

THE STORY OF REV. JAMES R. CLAYTON

As told to his daughter, Ina (Clayton) Askew

January 1945 in Hazel Park, MI

Courtesy of Debby Barker

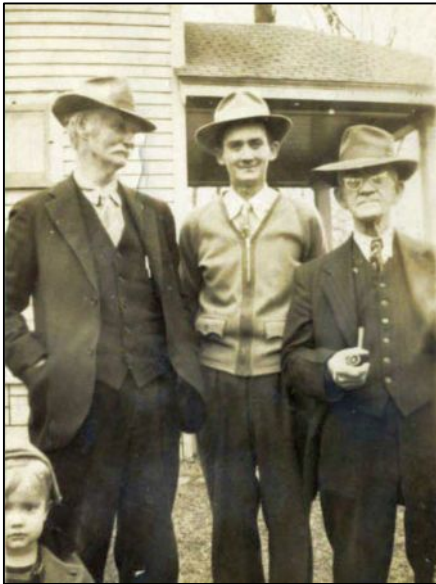
Retyped by Audrey J. (Denny) Lambert: Dec. 2011

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To Whom It May Concern:

I have always heard that procrastination is the thief of time, and it has about proved true for me as I have thought for years that I would write down the most interesting things of my life, and I have only now under taken to do so, this December 26, 1944. I shall dictate entirely from memory as I have never even kept a diary.

First as to my parentage: The Claytons are English and came to America from England and settled in one of the colonies during colonial times. As many as seven at a time were in the Colonial Congress. They



were the direct descendants of John Clayton, a co-worker of John and Chas, Wesley in the starting and spreading of Methodism. We have no actual proof of this, as it has only been handed down from generation to generation orally – But we have always been proud of the fact, and out of every family has been one or two preachers.

(Pictured: L to R: Rev. James Robert Clayton; Sam Edward Askew, s/o Jephtha Askew & Jephtha “Jep” Tubb Askew; little boy in left corner is: Richard Askew).

My great grandfathers name was John W. Clayton. This is just about all I know about him. His son, Hardee Clayton, was my grandfather. I can remember him well, and have listened with admiration, as a child, to the many vivid tales of hunting trips they both made with David Crockett, a close friend of theirs, whom they helped to elect as their Congressman from their District, and later built a monument of him in their County Seat. I suppose I inherited the love of hunting and fishing from these two staunch, old pioneer ancestors. The most I know about

them is what my mother – who lived among them for ten or fifteen years, and other older relation I have since met have told me, who knew them well. I shall endeavor to set down some of the incidents in their lives that have been told me.

Mother said that it was no uncommon thing for my grandfather to meet a neighbor, coming in from one of his hunting trips, and stand all night and just talk regardless of a few inches of snow. I very well remember his big barn where he and his neighbors would flail out their wheat together. The neighbor that had as much as 20 bu. of wheat was a prize farmer in those days.

I also remember the instructions he gave me in killing a deer at night. He said to go away down the creek and wade up the creek and have a small light on your forehead. This light would shine on the deer’s eyes, making them shine – then shoot at their eyes. He said to never wade down the creek as the creek would flow to the deer faster than you could travel, carrying your scent, frightening away any deer that happened to be drinking or eating moss out of the stream below.

The first thing I remember about grandmother Clayton was the fact that she was blind. I do not know how long she was blind. She died when I was around twelve years old. I remember her flax wheel, - her candle mold that made a dozen at a time, and her grease lamp. I can see her as she sat in her corner knitting and smoking her cob pipe. My mother always spoke of her as being a gentle, kind woman. She always spoke of my grandfather in the same terms.

I know very little of my mother's people. She said they were Irish, and originally came from Ireland. She had two brothers, Joe and Mack Gallaher. Joe seemed to be her favorite. She would often call my brother John – Joe. This made my brother Kynette and me mad, hearing it so much; and many is the time we've whipped "Little Joe" because of this. I said, years before I ever married that if I ever married and had children, I would not show partiality among them, and in spite of all I could do my three oldest girls by my last wife thought I was partial to my fourth child, that had blue eyes – fair complexion and light hair, and many is the time she suffered the same fate of "Little Joe." But for the sake of truth I did think Ina was as pretty as any of them, except for Stella – My first child, and her sisters who were twins that I was never able to tell apart. If I ever had any preference for any of my children I would have to say it was for Stella, for I don't believe a man every raised a better girl. The only think that ever Stella did to aggravate me was that she cried for 3 solid months after she was born, which fact firmly established in my mind that a child could have the 3 month colic – a thing I had always laughed at.

My father's name was William Clayton. As I have said his father was named Hardee Clayton and his father was John W. When my father and mother, Sarah Elizabeth Gallaher were married I do not know. Mother said they married and moved near my grandfather Hardee's and lived until I was two or three years old. They then moved to Shoates Creek in Giles County, Tennessee. I remember nothing of the trip. But the first thing I do remember was climbing up and throwing mother's goose eggs out of the nest; and being caught in the act itself my tail has hardly quit burning, and believe me I never tore up another nest.

The next thing that I remember was going to where my father was at work in my little long tailed shirt – that was what all little boys wore in those days – and some ganders almost killed me before my father could get to me.

Another thing I can remember is following my father and sitting down on a nest of ants. My father had come to the rescue again. Along about this time the Methodist had a meeting at Shoats Creek and I can remember a Missionary that was there, a Mrs. French. She told about her little daughter dying on the ocean on the way home and being buried in the water. I never forgot the picture this left in my mind.

Along about this time my father bought sixty five acres of land on Shoats Creek where we were raised. He paid for his land by splitting rails for fifty cents per hundred. What he got off of his Circuit in those days he could usually bring it home on horse back, as it mostly consisted of wheat, corn, hog jaws and now and then a hen, and believe me he kept a horse big and fat that could carry a load. I remember his horse well – his name was "old Rock."

I shall pause here to show you the change in the custom of those days and today. When my father wasn't using Old Rock a neighbor girl – Miss Malisse Cane, who afterwards married John Ratliff – would borrow Rock and she would always borrow me along with Rock to ride behind her as it was considered altogether out of place for a young lady to be out unchaperoned. Maybe this is where I got my love for courting and marrying young. John and Malisse never forgot me, even after I became grown, and when I left that County I considered them among my very best friends. Malisse died two or three years ago. She had almost reached the good old age of 100.

In 1877, I think, my father was moved to the Lexington Circuit in West Tennessee, at Lexington. We lived at the foot of the hill known as The Big Cedars, and owned by a man by the name of Caffee Wilson, for whom my brother Caffee was named. One of the most vivid recollections I have while there was the people passing our house, leaving Memphis, Tennessee fleeing from either the Cholera or Yellow Fever – I have forgotten which.

Another thing I remember while living here was my father breaking us from stealing sugar. Sugar was really a rarity in those days. One day we saw our daddy coming with a large bag in his hand. All of us wanted the little box, after the pills were gone, because it was a cut little wooden box that resembled a coffin. So one day he came in with a new box of McLeans pills and we jumped him for the bos. "No, he said, the box goes to Kynette this time after the pills are gone." A day or so after this Kynette took the 'trots' terribly bad; upon trying to find out what could be wrong my father thought of his pills, and upon

going and looking he found them all gone. He asked Kynette if he had taken any of them, He said, 'yes Pa, you told me I could have the box after they were gone, so I took them all.' Well I don't suppose it hurt him much, but he was cleaned out better than General Patton has been able to clean out those pill boxes in Europe.

During our stay here I hired out to Uncle Billy Hayes, to help make a crop and drive the team for ginning cotton. The gins in those days were turned round and round like a sorgum mill. I received five dollars a month wages. After crops were finished the first year I worked, I went with my father back to Shoates Creek, to visit my sister and other relation. I took five dollars of my money and had it changed into nickels and dimes – Boys like to make a bigger show and I have no recollection of spending a penny. But every where I went I never failed to stick my hand into my pocket and rattle my money. On our way back home I got tired of riding so I walked behind, then when I got tired of this I would swing on the coupling pole and stick my feet in the air. We had gone several miles when lo I discovered my pockets were empty. All my money gone! I begged and cried for Pap to turn around and hunt for my money. But he said he couldn't do this, as it had scattered no telling how many miles back. I remember how he insisted to me that it was worth all it cost and for me to learn the lesson early of taking care of money. This trip was taken after crops were 'laid by' following the Big Storm which struck in April of that year. My sister's house had not been bothered because she lived so close to the top of a hill that had a lot of trees on it – but not far from her house it seemed that every thing was torn up. Big trees were laying everywhere. This storm is known in history as "The Big Storm." I hit almost all of the Southern States sweeping large areas clean as if swept by a broom.

In August of this year my father got too hot preaching, and took a cold, which settled on his lungs. When Conference met in October 1879 he wasn't able to go, and had to take Super-numary relation. He took his family back to the farm on Shoates Creek. I remember one thing very distinctly as we were moving back. A Mr. Wilson drove the wagon that I rode in. We passed a field where they were picking peanuts – Mr. Wilson asked me to take a dime and go over and buy some. They gave me about a gallon for the dime, so Mr. Wilson sent me back for another gallon. We began eating peanuts and I foundered on them, and to this day I can't eat very many of them at a time.

I shall never forget how good our neighbors were to us for at least a couple of years after my father died. They brought their oxen and drug us in enough wood to last the whole winter, and I then chopped it up for the fire.

After burial expenses were all settled we had the farm and "Old Rock" left, and none of us large enough to get much use out of him, so my brother-in-law traded him off for a small mare.

I have never claimed to being an expert at but one thing; and that was chopping with a ax. I started working on those trees the big storm had blown across about four or five acres we had cleared for corn. I chopped the trees in ten and fifteen feet lengths, and by the following spring I had enough chopped that it gave around thirty or forty men an all day job piling them to be burned.

