure many of you would like to hear. It goes like this.

A very prominent man of Athens made a business trip to Mexico. That would be about 1867. Not too many had the privilege of visiting south of the border in those days and those who did brought back a wealth of souvenirs.

This prominent man was a special friend to the sheriff who had warrants for Crock McKenzie. He bought many souvenirs to bring back to the states but he shopped longer for the sheriff's present than any of the others.

He ended up by buying the sheriff a great wide straw hat. It was doubtful if any in Athens had ever seen a hat half so large. The sheriff was very proud of his hat. He kept it in his office and showed it to all his visitors.

The day he was handed the warrants for Crock McKenzie's arrest his friends told him worriedly that they sure did not envy him his job. The sheriff sat the big Mexican hat on to his head and said boastfully "when Crock sees this hat he will go as meek as a lamb."

The sheriff and his one deputy mounted their horses and rode off in the direction of Crock McKenzie's home. Crock lived on a high ridge where he saw the sheriff and the deputy coming for him.

Quick escape

Crock just barely had time to saddle his horse and kiss his wife and children. The sheriff and his deputy began to gain distance on Crock at the very beginning. They were just one hundred yards past where Ramon F. Guffey now lives when the sheriff took a shot at Crock.

Uncle Mack would stick his big finger in the bullet hole and twirl the great hat while he was talking to Grandpa. It worried Dad's parents about sheltering a fugitive but he was Dad's uncle by marriage so they just couldn't turn him away.

A trip to Dayton

One day Dad's father learned that a huge camp was located in the area where Dayton, Tenn., now stands. They were building that railroad that passes through Dayton now. That was in the late spring of 1876. Dad was eight years old.

Dad's father along with Uncle Mack filled the wagon with green beans and green corn, apples and other produce and drove down to the camp. Uncle Mack was a giant of a man standing six feet seven inches tall and was very muscular. When they reached the steep mountain climb he took over the driving seeing that he outweighed Dad's father 130 pounds.

The heavy wagon sometimes would run clear up to the big mule's rump, then Mack McKenzie would say "Hold'er, Buck!" Buck did hold his heavy load to the foot of the mountain where Uncle Mack left them for fear a sheriff might spot him.

Dad was shocked to see so many machines and men working where just a year before he only saw two people in all of that area. His father stopped the team and said he was going to look up the camp boss and for him to stay with the team. Some of the biggest men Dad had ever seen were working on that railroad.

Just about all of them were black men. One huge man came to the wagon and took an apple. A man even bigger than him twisted the apple from the other man's grip and threw it into a giant oak so hard it turned into a mist. He then scolded the apple snatcher by saying, "From now on, when you want an apple you ask for it!" He did ask Dad for an apple and Dad nodded yes.

Return trip

The camp foreman bought everything Grandpa had in the wagon. It amounted to the largest sum of money Grandpa ever had. Grandpa began to negotiate through the mail with Uncle Mack McKenzie's lawyer. It seems that Uncle Mack had beat up a man in his own house. When winter time came Uncle Mack's prosecutor

agreed if he would pay so much damage he would withdraw the warrant.

In the meantime, Dad's parents both were much stronger so they decided to move back to McMinn County. Just as they made plans to move a rush of winter came down out of Canada and just about made it impossible for them to move. It was just by a tiny margin that they made it back.

Grandpa let Big Mack McKenzie drive down the mountain. Grandpa had shoed his team with cork shoes. The ground had a layer of ice on it that was covered with a ten-inch snow. When they started down the mountain they rough locked both rear wheels. That big heavy wagon just about slid the whole distance down the mountain.

Dad said the wagon would slide up against Old Buck's rump and Uncle Mack would say, "Hold her, Buck," and Buck would stiffen his long sturdy legs and they finally reached the foot of the mountain. They were not out of the woods yet for when they reached Washington Ferry the river was frozen over.

Grandpa went to the home of the ferryman and asked, "How am I going to cross this river?" The ferry man's answer was, "You'll just have to do like the others, drive over on the ice." So they did drive a covered wagon across the Tennessee River in the winter of 1877.

