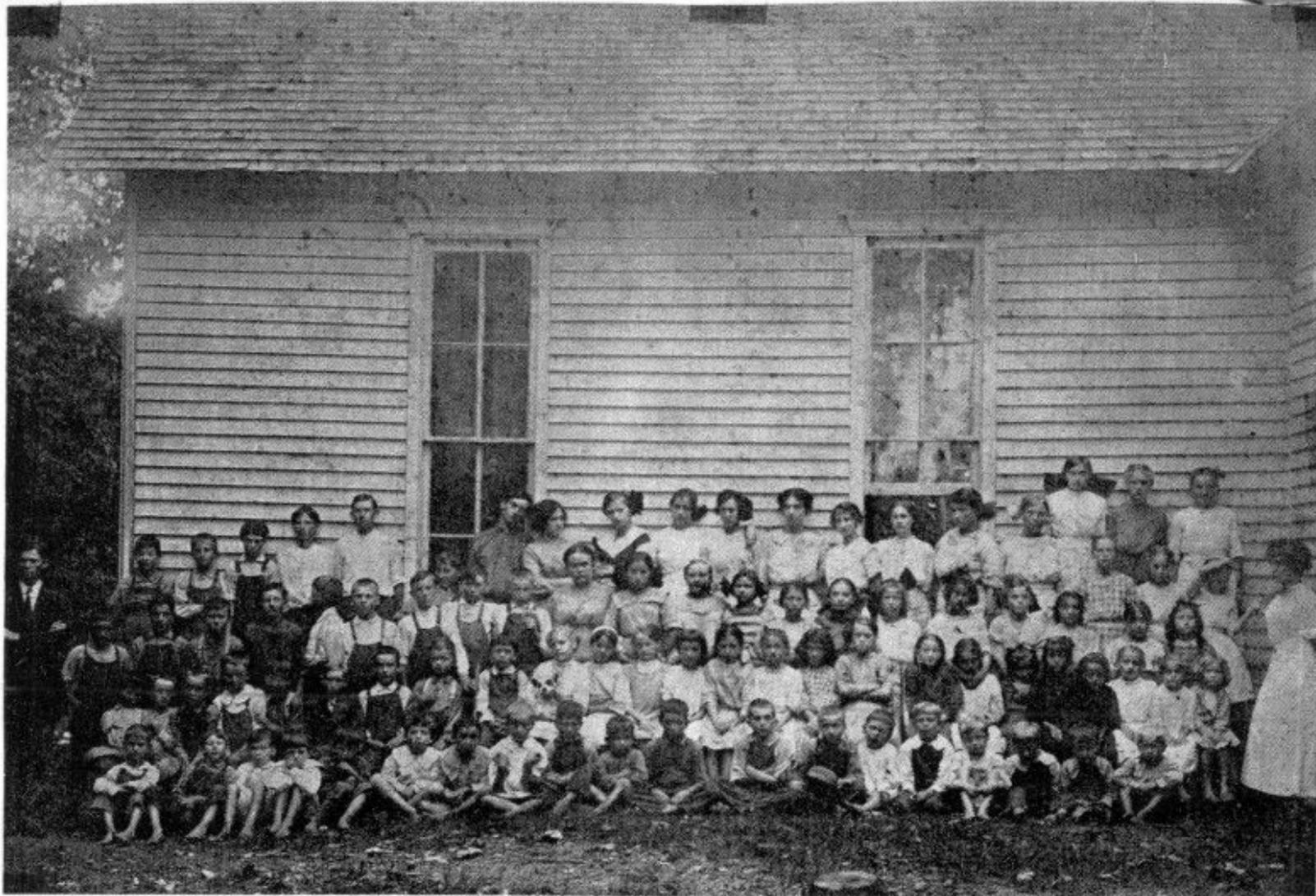


CHESTNUT MOUND SCHOOL, 1912



It was a summer day in 1912 when the teachers and students of Chestnut Mound school in Tennessee fell out to have their picture taken. Not a single student in the front row had on shoes, and it is possible that only the larger girls along the back row wore them.

Some of the youths on the front row wore white shirts with wide collars and knicker britches, that were pulled above the knee, mainly to keep them from being worn out playing marbles.

The fifth boy in the third row, to show his utter disdain at having his picture made, stands sideways, and the larger boy leans his head toward one of the girls – who in looks the other way. Some of the girls wore large ribbons in their hair.