Can you imagine how we made a crop that year? Well I can tell you Uncle Joe, mother's favorite brother, came up to see about us, and went out and bought us up corn and meat to make a crop on and gave it to us. Uncle Mack never came to see about us, altho he was worth lots; but when he would get sick he never failed to send for mother to come and help him out. My mother always went when she was sent for, and received a grudging thanks. We would have to make out for ourselves until she could come back.

We made our crop and this was what was known as the 'Dry Year' of Tennessee. We had two bushel of corn over what we needed and we sold it for \$1 pre bushel. That was the first time I ever heard of corn selling for a dollar a bushel.

If there was ever a woman that could manage boys and get work out them – mother could. We did love to fish and hunt, and soon became experts. Mother was a great lover of fish, squirrel and rabbit, and could sure cook them.

In the summer time, while we were in the crop, mother would set out a certain amount of work for us to do, and promised us when that was done we could have the rest of the week off to fish and hunt. We sure laid with it trying to get through at least by Friday night, so that we'd have Saturday off. We were not allowed to hunt on Sunday. One Sunday, I remember, a big hawk lit in a big tree quite a distance from the house; my brother Kynette and I both made a jump for the gun. He beat me to it, and I couldn't take it from him. He steadied his gun in the pailings and fired. I can see today that hawk swinging on the under side of that limb dead. I let out a big oath, and I can almost hear mother's voice today shaming me for cursing. I was so surprised and thrilled over my younger brother killing that hawk I cursed before I thought. I guess this was the first time my mother ever heard me curse.

I remember about the last possum hunt Kynette and I had together. We didn't get off our own land and caught five in a few minutes time. I wouldn't begin to say how many rattle snakes we killed in our yard. We didn't think much about them.

I remember the last Coon hunt I went. I was married at this time. Two boys I knew well came along and begged me to go. I sure loved Coon meat, so I finally told them that I'd go if they would give me the meat and they could have the hides. We hadn't gone far until we got one. We skinned it, and they reached me my Coon. I slung it over my shoulder. Soon I had another one, then another one, one in front and two behind, swing over my shoulder. I got sick of those bloody Coons and slung them down and went home. I haven't particularly craved Coon since then, although I have eaten it a few times.

We always love to thin of our first sweetheart, and I have a double special reason to remember mine. I must have been about fifteen. One Sunday morning I did something my mother didn't like and I wouldn't let her whip me. She said, "I'll get you!" Well when mother said that you could just be assured that you were 'got'. We got ready and went to Sunday School and I fell on a plan to keep my mother from whipping me. I had my sister, Frances, invite a neighbor girl, Mary Penny, that I was struck on, to spend the night with her. I can remember how big I felt when I helped her over the creek, and how good I felt that everything was working as planned. We all slept in the same room. I went to bed leaving mother, Frances and Mary talking up by the fire. Mother gave me time she thought I was asleep – but I wasn't. She walked over and got her switch and marched back to my bed and laid down the covers. She had me. I couldn't even kick with only a shirt on, and she liked to have beat the life out of me.

Soon after this, Mary moved away. I had often wondered through the years where she had gotten off too. One summer a few years back, I stopped off at my daughter Floras – in Durant, Oklahoma, and ran into a man I had known when a boy, Lon Wilkerson. He lived in the same town as Flora. She said one day on the street a man had come up to her and ask her if she was Delia Lay's daughter. She didn't know him, so asked him what he knew about Delia Lay. He said, "I know you are her daughter. That sorry Jim Clayton beat me out of her. Aren't you?" Well he often visited her, and when he heard I was going to be there he came to see me. We were talking and laughing about Shoates Creek, and I told him I'd love to see my first sweetheart, and when he found it was Mary Penny, he was excited to death, because she lived in Durant too. We went down there, and I told Lon not to introduce me but to let me tell her myself. They talked and every once and awhile I'd add in a word; and we swung our conversation around to Shoates Creek and she kept looking and looking at me. Finally when I told about getting a whipping in bed, she jumped out of her chair and said "Jim is that you?" and we all laughed and had such a good time together.

I would love to say the boys of Shoates Creek were not angels, but I never knew any of them to be indicted or drunk – but we would fight. There were six of us that usually were into all of this. Two Sneed boys, Jacob and Edd, two Sandusky boys (Delia Lay's cousins) James Washington and Jay – Jim White and myself. We were all about the same age, except Jim White who was about three years older, although near our size. He could always whip any one of us. He would always quit when we would tell him that we had had enough. You know our fighting was just for the love of the fight itself, and to see who was the best man, as it was called in those days, for we always remained the best of friends.

I shall never forget the next to the last fight I had with Jim White. He had we whipped, but still I wouldn't tell him "I give up." Finally he got tired of me and pitched me over a fence into a fish pond that was near. I told him that I would get him for it. Soon he moved away and stayed two or three years. One Sunday

morning at church, who should walk up but Jim White. I went around to him and said, "Jim, by now – well we tied together. I grabbed him by the shirt collar, and had his eyes beat black by the time they got us separated. When he could talk he said, "I shore can't, Jim." We remained good friends and years after this when I became the pastor near him, he would go with me in my buggy most everywhere I went, and many is the good old laugh we have had over those childhood days together.

I have often told my children about the time Jim fought my fight for me. Jim was a peculiar boy. He was a big hearted fellow but just couldn't learn in school, but he certainly would stick with a friend. Jim and I were attending an exhibition together – This was after I had entered the ministry. A boy had gotten mad at me that day at the school I was attending, and came up to where Jim and I were sitting on the rostrum and tried to pick a fuss. The boy and his brother had an awful reputation for fighting. Before I could say anything, Jim had the fellow floored, and thoroughly whipped before he was pulled off. I suppose Jim thought it wouldn't be fitting for me to fight, so he gave the bully a much needed lesson.

I can remember back when a small child, my father often said I would make a preacher. This probably influenced my after-life. I knew though by the time I was fifteen or sixteen I'd have to quit lots of things I was doing if I ever made a preacher. I loved to play cards, dance and would cuss. I didn't feel that I could give up any one of these, much less all of them. I loved to play cards and dance, and as for the cussing, I had gotten into such a habit of it – I had to plow a little old mule that would sometimes drag me and the plow to the bottom of the hill, and I would cuss in spite of everything. It has been said they heard me a mile hollering at that old mule.

I loved to go to meetings – I loved to see people jump and shout, and seemed so filled with the love of God, and I wanted God to give me this shouting kind. Two years before I was converted I went to every meeting within going distance. I never failed to go to the moaners bench but I was never satisfied, for I wanted to be able to shout and holler. I wanted people to see me and be able to know that I was a changed boy. After about two years of this, I remember well the night I was on my way to the revival that would end that night. Just before reaching the church I stopped under three big beech trees. I was talking to the Lord, I said, "Lord, if you don't have this shouting religion for me, give me at least some sign that I'm alright. Immediately it seemed that electricity was traveling all over and through my body – It seemed to extend to the old rail fence that was near to light it and all around up. When I left here and went on to the church I walked in, and before I got seated Old Father Crowder looked up and saw me, and jumped up and hollering – "Jim's got it! Jim's got it!" It made me so happy to march up and sit down among them. Something like a month passed and one day I thought – "Why I've quit cussing!" I had quit, and didn't know it.

I never gambled but one time, and that was to teach my wife's cousin – Jay Sandusky – a lesson. One night Jay came over and said he was going down on the Mississippi and gamble. I begged him not to go – I told him that he didn't know how to gamble, and that he'd get killed. "Oh no, he'd say – Finally I told him, "Jay, just to prove to you that you can't gamble, stay here tonight and I'll play with you." We played a dollar a game. I'd win and win – Then I'd let him win a game or two so he wouldn't get out of heart. I wanted him to lose every cent he had. Then I'd win this all back and more. We played all night. I won all of his money, which was around thirty five or forty dollars – then he put up his rifle, and I got that – and his yoke of calves. This left him completely cleaned out. When he started to leave I gave it all back to him but told him I wanted two or three dollars of it as I needed it when I went to town. He sure was glad to get it all back, and he never left to take up gambling. I have always felt good over this gambling spree.'

In October 1885 I married a neighbor girl, Delia Lay. We had claimed each other since we were small. She was the teacher of the young peoples class, and I'd always sit on the bench next to the front where I could whisper over to her when our class was over, and I've never felt that I sinned against the Holy Ghost in doing so.

Delia was the daughter of James A. "Crick" Lay, and her mother was Elizabeth Sandusky – a sister of Uncle Jacob Sandusky. Delia was also a great niece of Old Uncle Major Sandusky.

Mr. Lay was a Union soldier, and went though the whole Civil War under Grant, Sherman, Sheridan and Kilpatrick. He was on one of the details to capture Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy. He

could not read or write a word, but could tell one more about the war than anyone I have ever talked to. We could kill, say, from five to ten hogs at a time, and weight them up, and when we got them all weighed he had them already totaled correctly. There was no use following him with a pencil; or a dozen could pick cotton, and come in and weigh it, and he could do the same thing, although he couldn't read the figures on the scales to do the weighing himself. He was a great church goer and had a certain seat, and was never heard to say a word in church, but when he died he seemed to be missed more than anyone I knew of. Everyone would say – "Well no one in Crick's place today." His seat was left vacant. He died before Delia and I married.

Lest I forget, there is a little incident that happened when Mr. Lay was sick that I will relate now. I had gone to the barn to catch mother's mule for us to go down to sit up with him. While I was there a comet passed over lighting up the earth all around. It almost scared me to death, all I could think of was, "Judgment Day, and I'm a goner." All I can remember about that night other than this, was Mr. Lay looking at me sitting up with him and saying, "Jim, you are a fine looking boy." That comet must have frightened me nearly to death, for I have no recollection of his death or burial.