Dad really suffered on that return journey for he had to stand in the rear of the wagon facing the cold wind and lead the cow.

A note from Guffey

I have given you an account of some frontier living and I did it in a spirit of truthfulness. One would expect living so hard to shorten a life. Well, just for your benefit I checked up on the life span of my grandfather, my grandmother and my father. G. W. Guffey died at the age of 85. Rebecca Shell Guffey died at the age of 77. C.G. Guffey died at the age of 99.

Frontier living packed with excitement

(EDITOR'S NOTE — The Daily Post-Athenian is pleased to present this story by long-time McMinn resident Bill Guffey, entitled "A Story of Three Long Generations")

By BILL GUFFEY

Time cuts down all, both great and small. Maybe we should put our minds to the future and never dwell on the past, but somehow since I have grown old I look upon the long-ago years with a deep fascination.

Perhaps I feel myself nearing that day when I will join my forefathers on that other shore. Whether my interest in my forefathers is of benefit to mankind can be decided by men of better mental ability than my own, and I can gracefully yield to their judgement.

I am going to tell about a period of my father's life that he often talked to me about.

My grandfather, George Washington Guffey, was born near Riceville in 1840. His first child, a son, was born within a mile of Grandfather's birthplace Jan. 27, 1868. People of today could not long exist in the hardships those pioneers had to endure.

"The great crowd gathered around his grandfather like Indians around their chief."

My grandfather's first child was to be my father 33 years later. In those days of hardships children had to labor at a very early age. Dad was blessed with an excellent memory. He remembered many incidents that he experienced at the age of four. He only gave the dates

of those incidents when he was positive of the time they happened.

His grandfather, Thomas Franklin Guffey, and his family along with four of his sons and their families migrated to Missouri in 1872 when my dad was four years old. Dad lived just seven months short of being 100 years of age before he died and he could remember the day his grandfather with his relatives stopped at his father's home to bid them farewell.

Departing relatives

He remembered there were quite a number of people in that long caravan of wagons. He used to tell how he romped and played with one of his cousins who was within a month of his age but the one who impressed him most was his white-haired grandfather.

The great crowd gathered around his grandfather like Indians around their chief. When the moment arrived to leave, his grandfather called all the kindred into a group and went to every individual and kissed him tenderly saying, "I'll never see you wonderful people again."

Dad in his childish mind hadn't believed it was possible for a grey-haired man to cry but there he was

weeping like babes and women. His premonition proved to be right for he went on to Missouri and died that same year never seeing his Tennessee relatives again.

Being a member of a frontier family was harder on the first child of a large

family for there were some years he had all the chores to do. He did his labor for parents who seldom acted as they

appreciated his efforts, but when Dad was old he could look back on those days and understand his dad and mother were so tired they didn't feel up to any affection for their child.

They did well if they could show a little affection for each other. The children would just have to wait for better days. Dad's father had managed to buy a small cabin and his mother had furnished it with things she had made in hope of someday having a home of her own.

It was really scary to see how poverty-stricken that young married couple were but it was even more scary when you realized they had more worldly goods than the average. In those days there were no markets. In other words they had to get their food from the soil and the forest.

Short supplies

Dad's father was a dead shot with his rifle. If he missed a turkey it was a disaster for ammunition was as scarce as diamonds. Housewives had not yet learned to can fruit and vegetables so their winter food was either cured or pickled.

His mother would pickle a huge hogshead full of turnips. That was rough food but Dad said it tasted very well when the snows were deep. His father cured about three big hogs whose hams and shoulders lasted through out

"Alice was laboring like Hercules to keep the housework up..."

the year. His mother also pickled a hogshead of green beans.

They actually had a variety of foods but they were so rough I doubt if the tender ladies of today could eat any of them. Well, that rough diet evidently wasn't healthy for Dad's parents were getting more irritable every day. By that time they had five children counting the baby.

The children who could walk were Dad's Aunt Alice, Uncle Jim, Aunt Annie, and Uncle Frank, who was still in his cradle. Dad was nearing his eighth birthday and was taking on new duties as his strength allowed him. His dad once told him that he turned out more work than the hired hand. Dad not only was doing more labor, he began to take on worries like grown-ups.