Front row, from left, Thurston McDonald, Johnnie Harris, Will Lee Young, Ben Petty, Leamon Blair, Henry Petty, Robert Apple, Frank Young, Carmelius Cowan, unknown, Haywood Ditty, two persons unknown, Homer C. Hooper, Pierce Farmer, Jess Beasley, Raymond Hunter, Jimmy Ditty, Vestle McDonald

Second row, Clyde Fitzpatrick, Solon Fitzpatrick, Frank Wyatt, Win Draper, unknown, John H. Elrod, Deward Wyatt, Blanche Fitzpatrick, Mamie Wade, Lena Hunter, Birdie Petty, Almira Ditty, Roberta Snow, Susan Bush, Effie Dickens, Mary K. Draper, Nettie Fitzpatrick, Hettie Cowan, Daisy Cowan, Katie Tumblin, Georgia Tumblin, Era Lee Duke, Miss Lena High, teacher.

Third row, Leslie Gold, Teacher; Sam Watts, Walter Cowan, Birch Sanders, Claud Watts, Robert Young, Ward Draper, Hobart Wyatt, Lasco Watts, Harry Young, Gertye Ditty, Leora Young, R. Lee Apple, Gladys Duke, Grady Hargis, Grace Glover, Ruby Hunter, Maud Fitzpatrick, Robbie R. Cooper, Mattie Apple, Nerma Dickens, Lizzie Fields, Ogeal Sanders, Clara Cowan.

Back row, Earl Fitzpatrick Byron Fitzpatrick, Willie Bush, John Hunter, Hayden Johnson (hiding at window), John H. Fitzpatrick, Marley Watts, Nell Petty, Gertye Sanders, Rossie Petty, Grady Duke, Vera King, Vallie Hunter, Lula Wade, Flora Ditty, unknown, Sadie Young, Lola Cowan, Lillie Shoemake.

STORY OF CHESTNUT MOUND SCHOOL:

Carthage Courier, Carthage, Smith Co., TN: 9 December 1971, pg. 6

The Chestnut Mound School was aptly named. The school building, built in 1909, was surrounded by a small forest of chestnut trees, and in the fall of the year, just after the first hard frost, students would search the ground for chestnuts.

No one at the time would have believed that years later there would be no bearing chestnut trees. The big tough boys who had gone barefooted all through the summer, would try to impress smaller children by stomping open a burr with his bare heel. Most of the chestnuts were eaten raw, however some families preferred to place the nuts under the grate in the living room and let the hot ashes bake them.

As mentioned before, the first school house built on the lot was erected in 1909 and in 1915 a larger building was erected to house the “two-year” high school. When the Chestnut Mound High School was phased out, the building shown in the picture was torn down and a smaller building erected.

The picture above was made in 1912, and although few would admit it, it was a happy time for most. To stay at home they would have chores to do, so knowing this many students tolerated school better.

Just before recess the teacher would send two or three small boys “down under the hill” to a spring, where they would fill the drinking buckets. All students drank from the same dipper, however, sometime the teachers would have their own.

For recreation the boys played baseball and the girls played a version of softball. In both instances the balls were either made of wrapped twine or sewn socks. The socks were pulled together to make a hard ball and then sewn together. The balls wouldn’t travel far, but that seemed just right as playground was a matter of only 40 or 50 feet square.

The smaller children who were not accepted into the ball games played hop scotch, skip rope, London bridge, pussy wants a corner, blindman’s bluff and other games. In the spring when the ground would dry out from winter snows and rains, the big happenings were marble games. There were always some boys, no matter how well-off their parents might be, who would not play for keeps, and these boys were always looked upon as a somewhat social outcast to the “big” gamblers.

Most marbles were made of clay, and each shooter, more than usual, claimed to have a special “taw.” Later when marbles were of better quality, the boy that owned a “shooter” that had half moon chips in it, possessed the best. When a boy had a bad streak of luck and was down on his “moon shooter,” he would often time call out “stick in five on my shooter,” which meant if he lost the five, he would give up his best shooter to the boy sticking in the five.

A lot of boys carried scarred and bleeding knuckles, which gave them special marks of distinction – meaning that they had played so many games they had literally worn out their “knucks” on the ground. Their knees fared no better.

The children always looked forward to school closing for summer vacation for more than one reason. It was the custom for the teachers to take the students out into the woods strolling and looking for wild flowers – not exactly a senior trip to Washington, but then again they never thought of anything finer.

The picture was loaned to the Courier for its Old School Picture Series by Mrs. A. H. (Andy) Huff.

*See Schoolyard Tales at:

<http://www.ajlambert.com>