Well the time came for us to get married. I went over to John Ratniff and borrowed the dollar and a half to buy the license. John went to Pulaski and bought them for me. The next day I helped John with his chimney, thereby getting the debt down to one twenty five. He gave me fifty cents a day, but I only worked a half day.

Rev. J. W. McNeal, our Presiding Elder married us. He was one of the finest men I have ever met. He afterwards became Presiding Elder of the finest men I have ever met. He afterwards became Presiding Elder of the Illinois Conference. He tried to persuade me to come up there. He offered me an \$880 salary and an eight room house to live in if I would come. I was at that time getting \$250. I loved the mountains of Tennessee and have never regretted not going.

After we were married, supper came on and we were all gathered around the table eating and having a big time. We were joking about who would get the gizzards, when little Dallas Crowder kept saying, "I know why sister wants the gizzard." Finally someone said, "Why Dallas?" and he said, "Cause it makes her titties grow." This produced about the same kind of silence that a German bomb would have done – although it didn't do as much damage.

Soon after my conversion, as I had always thought I'd make a preacher, I started at it in earnest. I was licensed to preach and took the four year local course, and also went to school the four years. I bought all the books for each year and have them yet if someone hasn't borrowed them and failed to bring them back.

The first year of my schooling I went to Bowdenham Academy (1891) and taught school in Giles that fall. The next year I entered Summertown Seminary (1892, 93), and went here three years. Teaching school four months each fall. At this time we were having four months 'Free School'. Thus I was able to teach my term and go to school in one year. My brother Kynette stayed with my wife and I and went to school the three years and taught in the fall the same as I was doing.

When Delia and I first went to Summertown we had three children, Stella, Harrison and Kynette, and the second year 1892, behold two came at once, Flora and her twin sister, Edith, who lived eleven months. My soul was set on them to make foreign missionaries; but after Edith died I decided to let the Lord call the missionaries and preachers and with his help I'd try to feed the ones left.

During the four years that I went to school, causing so many hardships on Delia, I never heard her complain. A few days before she died she and I were talking – I told her – "Delia, you have had such a hard time – I am now just getting where you could have it easier – I hate to see you leave. She replied, "Jim, I am glad I could do what I have." So I feel that most of the credit for my education goes to her.

Delia and I went to the same school for six years before we were married. We were in the same school for six years before we were married. We were in the same classes, and she could always beat me in them. She would have made a first class school teacher, if she'd had the chance. She was a swell Bible teacher –

Being my teacher for at least two years before we were married. With my disposition it was God's blessing that I got her, for I never remember us having a fuss. She just went quietly on her way and ignored anything I did or said which she didn't approve, and would do it in such a way that instead of making me mad would make me ashamed. I would like to tell one little funny thing on Delia. I was always a great lover of oysters and salmon. I had always begged her to help me to eat them, when I brought them in but she always declared that she just couldn't eat them. She would always fix them though anyway we wanted them. One time I bought some salmon and she fixed them, and I again asked her to just taste them to see if she wouldn't like them. Finally she tried just to satisfy me. She took her a bite, and I sat watching her taste and taste – at last she looked at me and said, "Why Jim, they are really good." She always helped us eat the salmon after that.

Summertown was settled almost entirely with Northerners. So soon after we had entered, some of the bullies thought they would drive the southern boys and girls out of the school and did succeed in getting rid of all except my brother Kynette and I. We stayed with them, although it meant a fight every few days. I remember one fight in particular was with two boys that went so far as to use a knife on my brother. These two boys later got into trouble and we signed a partition to keep them out of the penitentiary. I remember another time I had a fight and was called in before Prof. Penick the President. I thought he was going to expel me so I began about how he could whip me or punish me anyway her wanted to but I'd die before I'd let him expel me. Finally when he got me cooled down he taught me a lesson I never forgot. He said, "Mr. Clayton, I really believe you gave the fellow what he needed but you are planning on making a preacher and it will get out all over the county that you are "that fighting preacher." That did me lots of good and that's the last fight I can remember having.

Along near the close of our first year here our food supplies and money got scarce. There was a large store in the town that looked progressive enough to carry us on credit, awhile if they would – so I decided to go and see as we had gotten to the place where something had to be done. I walked in and told him my circumstances, although I told him I realized he knew nothing of me. "Yes I do, he said. I have noticed you and your brother passing back and forth in front of my store going to the post office, and I have never seen you enter that dance hall across the street. You can have anything I've got and as much of it as you want." This was a great help to us when we needed it, and when we came back the next year we did our trading there.

The next fall after my first year at Summertown, I was given a school in Lawrence County, known as Pea Ridge. The Director of this school told me he was looking for a teacher that could stamp out the card playing the boys and girls had gotten into at recess and dinner. I was willing to try so I got the school. I took my family and moved into a holler some distance from the school, and soon named out new home 'Sleepy Hollow'. This little hollow soon became known all over the county.

Well I knew that to have a successful school year would require a some strategy, so I began to study just how I could keep the students from playing cards, the ring leader of which wasn't even a student. On the first day of school I told those girls and boys I loved to play ball. Especially if I had a girl partner – So what about each boy choosing him a girl partner, and us playing ball at recess, and dinner hour. They were thrilled over the idea, and we had some big times playing. I was told that the outside fellow said he was coming in to start his card playing, and the big boys of the school (they went to free school until grown in those days) told him they liked the teacher and if he'd did they would promise him a thorough whipping. He never bothered around.

I had one student, a little boy around twelve years, he was the son of the Director, Mr. Simms. Every day he brought me a big apple or peach. One day as I was going home after school, Mr. Simms came to his gate to talk to me a few minutes – as was his habit. He was tickled about what his little boy had told him. He said his apple and peaches failed to buy the teacher out as it had always done before, and that he was going to stop bringing them. Mr. Simms told me to lay it on his boy when he needed it.

In this community the only church was a Missionary Baptist. The people here got ready to have their revival and asked me to help them out. I told the preacher that I would be more than glad to help him with the singing. I considered myself a good singer in those younger days. I led, sang bass or tenor. Many is

the time Jim Vaughn, Pantah, my sister, and her husband J. W. Sneed would sing through a musical paper – called Musical Million, which Jim took, after our supper was over. Lots of them were songs we had never heard. I remember one of them was “Put My Little Shoes Away.” Well getting back to the Baptist Revival. At the end of the revival came the baptizing as was customary. We were all gathered around the clearest water I nearly every saw. It was about waist deep. A Mr. Loony was standing by me on the bank; when the preacher baptized a Mr. Rodgers – a big rough looking fellow that had been converted - - One of the roughest men in the county – A large dead water moccasin snake was shook loose from the bottom, and his white belly was turned over so we could easily see him. Mr. Loony punched me and pointed to the snake and whispered, “He’s killed the old serpent.”

On Sunday, the last day of the meeting they had their communion, and Bo. Watts, the pastor, offered them to me and I took them. The next week when his association met he was brought before the Association for giving a Methodist the Lord’s Supper. They tried to make him say he had done wrong. He told them he’d never say he had done wrong but that he would say “According to the Baptist doctrine he had to do wrong to do right.

After Kynette and I had shown those Summertown folks we intended to say no matter what happened. Some other girls and boys from Wayne Co., hearing we had stuck decided they would try it, so they hooked up them a wagon, with provisions in it and rented them a house not far from us. In a few days after they got there, I suppose it had gotten around that they were Southerners, and someone filled a jug with powder and set a fuse to it and placed it under the corner of their house. When it went off it sounded like a cannon, and it tore up the side of the porch. In a few minutes they were up to our house scared to death. Two of the girls were sisters, Tiny and Myra Smith, daughters of one of my father’s best friends. One of them decided to go home as she wasn’t so interested in school. The other furnished herself and stayed with us. She later married a Methodist Minister, Brother Bedford, and became known and loved throughout the Conference. She died two or three years ago. My recollection is that Tiny’s brother Henry was School Director for Shaunette, her home school, and this is where I taught my second school after entering Summertown. It was one of the best neighborhoods I have ever lived in. We had a good school and a good Sunday School. And if ever a poor man enjoyed four months it was there. We lived in the house with Tiny’s mother, Mrs. Sam Smith, and she wouldn’t charge us one cent. In this same neighborhood also lived Bro. Sam Strickland, a former pastor of mine.

I was while I was here that I sang under the leadership of Henry Smith. He was a first class singer, equal to Jim Vaughn. He took different kinds of musical books and at night we would try them out. He lived near his two sisters and they could sing anything. In fact the whole neighborhood sang like birds.

I have never been back but one time to Shaunette, and that was four or five years ago, when our Conference met at Collensood, four or five miles from there. They heard that I was at Conference so nothing would do them but that I must go over and preach for them. It was given out at their school that I would preach at a certain time. Bro. Shot Gun Dixon drove me over. I preached on one of the Parables. After I had preached about half a hour I said, “Well I must stop.” They hollered, “Go one!” I talked about another half hour, and they still insisted on me keeping on. I must have at least talked two hours or more. So many had grown up since I had taught there. I guess probably half the congregation had never seen me. They had heard of me and I had a large crowd out to hear me. Every time I see Shot Gun Dixon – He’s always their layman to the Conference, he says they are still talking about my sermon that night.

Well the time came for our last year at Summertown. We rented out house and moved back. My brother was still with us. This year two boys, Lonzo Fleeman and Will Gooch boarded with us. This was their first year. Lonzo was an exception for being a good boy, although he didn’t learn so very fast he finished his four years, but died soon afterwards. As for Will Gooch – there was no harm in him, but he was one of the most peculiar boys I have ever met. He slept upstairs – And every day when Delia went up to clean up their room she found Will’s bed pulled out of its place. Finally she asked me why he would do this. I told her I didn’t know but I would ask him. I said “Will, why do you always change your bed around.” He replied – “Well there’s an electric current running north and south. I want this current to run through me lengthwise, so I want my bed to run north and south. So we left his bed alone after this. Another

peculiarity of Will was that he said he'd get just as much enjoyment out of anyone picking a splinter on a rail fence as to hear the best of music.