One night he heard his parents praying for guidance on how they could care for their children. It seems that the family doctor had told them that day if they lived it was imperative that they move at once to a high and dry climate. His father secured a farm in the area the family doctor had recommended.

Moving to higher ground

He equipped his wagon with a cover that was rain proof. Dad's father's team consisted of a horse and a huge mule that could outpull a good-sized elephant. You would never believe the provisions they managed to store in that covered wagon.

Dad as usual had a task to perform

throughout the long trip. He had to stand in the rear and lead the family cow by a hemp rope. The cow gave him little if any trouble on the long 40-mile journey.

Dad enjoyed the scenery along with his work. They had to ride over many hills before they reached the Tennessee River. When they pulled up to the Washington ferry it was on its way to their side to pull them over.

Dad couldn't explain to me just how they pulled the ferry backwards and forwards across the river but did say it was powered by two strong oxen. In those days it was said by all that the village of Washington had once been picked to be our nation's capital, and that is how it got its name.

Dad got the thrill of his life while crossing the river. Decatur did not exist in 1872. Washington was a village of perhaps twenty houses. When they reached the area where Dayton now stands there were two farm houses standing in sight of each other. Dad's parents decided to seek shelter in one of them.

In those days there were very few taverns and if a homeowner should deny a weary traveler lodging he would be committing a sin that would land him in disgrace. They chose the first house they came to and immediately believed they had made a bad choice. The homeowners looked old and haggard but actually they had just lived a hard life.

Tooth cleaner

Dad remembered the old lady kept a cob pipe in her toothless mouth at all hours. They had venison for supper and the old woman had polluted the meat with ashes. Dad wasn't sure if the ashes came from her pipe or the fire. The old man complained about the ashes, saying, "Old Woman, did you have to get all these ashes in the venison?"

"What of it?" the old woman shrieked. "The ashes will clean your teeth!" It certainly would not clean their teeth for neither had a tooth in their head.

"Uncle Mack would stick his big finger in the bullet hole & twirl the great hat..."

They got an early start that morning. Their host had not fed them too well but the team was fed several big ears of corn plus a measure of oats. Dad's father bragged to the old man about the team's diet and he allowed they would need every bite of it when they pulled the wagon over that big steep mountain.

When they reached the foot of Walden's Ridge, Dad's father made a close inspection of the wagon and

something came loose while they were scaling that treacherous mountain it might mean the destruction of every single one of them.

The big mule's name was Buck. He was stronger than his teammate. Dad's father fixed the harness so old Buck would carry the greater part of the load. Old Buck took them up that mountain and appeared to have half of his oats left. What a mule!

Mixed blessings

They reached their new home in time to set up some beds and sweep the deep coat of dust from the floor. Dad had to marvel at his little sister Alice. Even though she was a bit short of her sixth birthday she was doing the housework for her mother was sick.

They spent a restless night for just a short ways from the house there was a den of wolves. Then sometime in the night a bear was trying to get to their horse. His father sprayed the bear with buck shot and he left. With the wolves a-howling and the horse a-screaming from the fear of the bear they got little sleep.

When daylight came they found themselves in a beautiful world. The ground was so fertile there was plenty of Volunteer food in the garden almost to live on, such as potatoes and onions. The birds seemed to be welcoming them with extra singing.

One day Dad had to go to the gristmill with a turn of corn. Now can you imagine one of our eight-year-old boys of today riding past a bear den and a wolf den?

He did have great fear that a bear would attack him but he was sure of one thing, if old Buck could aim his hooves one time at that bear he would send him into the next county. The miller ground the corn into meal then sent Dad on his way home.

Hard times

Dad felt like a grownup when he returned with the meal for certainly a man could have done it little better. While he was gone, his father was able to plant lots of vegetables. His father

was growing stronger but his mother's health was improving slowly. She was not only sick physically she also was mentally ill.

Alice was laboring like Hercules to keep the house work up while her mother was fussing at her continuously. She would actually call her over to her bed and whip her. Dad wondered how much more abuse his little sister could stand.