This year at Summertown we had a new pupil to enter his first year that I learned to love dearly. He was studying for the ministry. His name was John Bryan. A thorough bred Englishman, with all the English brogue. He was awkward but learned fast. Probably one of the reasons he seemed awkward was because our ways were so different from what he had always been used to. He later finished under by brother Kynette who became Pres. after finishing the University at Chattanooga. After John graduated he was transferred to an Oklahoma Conference. One day when he was crossing a creek he was drowned. I'll meet you someday John.

We had a good school year. The only think that married our year was the death of our little daughter, Edith, Flora's twin. After the school was out we moved to Shoates Creek, to teach the home school. We got our house to live in from Mr. Kilpatrick, the only Campbelite I knew of up to this time, and I found him one of the best neighbors I ever had. I shall never forget going to him one day when he was in the field plowing. When I got to him he said, "What do you want Jim?" I replied "There isn't any use of my stating it Mr. Kilpatrick – you see I wanted your horse, but you are using it." He looked at me and said, Jim, what do you want with my horse?" I told him that I wanted to go to Summertown to get me a horse to ride my circuit that I had gotten from W. C. Carter. Mr. Kilpatrick unhooked his horse and said, "You can sure have my horse. That is far more important than this plowing. I can do it later." His attitude removed any prejudice I might ever have had for the Cambelites – and through later years some of my best friends have been members of that church. I never had a friend any better than good old Dr. Denton, who passed away this past year, who doctored me and my family without a penny compensation. Dr. Sewell and Dr. Syper were also great friends of mine.

Let me stop and say that I have finished my four years in school. I have taught four schools and finished my four years course for a local preacher, and am now ready to attend my first Annual Conference.

In that day we always went in buggies – two to a buggy. I went in the buggy with Bro. Will Stricklin, whose horse died while at Conference. And I came back with Rev. J. S. Finley, a neighbor. We stopped in Lexington, where I had lived before my father died. While here we spent the night in a hotel. I had never been in a hotel before. When we went into the dining room to eat I took the first seat I saw vacant. The other preachers went on up into the front. I had only finished about half my meal, when everyone around me got up and left the room. I got up too as I thought it would not be good manners to eat after everyone else around was through. When I got out into the hall, who was there to greet me but a good old colored woman that had lived across the road from us when I had lived in Lexington as a child. We were having a big time time talking over old times and about how her boys and us would fight, when the other preachers came out. Bro. Stricklin had noticed me leave out before I was finished so he told me to eat as long as I wanted to when at a hotel. I never forgot the advice.

When my appointment was called for Sparta circuit, I was dumbfounded. I had heard so many tales of the mountain people, I almost believed they had horns. After Conference was dismissed I was standing there in a deep study. Bro. J. M. Carter spied me and came over and put his arm around me and said, "Jim go up there and make a preacher out of your-self. It was on the Sparta Charge that I started out." Well that lifted all my doubts and misgivings. I thought if the mountains could produce such men as Bro. Carter is was good enough for me.

When I got my horse from Bro. W. C. Carter, he had thrown in the saddle and some big saddle bags. I stuffed these full of my clothing ect. and threw my overcoat over this and I must have looked like a gypsy peddler as I left my home in Giles – headed for the mountains of Tennessee.

After two or three days hard ride I landed at Doyle. I enquired for a leading Methodist and they said to go to Brother Hoover. I rode up – Bro. Hoover came out and asked no questions but immediately told me to get down. I must have looked like Peter Cartwright. I never found better friends than Mr. and Mrs. Hoover. They must have been around seventy-five at this time. They were people who had come from the north and settled there a few years before. They were sure Methodists.

The next morning they sent me upon the ridge to get acquainted with Bro. Keathley, the father of Rev. H. P. Keathley, now living, a man of about fifty years service in the church. I have never met a man who loved the Methodist Church, the Republican Party and Methodist preachers as much as Bro. William Keathley did. Bro. William's wife was one of the most lovable, easy dispositional woman I had on the Sparta Circuit. She wasn't strenuous in either of these things, but just a fine Christian lady.

Bro. Petway Keathley had two cousins, Milo and Castro, who lived near, who were talking of making preachers – and later on did make good ones. In a few years Casto died. Milo is now an honorable retired minister of the Methodist church.

Now let me tell you about a peculiar racket between a man and his wife that happened while we lived there. Sister Bushnell always washed on Monday. This Christmas fell on Monday, and she wanted to wash, but Mr. Bushnell stood her out on it. This was the first Monday she had failed to wash on Monday when well.

I am about to forget to tell you that my wife and children came up to live. They came on the train sometime near Christmas. I had us a little house rented for one dollar a month. I beat myself out of my first years rent, for when the steward asked me what about my house rent, I told him that I would see about that. At the end of the year I found out that it was the business of the church to pay the house rent, so you may be sure I didn't make the same mistake twice.

We just stayed there one year and then moved to Peal Chestnut. The people said if I would move they would get me a house, and I agreed to do so.

I found Peal Chestnut a wonderful place in every respect. Made up of such families as J. M. Haye and wife, Jim Gracey and wife, Hugh Gracey and wife, Jim Hayes and family, Andy Keathely and family, and all the Wards and oh so many more. In fact the Peal Chestnut people served both branches of the Methodist, the Baptist and Cambelites. They went to church there.

Before I moved to Peal Chestnut, Aunt Becky Jones (Bro. Alonzo Harris' aunt, and husband, Uncle Tommy were riding along in a buggy when a tree fell on them. They set Aunt Beckys bones, and she was walking around when I to there, but Uncle Tommy was in such a broken up condition they laid him out to die without trying to fix him. When I left Peal Chestnut he was turning himself in the bed by the help of a rope swung from the ceiling. I don't remember just how long he lived in this condition. They were members here at Peal Chestnut.

This was the winter of 1894 – cold, cold and a big snow – Nearly all the birds froze to death. I believe this is a good time for me to put in my rabbit tale. Tom Coatney, known as an honest man had married Uncle Tommy Jones' girl. He said he went out into the pasture and saw lots of tracks all going toward a large hollow log. He said upon examining the log he found it full of rabbits. He began to cut them out, one hundred and twenty five – all of them were smothered to death but two or three. I have always believed this.

I never was sent to a circuit where they needed a church building – but at Peal Chestnut I found it very inconvenient about a school house. The county line between DeKalb and White runs through the village. I could not get them interest then in a school house, but in later years I was sent back and Alvin Hayes and Waymon Ward were now two leading merchants that were boys when I was first there. I named it to them, they said, "Bro. Clayton we do need a school house. Give us a plan." I said, "Get a big dinner, invite the State Superintendent, R. L. Jones, who was a native of that neighborhood, and invite each county board of White and DeKalb and tell them to set the school house half in one county and half in the other. Let one county furnish the teachers one year, then the next year let the other furnish them. It all worked like magic. They built one of the best school houses that was in either of the counties, and is a successful school today.

I want to tell a little incident on Alvin Hayes. One day one of his Drummers was in his store, talking when they him how many cigars he smoked a day. Alvin told him. Alvin was a great cigar smoker. They thought a minute and said – "Alvin, had you thought that if you didn't smoke you would have saved \$5,000

in five years? “Yeah, Alvin said, “Listen do you smoke?” “No”, the Drummer replied - - “Have you saved the \$5,000?” said Alvin, “No” said Drummer. “Well I have”, said Alvin.

About the time of my last pastorate, Bro. Waymon Ward built him a fine home near his store. My first trip there after it was completed I visited him and his wife, and he took me all over his new house. When we went upstairs he led me to a real nice room and said, “Bro. Clayton, this is your room. I have dedicated this to our ministers, whoever he may be – you are to use this at anytime as though you were entirely at home.” I always did so, and appreciated it very much.

A few years back I visited Bro. Alvin Hayes’ family. They had now bought the home and store of Bro. Waymon Ward, who had moved to Doyle. That night when it got time to go to bed, Mrs. Hayes took me to the same room the Ward’s had dedicated to the preachers, which they had now dedicated also. With tears in her eyes she explained how the beautiful furniture in the room had belonged to her daughter Willie who had passed away not so long before this. She said Willie wanted her to have it, and she couldn’t think of any better way to use it than to dedicate it to the preachers room.

The last time I preached there my salary had all been settled in full at the Quarterly Conference before I preached. After I pronounced the benediction, Bro. Waymon Ward came to me and handed me \$5, and said, “Bro. Clayton, that sermon was worth \$5.” I said, “Bro. Ward, I wish I had preached one worth ten.”

We will now drop back to May 1895. This is my first year at Peal Chestnut. One day I received a letter from Bo. Banks, our Presiding Elder, and the father of Joe Banks of Baxter. In this letter he asked me if I would consider leaving Peal Chestnut, and going to Laurel Hill Circuit, to fill the vacancy of Bro. R. F. Wilmoth, who was ill. I replied by return mail that I had rather not, that we were having such a nice year. After I mailed my letter to go to studying – I went to see Bro. H. P. Keathley, a local preacher at this time, and asked him if he would consider taking Peal Chestnut to release me to go to Laurel Hill Circuit, which is now what is known as Mount Zion and Maggart. Bro. Keathley was glad to do this, so I at once wrote Bro. banks and told him I would do so if he would let Bro. Keathley fill my place. He immediately replied that it was perfectly alright; so on Monday after the fifth Sunday in May, leaving my wife and children in Peal Chestnut, I again filled the old saddle bags with clothing and books – saddled my horse and started for Mount Zion.