When Christmas came around Dad's father mounted old Buck and rode to some faraway town and bought them

a all a present. He didn't remember Dad, his eldest, but he remembered his little four-year-old brother Jim. It was a tin knife. The knife was made on the same pattern of a grownup's but it was so shy of metal that even a four-year-old could not hurt himself with it.

A man at the neighboring farm was raising deer domestically. One day Dad's father took them to the deer farm where they could cuddle the tame deer to their satisfaction. All at once they missed Dad's little brother Jim and when they found him he had a gentle deer by the neck with his left arm and was sawing at the deer's neck with his right hand. The deer didn't appear to feel the little tin knife but Jim was making a face like he was straining every muscle he had.

Dad asked, "What are you doing, Jim?"

"I am fixin' to have venison for supper," was the little fellow's reply. That remark put Dad's father into a convulsion of laughter. That was the first good laugh he had seen his father take in a long time.

Change for the better

His father began to act like a father. One day he took Dad, Alice and Jim to a strange place. This place excited Dad far more than the bear and wolf den. It was actually a large flat rock with human tracks in it. The tracks were made with naked feet sometime long ago when the rock was soft. Those tracks were every size. One was so large that when Granddad stood in it with his number 12 shoe, hardly more than half was filled.

At last it came time to go to school, a big log cabin. Dad was shocked at the attendance for he had thought that area was far more remote than it actually was. They only had one teacher, a man. He asked the teacher where the privy was. The teacher replied that there was none, only the plum orchard a short distance away.

Dad was a nosey boy in many ways. He was often listening when his parents thought he was sleeping. One such night

was the time his uncle Mack McKenzie came to their door. He had a hat that was as wide as the door. Never before had Dad seen a hat half so big. Uncle Mack told Dad's father he needed to stay with him a month or he was hiding out from the sheriff.

Dad listened with big ears while he told his father all about it. But where did you get that awful hat, Dad's father asked. Well now, George, this hat belongs to the sheriff of McMinn County. The sheriff's bullet tore a slug out of my Mackinaw and my bullet pierced his hat just above his forehead. The hat rose up in the air and before it landed good the sheriff was galloping out of sight.

Love prevailed through bitter warfare

(EDITOR'S NOTE — The Daily Post-Athenian is pleased to present another submission by long-time McMinn Countian Bill Guffey. Entitled "Stories Concerning Civil War Days," today's article is a continuation of the last 'Guffey Story,' about the War Between the States.)

By BILL GUFFEY

In my last story I told about when my grandfather slipped into McMinn County and, on his return trip to his army base, led five men who were the remnants of the Andrews raiders to friendly (Union) soil. That happened probably in the fall of 1862.

I would like to continue from that point for there is quite a bit of history connected to the three years following that period of time.

Grandfather made great friends out of the five remaining Andrews raiders. The army staff sent all five to their homes to convalesce. That, of course, separated them from Grandfather but they all gave him their addresses and he kept in touch with them so long as they lived.

Grandfather began to suffer many reverses later. His brother Joseph died with what the doctor called the black measles. His brother was less than two years his senior. He was the brother Grandfather played with the most when they were children.

It hit him in a tender spot when his favorite brother died. The army was going to bury him but Grandpa bought a walnut casket and gave him a Christian burial just out from Summerset (Kentucky — where the camp was located).

Grandpa could hardly understand his own behavior later. He began to drink lots of Kentucky whisky. It and fast women were a couple of things that inflation did not seem to bother.

In the late summer of 1863 Grandfather suffered a bad case of double pneumonia that ruined his right lung and affected his heart and gave him a bad case of hemorrhoids. The army hauled him to Danville, Kentucky and mustered him out.

Home to Athens

He had been told that Hooker's armies had cleared the Confederates out of East Tennessee so he rode the train right into Athens. He was so weak he didn't dare try to walk the nine miles to his wonderful mother's table but he luckily caught a carriage going that way.

Grandpa was so thin and pale very few thought he would live long but his mother knew how to take care of her boys. In a few months she had him walking all over the farm. Then one day he dared to walk the nine miles to the post office at Athens where a check awaited him for his mustering out pay. He had to wear his blue uniform for he hadn't been able to buy any civilian clothes.

The postmaster handed him his check, then he told Grandpapa that a strong force of Confederate soldiers had fought a hard battle with some Union soldiers just a half a mile away. The Confederates were winning until a larger force of Union soldiers appeared to give aid.

The Confederate force withdrew in good order. It's just possible some of them were still in the area to do some sniping, the postmaster told him. Those shiny buttons, he said, on that dark uniform would make a perfect target.

Grandpa acknowledged the danger and asked the wise old man for his advice. Well, if I were you, he said, I would return home through the fields.

Out in the fields

He was making good time until he looked ahead to see a beautiful girl plowing. He recognized her as being the pretty little Shell girl who was hardly full grown when he went off to war. Now here she was plowing and nowhere in the county was there a young lady more beautiful. He knew why she was plowing. Her two brothers were off to war in the Confederate army.

His mother had told him how the Union army had raided their farm, looting everything that wasn't hidden. He approached the lovely girl from behind, tipping his hat and saying "Good evening." The lovely girl gave the blue uniform a fleeting glance and threw the line down and ran like a frightened gazelle. He felt helpless as he stood there watching her run so

gracefully over the plowed ground. Her shiny hair appeared to float because of her speed. He picked up the line and finished the plowing, the ground that he guessed she was anxious to plant.

After he finished plowing he drove "Old Dolly" to the barn lot and continued his journey home.

He told his mother about his meeting with the beautiful Shell girl and she advised him to forget about her, saying the Yankees had treated her family so bad. She just didn't see how she could ever forgive them. She said, "George, my son, it would be a waste of your time to seek romance with that pretty little Rebel.

"She hates Yankees and I don't blame her after the way the Union army abused them. They were rich when the war broke out then the Union army raided their farm and carried off their property until they reduced them to the worst kind of poverty.

"Her father broke down in his late forties and his hair turned a snowy white," she said. "He just sits and stares all day long."

Just the same, Grandpa fell in love with that Shell girl when she fled from him in the plowed field. He decided he was going to marry her even if it took a decade of courtship.

Still trying

When the civil war ended, in the spring of 1865, Grandfather had failed after two years to get the Shell girl to speak to him. But he hadn't despaired yet.

Rebecca Shell's two brothers, Obidiah and Thomas, came home from the war to find the farm in a state of collapse. They were horrified. Obidiah had entered the army as a private and in the four years he had risen to the rank of Captain. His brother Thomas had entered the army with the rank of private and was mustered out, still with

the rank of private.

It had been that way since childhood. Obidiah could achieve things his brother Thomas could not. Yet, they had the same parents. Obidiah was a good scholar, but Thomas was a poor one.

Grandfather's crush on Rebecca Shell, the sister of Obidiah and Thomas,

had for two years because the neighborhood joke. He had pursued Rebecca to death, it would appear, but she hadn't so much as given him a smile.

When she finally did smile at him one night at church, he almost went into shock. Once she became his "regular" she explained to him that he had been her choice all along, but her duties to the family had deprived her of the rights of courtship.

I'll not go into a long story about it, but Grandfather and the girl of his dreams got married and moved into a tiny cottage of their own. They were having a hard time but they didn't know it, for they were in love.

Turn of fate

Obidiah Shell had gotten all of the farm buildings in good repair then he came down with the measles. At that time the Southland had been flooded with carpetbaggers. Those evil agents had been urged to go there by vengeful people of the Northern and Eastern states. Lincoln had believed that the South had been punished severely enough already.

A carpetbagger convinced the sheriff of McMinn County that Obidiah Shell, because of his rank, had been guilty of war crimes. The sheriff got a posse together and came for Obidiah, Grandfather's brother-in-law. A friend of the Shell family just barely beat the posse there and warned them.