Lest I forget it, - The only time I ever had my church members to ask a Presiding Elder to talk to me was while I was at Peal Chestnut. Bro. Banks came to me and said, “Bro Clayton, I have had one of the most peculiar complaints on you I have ever heard. The members want me to talk to you about it.” I couldn’t begin to imagine what it could be, so I said, “Well what is it?” “They fear you are studying too hard, and that it might effect your health or mind.” We both laughed and I was relieved that it wasn’t anything more serious.

Before getting to Baxter, I met two men – Tom and Bill Maxwell, who introduced themselves, and we talked awhile. In later years they became my members. They were first cousins of my third wife, and many is the night I have spent with each of them.

Going through Baxter I only remember two or three things. In passing by the place where Baxter Seminary now stands, I remember saying to myself, “What a beautiful place to build a school.” The grounds then were covered with penerile. I fed my horse and let it rest while I ate some oysters. About all one could see of Baxter, in those days, were cross ties – my they were everywhere. I never saw so many cross ties in my life. The only thing in Baxter at that time might be said to have the distillery, which was just below the depot, which was run by a Mr. Jones. I’ll have more to say about Baxter later on.

I made my way on down to Maggart, and spent the night with Sam McKinney, who was later killed. Of all the many that have gotten killed in Putnam and Smith during my ministry – there must have been at least a hundred – people I was acquainted with – Mr. McKinney was the only one I ever saw after death, and I wouldn’t have seen him if he hadn’t been my member and I held his funeral.

The next morning I went across the hill to Mount Zion, and spent the night with Bro. Bill White, and family, and took charge of the Long Branch, Carters Chapel, Moccasin Bluff, Silver Point and Hicky, now known as Carr's Chapel – and Maddux Chapel. As this was the first my appointments for holding my revival meetings. When I announced my plans at Maddux Chapel for a two weeks meeting, Bro. Bob Maxwell jumped up and said, "Bro. Clayton, you can't hold a meeting here at night. They will be here drunk and shooting and break up." I stood in the pulpit looking over a large congregation, thinking - - Looking down the isle I saw three of the finest looking men that I had ever seen, all strangers - - I said, "Gentlemen, if you three good looking men down there – and all of the rest of you fine looking men here will promise me that you will hold that fighting bunch, if they come here, until I can get down the creek two hundred yards, I'll try it." When I went back to hold my meeting I got acquainted with the three I had noticed my first trip there and found them to be Bud Evans, Jim Sullins and B. Jared. Bud Evans later told me that they organized and that they were determined that no one should hurt the "Parson" as he always called me. They all became my life long friends. We had a wonderful meeting, and twelve joined the church, among them was my later wife, Hattie's brother, who later moved to Arkansas and married and had a large family, and died a Christina man. I have always felt well paid for not letting myself get scared out. At the close of the services Bro. Bob Maxwell said, "I want to talk a little. At the beginning of this meeting I made public the fact that I didn't think we could hold night meetings here. I want to say that I was mistaken, although I was sincere about it. We have had a wonderful meeting, and I am glad of it."

Sometime after this, I have understood, that one of our preachers went there to hold a revival and before he got started he got up in the pulpit and told them what he would do and so forth, if they did certain things – I have been told that this preachers bridle was cut to pieces – his saddle was cut and smeared with manure, and dead roosters were tied to his horse. It doesn't do for even a preacher to talk too big.

At Carter's Chapel we had a good order – but there had been so many killings, the people were so divided, if I did any good I didn't know it. I can remember distinctly Miss Sally McDonald, the sister of Dr. Thomas Jefferson Smith's wife. She was teaching school there at that time, and took a great interest in the revival. Miss Sally later studied nursing and became head nurse in one of the biggest hospitals in New York. When she retired she came back to the hills of Tennessee, and spent her last days on the old homestead near Carter's Chapel. I have often thought if angels walked the earth in human flesh it must have been Miss Sally, who I never saw after my revival there and Dr. Smith's wife, Mattie, who cooked me a many meal when I was at Carter's Chapel. I did love to visit with them.

My next meeting was at Long Branch, a place I am sure was the roughest places for cussing I have ever been in. I went to Bro. Fed. Starnes the first day before my meeting began - - an old stand by - - He told me about Old Father Milt Presley, a local preacher who was real old and in bad health, that lived in a little house up above him. I went up there and stayed a while with him. He was an old fashioned preacher but was counted one of the finest best men in that country. Uncle Milt attended one of the District Conferences. Different preachers had preached and had done no good. Finally Bro. Milt, who thought he was just a little above the average in preaching, asked the others to let him preach that night. They said, "Alright, Uncle Milt." Uncle Milt took his text and jumped and stomped and jumped and stomped, and warned the people but he couldn't get a move out of anyone. Finally getting tried out he turned to the preachers and said, "Water haul!" - -which meant in those days 'a failure'.

For fear you might think I was making fun of the Methodist preachers in the mountains – let me tell you a good one on the Baptist. He was reading where Nicodemus came to Jesus at night, and read this, "there was a man of the Pharisees named NI-cod-a-mus, a ruler of the Jews." - - - - and he ended by saying "and Ni-cod-a-mus, said unto Him, how can a man be born again when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mothers womb and be born?"

While I am on funny tales I am going to relate a few; and believe me a preacher going among so many different people sure hear a lot of them. I know enough to fill a book, but I will only take time for a few.

This one was told by a real smart Baptist preacher on one of his brethren. The one the tale is about is a Bro. Dillehale, and Irishman whose hair stood straight up like the stickers on a chestnut burr. He said he was one of those fellows that thought he knew everything, but knew nothing. They were attending a

Baptist Association and were staying with a well to do farmer that had two large rooms to sleep in that was connected with a large hall. Several men and women were staying here. The women were sleeping in one of the rooms and the men were in the other. One morning real early before anyone was up, this preacher woke up all the men. They kept telling him to keep quiet, but he paid no heed. Finally he rushed out of the room and went into the room where the ladies were and said, "Miss Mary, get up I want you to urinate on the piano."

I will tell you one now on one of my own members. A man I dearly loved. A man who prayed to live until he could see me and believe me he lived until we saw each other again and he died the next week. Bro. C. C. Manners was preaching at Mount Zion one day. He had one of those big biscuit watches, and had it fastened to him by a long chain - while he was preaching he wanted to know the time, so he took out his watch and thought he dropped it back into his vest pocket - when after awhile he happened to glance down - he saw the watch had missed his pocket and was swinging between his legs. He told he got so blind he thought he was going to faint.

I'll tell you another one on Bro. Manners. He would only laugh with us about it if he were here. The District Conference was going to be held at Mount Zion, so the members there took their wagons and went to Gordonsville to meet the preachers that came on the train, for this was in 1894 before we had cars. Bro. Manners took his old wagon - put his frame on it and went after his load - the others had beds on theirs, and chairs to sit on. Coming back Bro. Creasy was riding with Bro. Manners. He was awful to joke, so he began to tease Bro. Manners about coming after them with only a frame on. Finally Bro. Manners had enough of it. He stopped his wagon and told Bro. Creasy he had done the best he could, and if he didn't like it he could get out and walk. Bro. Creasy didn't really mean it for he was raised the poorest of boys, and had never forgotten it, although he had become one of the best preachers in the Conference. When Bro. Creasy was up preaching during the Conference - he could almost carry one, as it seemed, right into the Gloryland, and Bro. Manners was hollering "Hallelujah" with the rest. After that no one was allowed to say anything about Bro. Casey in his presence.

One thing I found out during this Conference was that preachers didn't know everything, for one of the local preachers kept talking about circumcision. Finally I said, "Why Bro. that's not circumcision." He said, "Well what is it then?" I told him flatly what it was. He got mad. I told him to go ask someone else. He agreed that he would take whatever Bro. Banks said - so he went and asked him - soon he came back and acknowledged that he was wrong and that I was right.

Well lets go back to Long Branch. Remember I started out by telling you about Old Bro. Presley. He never raised a child that got rich, but no one ever raised one that paid me more, according to his means, than Bro. Jake Presley. He was a good steward.

As I told you, Long Branch was a rough place. The first day I was there, after I got back from talking to Bro. Presley, I told Bro. Starnes that I was going down to the river and see how it looked for fishing sometimes. Bro. Starnes told me that if he were me as there was a big gang of rough men down there pearling. I said, "They wouldn't hurt a person would they?" "No", he said. So I went. There were about twenty five or thirty men there. They kept at their work and paid no attention to me. Years later one of those same rough boys said to me, "Do you know Bro. Clayton, that you stopped me from cursing?" "No," I said. I didn't know it. How?" "Well," he said, years ago going home from your first revival on Long Branch, I was going along cussing my wife about something and you came up and put your hand on my shoulder and told me if I cussed I couldn't catch fish. I stopped cussing.

It rained all week the time of my first revival. Two night we had to stay all night at the church because the creek had gotten up so.

A lot of those rough men became my best and lasting friends.

We go now over to Bolens Branch. The weather was ideal and those people wanted a revival. After the meeting had been going on for a few days, the house became terribly dusty. So I recommended putting straw all over the house, for when they shouted it got that dust so stirred up. The people said that was the

very thing, so we put straw all over the floor. We had a wonderful meeting and several joined the church. During this meeting I married Mack Smith to Camelia. I have forgotten her last name, who years later became my uncle by marriage. A few years ago Mack died and Camelia married Jim Brown of Baxter. They are both good friends of mine today.

I'll tell you a few things that happened during this meeting. Some young woman was sitting on the moaners bench crying, and I was bent over talking to her and she suddenly gave a jump and bumped my nose, and I liked to have bled me to death.