Obidiah's sister ran to the barn and saddled his faithful horse and led him to his window. Obidiah mounted the horse just as the sheriff began to encircle the house. The house was surrounded by pine logs that Obidiah's horse was able to leap while the horses of the posse had to go around them because they were not trained like Obidiah's horse.

Obidiah made good his escape to the mountains where he was able to hide out, but he was terribly worried about his health for he was still carrying a fever from the measles.

Close call

The next day he and his horse were being stalked by a starving panther. A panther would leap onto a horse's back where it would be safe from its hooves, then claw the poor animal to shreds. The horse well knew that so he began to run in desperation.

In trying to comfort the terrified horse, Obidiah broke his bridle rein. He looked ahead to see a huge oak limb barring his way. Seeing that he could not bend under it, he grabbed the limb with his strong arms, letting his horse go out from under him.

He swung to the ground and jerked the rifle forward that he had strapped on to his back and shot the pursuing panther dead.

At that time Obidiah Shell was the finest specimen of a man that could be found. My Grandmother described him as having a handsome face, with wide

muscular shoulders and a wasp-like waist, with wide hips and strong hairy legs.

Obidiah found his horse grazing in some tender grass. He had been able to mobilize enough strength to escape from his terrified horse's back but now he could tell his strength was leaving him. He gathered tinder to make him a sick bed and he made the bed in a cave that would give him protection from the weather. He tethered his horse with all the line he had so he could graze. He had water in the cave for both himself and the horse.

He was in the cave for days and was not conscious all the time, being burned with a high fever.

Cleared of charges

Back at home some influential people had gone to Washington and had gotten Obidiah cleared of any criminal charges, but he had hidden himself so well from the Sheriff that even his loved ones could not find him to tell him of his exoneration.

Had they found him then it probably would have saved his life and also the lives of his four sisters. They did not find him, though, and he lay unattended in the cave with pneumonia.

One day he had barely enough strength to saddle his horse and he mounted it by standing on a bank. He took his time and tied himself to his saddle. His horse carried him the more than 20 miles where tender hands lifted him from the saddle into a downy bed.

He only lived a few more months, but he lived long enough to infect his four beautiful sisters. He died with what the doctors called "galloping consumption." People little realized how contagious that disease was back then, so his four lovely sisters followed him to death in less than two years time.

Five good decent people were sacrificed because a sheriff gave an ear to a lowly carpetbagger. Such was the justice of a people that had been conquered by an army that was often more bent on vengeance than justice. I can take you now and show you the graves of those five who were buried side-by-side in what is known as the Guffey-Shell Cemetary.

The epitaph of Obidiah is as common as any in the cemetary, but if he had been on the side of the Union, there would have been many songs and statues to his memory. My father used to tell of his bravery at our fireside when I was a boy. The Union Captain he surrendered to refused to take either his sword or his horse. He asked Uncle Obidiah, "Is it right that I take the sword of a better man than I?"

He, Uncle Obidiah, departed from his conquerer by shaking hands with him. If Lincoln had lived, Grandmother's family would have been treated justly. Although Grandfather was loyal to the

Union, while Grandmother's family supported the Confederacy, politics never once interfered with their long and happy married life.

I would like to add that throughout the four years of the Civil War, death

had often come around Obidiah Shell. In the battle of Chickamauga he had five horses shot from under him. He escaped death so much he was believed to have a charmed life. He could survive a deadly war but could not survive a justice that had been meted out by shyster politicians.

A note

Just another little note you might enjoy — My father had another uncle who was in the battle of Chickamauga, whose name was Elijah Guffey. Elijah has a grandson who lives in Shawnee, Oklahoma, who writes to me and passes me lots of family history. Before Eli Guffey died, he often talked to his

grandson, Ray, about the battle.

Eli was only a lad of fifteen years during that battle. Ray thinks he might have been a stable boy as he had been forced into the Confederate army. He told Ray his commanding officer sent him onto the battlefield for some reason he could not remember. That was the next day after the awful battle.

He said there was no sign of life of any kind, not a bird, not even a bug left living. He remembered a tree fell near him that had been nearly shot in two by cannon. This tree fell without even the aid of a breeze. In all of his life he never was in a place so lonely and full of death.