I am telling this next one, thinking that perhaps it might cause young girls to not wear real low necked dresses. I was down praying with an exceedingly nice dressed and nice looking girl. She was leaning over and her breast fell out of her dress into my face. This was before girls wore belly bands around their chests.

One night after altar was called, and we were praying with the ones who had come up, I noticed a man sitting on the end of the moaners bench laughing. I walked over to him, hitting him on the back, told him to get up and tell it. He told me he didn't have religion, but he kept laughing, and I again said, "Get up and tell it." Finally he pulled my head down and said, pointing over to Tom Nolan a six and a half footer who was stretched out in the straw. "I thought Tom Nolan the longest man I ever saw stretched out in the straw." And I looked and was compelled to laugh with him.

I shall never forget a man by the name of Bug Hunt who lived near the church. Years before he had been indicted for a stage coach robbery – had served his time and was now making a good citizen. He said before the robbery took place two Curtis boys came to him and said, "Lets go have some fun." So he went with them never dreaming that they were going to rob the Stage Coach. After they had robbed it the Curtis boys skedaddled but he stayed there and didn't run, as he didn't have anything to do in the robbing. They indicted him – found him guilty- and he served his time. The Curtis boys were never apprehended as far as I know.

I want to say a word now for Rev. D. A. Patterson, a local preacher who helped me in my revivals for five or six years. He was the best help I have ever had. He would never have a collection taken for himself, being a Civil War veteran, and drawing a good pension. His delight was working in revival meetings. He said all he wanted was plenty to eat and his fine horse fed. He never failed to see my pay came up in full. I hadn't seen him in several years before he died but I have understood that he asked about me on his death bed.

We go now to Mount Zion to end my round of revivals for 1895. We had the biggest meeting I had ever had been in. There were about 85 conversions, and most of all of these joined the church. I was here that I baptized one of Uncle Bill Whites little boys, three or four years old. I picked the little fellow up in my arms and waded out in the water, and just before I put him under the water he looked up at me and so cunning and said something which I can't recall just now but I can remember that whatever it was it tickled me good.

Everything being wound up, I went over on Dillard's Creek to spend the night with Bro. Eli White. I already had quite a load on my horse, but the next morning he fixed up two middlings of meat and my horse and I started out for home, loaded down to the hub. Passing through Baxter, I crossed the creek and turned to the right. I remember going down into a thicket near the creek to feed and rest my horse, and to eat my dinner and count my money. I didn't know how much they had paid me, for my salary had already been paid and this was what they had given me for the revival. It was \$85, and the most of it was in new half dollars and quarters. Can you imagine how pleased Delia was with the two middlings and all that money, besides the other things given me.

In a few days I went to Annual Conference and was returned to the Laurel Hill Circuit, for a second year. So I began to make my plans to move my family to Mount Zion.

The people of Mount Zion sent wagons after me as soon as they heard that I was returned. They brought their feed and provisions with them. When we got to Bro. Bill Whites he said, "Bro Clayton, that house up

yonder in Jonesboro holler with fifteen acres of blue grass around it is yours as long as you stay on this circuit, if you want it." I told him that I sure would take it. So we moved right on up there and unladed. A big old log house with two rooms and a loft in it. Well floored and a porch in front, and a spring just up above the house, as good a water as I ever drank. Delia was carried away with this place.

The first year of our stay here I didn't have time to fish any. When I was returned for the second year, I asked them if the Cumberland was a good place to fish, and they said it was a fine place, so I began to make my plans to fish the next spring, by doing a double visiting and getting acquainted with everyone that winter. I fished most of the time with Bill Phillips, that lived just below me.

Along the first of July, Bill and I were down on the river fishing and talking and I said, "Bro. Bill, why is it you folds keep my salary paid up in advance and me fish all the time." He said, "Why Bro. Clayton, we'd rather see you fish then to hear you preach."

Somewhere about this time, Bill and I had been when Bill had to go home. When he got to the bank and started to get his share of the fish he hollered and told me that some of them were dead. I hollered back and told him to leave them alone, I never ate live fish. When I got to the bank to get my fish I found that he had taken all the live ones and left me the dead. I am still joked in Mount Zion about eating dead fish today.

By the time protracted meetings were to begin, sickness had stuck us. I got Jim Dickens, who wanted to make a preacher and J. B. Overstreet his uncle, both about the same age to hold all of my meetings that fall. J. B. Overstreet was a fine singer, and Bro. Dickens could talk all night. He made one of the best revivalists that had ever been in that district for fifty years.

The fever struck Harrison, our little boy eight years old. One day I asked the Dr. if he thought it would be safe for me to go to meeting. He said he thought so – I hadn't been there but a short time when someone came and told me he was dead.

I will tell you something now that Delia made me promise never to tell as long as Bill Phillips was alive. Delia was in the bed with a new baby, only a couple of two days old, when Bill came screaming and fell against our door at night. I opened the door and he said his little girl was dead. When I got back Delia said, "Jim, Bill's killed me." "Oh, I said, 'maybe not.'" "Yes, she said, but don't never tell him or let him know, for it would only worry him." She was never well after this and the baby died in a short while. Delia kept getting worse and decided that she couldn't live much longer, so she wanted to go back to Shoates Creek to die, so that she could be buried at home. It was about Christmas time when we took our children and caught the steam boat at Mount Zion and started for Giles County. The whole neighborhood turned out to see us off and to tell Delia goodbye. We went to Nashville and took the train on to Walker Station where her Uncle Jacob Sandusky met us. We lived with him until the 22 of February when she died. No one ever got any better treatment than Uncle Jacob gave us.

During the time we were living here with Uncle Jacob he was waiting for his two years to expire so that he could file for a divorce from a girl he married after the death of his first wife, a good old woman, who had around thirteen children, of which all but one died in infancy, and this one died soon after getting grown. Many is the time while we were living there with Uncle Jacob, he said to me, "Jimmie, I am suffering in the hull, if I could fix it someway up that the Lord brought it on me I would feel better over it, but Jacob brought this on himself."

After Uncle Jacob got his divorce he married a nice woman by the name of Penny or Shaw, I've forgotten which. To this union was born three or four children, one of which was Rev. J. C. Sandusky, a Methodist minister who served the Baxter church for four years and at present is at Viola, of the Tennessee Conference.

After the funeral I made arrangement with mother and Jim Beasley to keep the children for awhile, so that I could finish up my year at Mount Zion. When I got back I found Uncle Enoch and Aunt Martha Craig living in the house I had been living in. I have never had better friends that Uncle Enoch and Aunt Mart, as we called her. A short while before she died, and she lived to be old, I went to visit her and I said, "Aunt

Mart, how many children have you raised?" You see Aunt Mart never had any children of her own, but was a mother to any poor child that needed her. She told me that they would help me all they could, and didn't want one penny for it. It was while I lived here that I went back to Giles, and got my baby girl, Lena. She was at this time staying with Jim Beasley, she was a little past three years old. I can see her today as she was at that age. We got off at the Union Station and walked over to the wharf to catch the boat for Mount Zion. The telephone poles along the side walk threw shadows for us to walk over. Everyone we came to she held to my hand and jumped over. She thought they were logs on the walk.

Before Delia died she often told me she wanted me to marry soon after she died to keep our children together. She even went so far as to tell me she could think of no better girl than Laura White for me to marry. She and her sister had been in our home many times and done many a kind deed for Delia, while she was sick. So it was only natural that with my little children scattered my mind should turn to finding me a wife, and in thinking it over I decided Laura would make a good one for she was a good nice girl and her people were good friends of mine. One day I told Aunt Mart I wanted to have a confidential talk with her but if she didn't approve of it for her not to say anything about it. I asked her to see Laura and see if she would consider marrying me, and to let me know. I had to go off on one of my appointments and when I came back Aunt Mart said, "Clayton," that's what she always called me, I think it's alright." After that we did our courting at Aunt Mart's, and no one ever suspicioned it until two or three days before we were married. We sent word out about it and there was a big crowd there. We were married on the front porch at Daddy Whites and went on to church for this was Sunday morning, and quarterly meeting. Bro. Banks married us.

When I asked Mother White if she had any objections to my marrying Laura, she said "No, but that Laura didn't have any business marrying anyone. Soon after we were married I found out what she had meant by this. Laura explained how she had had a fall and it had broken the end of her spine, causing it to crook. One day she had a bad spell and began frothing at the mouth. We called in Dr. High and Dr. Simmons. They chloroformed her and examined her and then called me in. Dr. High explained to me how the fall had torn the muscles of her womb loose and showed me how to flip the womb back to place when it turned over. He told her to wear a certain kind of support to keep it in place and she wouldn't have these spells. They said I could do what was needed to be done as good as a doctor.

We had been married some over a year and a half when our little boy, Carter, was born. Laura was so much better that I began to hope that someday she would be entirely well. We moved to Hayesville, where I had been sent. One day I was in a meeting at New Bethel when someone came running to me and said my wife was having a spell of some kind. I hurried home and when I got there Dr. King was there doing all he could but she remained unconscious, I immediately told him I could cure her. Reaching under the cover I did what I had been told to do and she immediately opened her eyes, and began to talk. The people all seemed to think I had performed a miracle or was a dandy doctor one. Laura had taken off her support and had brought on the spell.

After this spell her health in general got worse and worse, and in a month or so her mother and daddy wrote me and asked if they could come and get her so they could take care of her. I told them that they could, for I knew they could give her better care than I could possibly do. So Laura took Carter and went to Mount Zion. She was never back to Hayesville but kept getting worse and died in July, and I was again a widower with five small children. Nothing would do Daddy and Mother White but that I give Carter to them. Of course I wouldn't do that. Sometime before Laura died I got a good old colored lady to stay with the children, and I was with Laura when she died. I had gotten her different times to stay with them for I tried to go at least once a week.

When Laura died, my mother came up to live with me awhile. I had written asking her to come. She came but soon told me that she couldn't stay long, and that I'd just have to get married. But I had no one this time picked out for me.

The District Conference this year met at Maddux Chapel in Putnam County. When the Conference opened there was a nice looking girl sitting at the organ playing for the Conference. When I got a chance I asked Bro. Nunnally who she was and if she was married. He said, "No, she isn't married. She's one of my

members, and is a great church worker. She is the daughter of D. L. McCaleb, a Methodist Minister who is now dead. Her name is Hattie. She will make a man a good wife if she doesn't backslide like her mother and Uncle Robert Allison; and if she does the devil wouldn't be able to live with her." She later told me that Bro. Nunnally advised her not to marry me as I had too many children, and that she would have too hard a time. She and her mother and sister Josie were staying with Simon Shanks, Mrs. McCalebs nephew, just across the creek from the church; and along about Friday I made it convenient to go over and take dinner with them. After dinner Hattie and I came out of the house and sat down on the porch. I asked her if she would like to go over to the church and play and sing. She said, "Why yes." So we went over and after singing awhile I said, "Hattie, I am looking for a girl to make me a wife – she'll have a hard time because I already have five children. I want a Methodist, a Republican, and would rather that she be the daughter of a Union Soldier – and she said, "I've always said if ever I married I wanted a Methodist preacher." Then I said, "Well I want you to consider my case and if we ever get so far along as to promise each other – let each of us have the privilege to back out before the ceremony is performed. Ask anyone you want to about me. At this point I let my case rest. I told her that I would write her after I got home. I didn't go with her any during the Conference – but it all got rumored around and as the most of the neighborhood was her relation, they carried her high the rest of the meeting.

The year before this the District Conference was held at Gentrys Chapel a mile south east of Baxter. Everyday I ate at Mrs. McCalebs table where they had everything good to eat, and especially the egg custards, which I sure bragged on, and ate my fill. During this Conference I was called on to preach to the crowd that was in the yard, those who couldn't find room in the house. After I got through preaching I had been asked to take up a collection for something, and thought perhaps my eating and bragging on those custards, which after we were married Hattie told me she had cooked – my raising the largest collection – and I'll have to say my looks – for she often told me in later years that it was common talk that H. P. Keathley and I were the best looking men in the Conference – that won Hattie for me.

Bro. Dickens had failed for the past two or three years to pass his examination. Finally we told him if he'd try his best one more time we'd pass him even though he failed. So again at Gentrys Chapel he had failed. Bro. Pafford was strongly against licensing him to preach, so I got up and told them I didn't want to go down in the records as a liar for if we failed to license him we were liars. Others felt as I did, so we failed to license him and I want to say again as I said before, he made one of the best Evangelist the Conference had had in fifty years.

Now we go back to Hayesville. As you remember my mother was with me after Laura died. A few months before this I had come to the conclusion that a certain man – who was a member of the church – was selling liquor. I got up in the pulpit and without calling any names publically, told what was being done. After service was over Bro. Dick Haynes called me off and said he didn't believe this certain man was selling whiskey. I told him I was confident he was guilty – which later proved to be true. This put me at outs with a certain class of them there, and they were just waiting for an opportunity to try to slander me as they had some of the preachers before me. One Sunday after services were over, and we were all talking with each other, as most congregations do after benediction has been said – one of the sisters came to me and whispered to me that her brother Clim Morris was to be married the next day and wanted me to come over and marry them, and take dinner with them. I said alright. The following weekend I was off to fill some appointment, and when I came home the neighborhood was working alive with big tales on me. Some of that low down class had seen us when she had asked me to marry her brother, and started some lies. The next Sunday I got up in the pulpit and publically said what I thought about the ones who had started the lie. I told them how they had made Bro. Banks years before live on blackberries for three weeks, because of lies which had been told. I told them how they had eavesdropped under Bro. Wilmoth's house and gone off and told those lies. I gave them to understand I wasn't running. I aimed to see it through. If I wasn't sent back as a preacher I'd stay with them. I gave them to understand that I knew the low-down rascal was sitting in the room listening to me who was responsible for it all. I said plenty. When we got back home mother said, "Jim, Lord have mercy, what do you mean?" Mother, I want his lying on preachers here stopped, and this is a good time to do it. Before Conference came on Bro. Stricklin had heard about it and told me if he were me he'd just take another circuit and get out of it. I told him I'd never do it, and I didn't. They offered me another circuit, but I wouldn't take it, so if any of my children or children's children ever happen to be looking back over the Minutes and find there where at a certain year Rev. J. R. Clayton was

sent to a certain place but for certain reason, which need not be told here, did not go. You'll understand just what is meant by this.

Bro. Suggs followed me there. A good old stand by. They dared not tell any lies on him. His wife died the next spring, and he went back to Wilson County. The next preacher was a stranger. One of this gang told a lie on him and he went and had a warrant taken out on him, and made him walk up and sign a lie bill which stands on record there today. This wounds up lying on preachers at Hayesville. I felt like it then and feel like it today that when lies are told on preachers they ought never to run but stand firm, since I have been sent back to Hayesville two or three times. My last charge was there, and I have many good friends among them.

To show you that I have, Bro. Blessing, my District Superintendent at this time, held my fourth Quarterly meeting. Our salaries were all paid up on Sat. He said to me, "Bro. Clayton, what about me preaching here this next week?" I said, "Sure, alright. I don't have anything special to do either, so I'll mention it to the brethren." When I did it was agreeable, so we began our week's meeting. We agreed to divide what we got at the end of the meeting. The last night I told them that Bro. Blessing had preached them a good meeting and I thought they ought to take up a little collection for him. They then said for us to stand out in front and as they came out to tell us good-bye, they would give us each what they wanted to, and I said, "Alright." So we each counted what money we had, and I asked Bro. Blessing how much money he had, and he replied by asking me what I had. I told him that I had, \$85.35. He said "that's what I have to a copper cent." He looked at me strange and said he had never heard of a thing like that. If you doubt this write to B. W. Blessing, Lawrenceburg, Tennessee.

After the District Conference at Maddux Chapel, Hattie and I kept up a regular correspondence, and when annual Conference met I was again placed at Hayesville. Hattie and I had agreed to marry as soon as I could come over after Conference.

The first week in November (Nov. 13, 1901) Bro. C. N. Sadler took his daughter, Connie, and I took my daughter, Stella and we drove to Double Springs by buggy to put them on the train for Athens, where they were planning on going to school. We spent the night with Bro. Sid Shoemaker an old friend of mine from Mount Zion, who at this time lived at Bloomington Springs. The next morning I told him that Hattie McCaleb and I were going to be married and wanted to know if we could be married at his house. He was delighted, so Bro. Sadler and the girls stayed with him, and I went onto Mrs. McCaleb's. I stayed there all night and the next day Hattie and I went to Cookeville to get the license. We came back by Hattie's mother's and her sister Josie and niece Bertha Mahan were waiting in their buggy ready to go with us to Bloomington where Bro. Sadler married us. There was a large crowd of friends and relations there when we got back.

After the wedding we went back to Mrs. McCaleb's and spent the night. The next morning we went to Bloomington and had everything arranged just what we'd do. We got Stella off and then started for Hayesville. We didn't get to leave until afternoon so we had to stop on our way back home. We spent the night with Squire John Sadler, on Martins Creek. The next day we went to a place called Stricklin Chapel out from Red Boiling Springs, to help Bro. Sadler in a meeting before going home. Bro. Sadler had followed us in his buggy from Putnam. When we got to Stricklin Chapel, we lodged with Old Bro. Cook, a through Methodist who took the church paper. When we got there we found that another Methodist preacher was there from Ohio, holding a meeting. One funny little incident I shall relate that sure got away with Hattie. The next morning this preacher came around where we all were and asked Hattie to tie his tie. She id in front of us all. When I got a chance I told her I didn't care for her tying his tie, but that she had better watch him as I didn't like his looks even if he was a preacher. About the next day Bro. Cook's church paper came, and in it was a long article on this same preacher who had asked Hattie to tie his tie. He was having charges placed against him in his Conference and had run off instead of facing them. Bro. Cook asked the preacher what the charges were, and he hemmed and hawed and slid out of the community. Hattie told me time and again she was sorry about tying it and I told her I didn't blame her for it one bit, Hattie had been raised to believe if a fellow carried the name of preacher before his name they were all nearly Saints, and this disillusioned her some but was a great lesson she will never forget.

Let me tell you another little one on Hattie. Before we got home we were driving along, talking about what a hard time I had had – my wives each sick in bed a long time and then dying. Hattie said how she didn't aim to be sick and in bed – she aimed to work and help me raise my children. A few months after this while I was off on a meeting, someone came and told me that my wife was bad off with the typhoid fever. I went home and found her nearly dead. After she got better she told me that she had nearly rather died than to have sent for me, after telling me how she didn't aim to be sick. We had a laugh over it and I never kidded her although I had thought about it before she mentioned it to me.

When I gave up the Circuit for Bro. Suggs, I bought two or three acres of land a good two story house, and taught school at Long Creek, and after the school was out I taught a subscription school in Hayesville.

A few months after Hattie and I were married I took her back on a visit to her mother's. She had never been away from her mother long at a time. While there we visited her brother-in-law who told us that he had heard from us every two weeks since we had been married. Upon asking him how he had heard since neither of us had written him he explained that one of his brothers had taken the same man I had told about in church a fifty gallon of whiskey every two weeks. After we got back I told the leading members what I had heard and he couldn't stand the pressure and soon left the community. I later heard that he died in shame and almost poverty.

One day after moving to Hayesville, Bro. Tom Wheeley – an upstanding citizen came to me and said, "Bro Clayton, a certain man is fixing to put in a Blind Tiger on the state line, just a mile from the church. What are we going to do about it?" I said, "And you don't want it?" "No we don't," he said. "Well you go to every leading citizen and see if they will stick with me even to death." He made his rounds and came back and said they would all stick. Then I told him to get some of the best and take them with him and tell the man if he put this Blind Tiger up we would hang him and that I would tie the knot. When these men went to him, he gave his solemn promise not to put it up, and he never did.

When it came time to elect the Sherriff the next fall after Hattie and I were married – there was a slit in the party and my record of fighting whiskey in my church members and in around my church had spread throughout the County, and since I wasn't preaching this year some of the leading Republicans came to me and wanted me to run. I told them I hadn't even thought of such of such a thing – but upon their insisting I told them I didn't have any time for campaigning, but if they elected me I'd serve. Unknowing to me Hattie set about to get me back to preaching. She had Bro. Stricklin, the Presiding Elder, to put me on the Buffalo Valley Circuit when Conference met. So when Conference was over I was told that I had been sent to Buffalo Valley, and since I had come out on top with the class in Hayesville and I could either preach or be sheriff, I of course chose preaching, and we began making plans to move to Sweet Gum Flat at Buffalo valley.

We got to Sweet Gum Flat, December 4, 1903. Eva, Hattie's and my oldest girl was ten months old. We lived in the Parsonage two years and 23 days.

I taught school almost everywhere I was sent to preach. My first year at Sweet Gum Flat I taught school at Club Springs. It was while I was preaching here that one of the most sensational things of my life occurred. One morning I got word that Uncle Daniel White, my second wife's Uncle, had killed Sid Vaden. I dismissed school until I got back and started out for Mount Zion.

I am going to talk awhile about Uncle Daniel, and then you'll be better able to judge him. I want to first tell you that I considered Uncle Daniel my friend. He was one of the most peculiar men I have ever known in my life. A great reader of the Bible and could quote more passages to verify witchcraft than most people can for baptism. He would go to Carthage two or three times a year and lecture to a large crowd in the courthouse on witchery. They said that he could really tell it off. When he would say anything about the witches to me, I let him say what he pleased and never argued with him, and made a friend out of him. I considered the first time that I ever met him that he was mentally unbalanced, and after he was put in the pen the warden told me it was a shame for Uncle Daniel to have been sent there that he ought to have been sent to the Sanitarium, where he could have been treated. He also told us that he never had him to work but that he could sit all day and read his Bible if he wished.

One Sunday while I was pastor at Mount Zion, Uncle Daniel walked up to about the middle of the church with his old gummy tobacco overalls on, and I can hear the noise they made to this day, as he marched up the aisle and sat down. He then leaned the bench backward against the bench behind. His brother, Uncle Bill, went to him and said "However Daniel, benches aren't to set on that way." Uncle Daniel raised up and said, "By jucks, I'll go home until I can get so I can behave myself." And he went, and as far as I know he was never in the church again, although he always paid me. When anyone would ask him to come back he would always say, "I don't know whether I can behave myself or not."

One spring Uncle Daniel hired me to plow for him. He paid me good for my work, and I plowed whenever I could. One morning before I got to the house, I saw a little blue smoke going up to the sky. There was not a curl to it, for it was a cold windless morning. I said to myself, "Uncle Daniel's up to something. "When I got there he was up but I didn't say a word about his fire. Soon he told me that he had been up all night burning an old sow that he had killed because the witches were in her.

I will not go into the details of Uncle Daniel killing Sid Vaden for each of them have relation living today that might read this book and stir old feelings of enmity that ran high for years after it occurred. I will say this thought that Sid went into Uncle Daniel's field where he was hoeing and threatened to shoot him with a pistol. Uncle Daniel sent a small boy to the house for his Winchester. When the boy got back Sid was still there and Uncle Daniel shot him.

I was already passed the church when I met the Sheriff. I asked him if he had caught Uncle Daniel yet and he said, "No, he'll sill too many up there. I am going now to get a machine or gun to shoot turpentine balls to set the house on fire and burn him out tonight." So I counted them, but there was a large crowd of men. I could look across the bottom and see him walking around in his yard, and every once in awhile shoot and cut leaves off about the crowds heads. Then they'd all fall back over the house over the bank. There was a road that went straight through the bottom and when it came to the bluff it wound around the house. I walked out the road a ways and hollered at Uncle Daniel. He answered me and I asked him if he knew who it was. He told me who I was. I asked him if it would be alright for me to come over and talk to with him. He said "Yes." So I went. When I went around the corner of the house, there was a chair setting there and Uncle Daniel standing off about 30 feet above me a little. He said, "Have that seat." – and of course I sat down. He then sat down in a chair with his rifle across his lap. I said, "Uncle Daniel I want to talk to you." He said, "What do you want?" I said, "I want you to go to jail where you'll be taken care of." He first said, "I won't do it!" I replied, "They are going to burn you up tonight and kill you." He said, "By jucks, I'll get more of them than they do of me." I replied that I didn't doubt that, but that would only make bad matters worse. It would only cause more grief and trouble for his folks. He studied a while and said, "I'll go with you." I told him that I wouldn't go with him by myself. I asked hi if he would go with John Gann and me. He said he would, or with just me. At once I stated down to the crowd. They immediately wanted to know what he said, "Gentlemen, I am going now to talk to Sampse Vaden, and Bill Overstreet. If they will promise me not to be out on the road, I'm going to take him to Carthage. John Gann promised me we'd all die together or take him there, if we started with him. When I got back from talking to Overstreet, they wanted to know what they said. I told them that Ball Overstreet had given me his solemn word not to be on the road, nor to let Sampse be there. I told William that if they both didn't promise to stay off the road I wouldn't start with him for I didn't want to hurt either of them – Sampse was the dead boys father, and Bill was the father-in-law. I said, "Gentlemen, we'll be here in about fifteen minutes. You can be here if you want to. When we got there, not a man, woman or child was to be seen. We told Daniel if there was to be any shooting, he was to shoot first – if there was more than one, then we'd be in it. Gann rode in front, Uncle Daniel in the middle, and me behind. We crossed the river in a ferry boat – I walked out in front and met the Sheriff and said, "Sheriff, I'll tell you the terms of surrender." He was waiting for us as we had called that we were coming. He said, "Alright." I said, "Uncle Daniel is to give up his rifle and pistol here to you and you are to give me the pistol to keep for him until he gets out, if ever. He is to keep his Bible in the jail with him, all the time. The Sheriff said, "Perfectly satisfactory." I spent the night with the Sheriff, and the next morning when I started to leave he handed me the pistol. I asked him if I could be indicted for having it on me, and he assured me that he would stand between me and all danger. When I got to Elmwood and started to get down off my horse, Tom Overstreet came up and started abusing me for doing what I had done. I ran my hand in my pocket and there was that pistol. I said, "tom, I have Uncle

Daniel's pistol in my pocket, and if you don't get away and leave me alone I'll kill you. He left me alone in a hurry. After I had started on home I got to studying just how near that pistol had come to getting me into real trouble so I promised the Lord then and there I'd let that be the first and last time for me to have an old pistol on me.

Uncle Daniel's lawyer, Mr. Hale, told me that Daniel was the most truthful man he had ever defended. He told me that he told Daniel if he'd swear he saw Sid with a pistol he would come clear – otherwise he was afraid they might hang him. He said Uncle Daniel said, "I didn't see the pistol, and I'll have my neck broke before I swear a lie."

When I got through with the school at Club Springs, the Directors came to me and wanted me to finish out the two months at Mocassin Bluff, the school near our home, for twenty dollars per month. So, I took it for a dollar meant something then when you could get corn for twenty five cents per bushel, and meat for 2 ½ or 3 cents per pound on foot.

Conference came on and I was sent back to Buffalo Valley. During those two years I made many friends that lasted as long as they lived; among them Dr. Denton, who died last year. All the Joneses, Old Dr. Farmer, and everyone else. This summer I taught school at Hopewell. I boarded at Uncle Walt Andersons for 25 cents per night, but I visited my pupils homes lots. Sometimes I'd pay him a quarter a week, sometimes nothing. If I didn't go to Uncle Bill Jared's once a week, he would send word by his boys to bring me. When I'd get ready to go to bed he would go upstairs with me and many a night we would sit there laughing and talking and chewing tobacco and spitting out a little widow until one or two o'clock. I lost a great old friend when Uncle Bill died. Aunt Boody, with wife, seemed to be just as glad for me to come, and though sickly was a good cook, and always had plenty to cook. She was a first cousin to Hattie.

During this school I bought my little farm in the 17th district. It was about six miles from the Parsonage at Sweet Gum Flat, and I named it Sleepy Hollow. This was one of the most happy years of my life.

The story from now on will be mostly about my teaching in the schools around near my home in Sleepy Hollow. Except for the twelve years we spent in Baxter, which was for the sold purpose of getting our children through the High School which was there, for I could never while there forget how happy we had been in the hills and was waiting my time to get back among my old friends I thought so much of.

I want to tell another incident that happened while I was living at Sweet Gum Flat. I had almost forgotten to tell it. One evening Walt Dewise and Mandy Christian came to my house wanting me to marry them. I asked them if they were both eighteen and each of them said they were. I asked for the license and upon looking at them I noticed that the County Court Clerk had failed to sign his name. I also noticed that the license were for Putnam County and I lived in DeKalb. I told him these facts and Walt cursed and said Dan Gossige was drunk and we could walk over the County line. I studied a minute and told them alright I'd marry them for I didn't figure there was much in the couple, and didn't matter so I walked where I thought was the County line and performed the ceremony.

The next evening Manda's father, Tom Christian and Henry Roberts walked up to my house and asked me if I had married his daughter and Walt Dewise. I told him that I had performed the ceremony, but had since found out that I had married them in the wrong County – we had failed to get into Putnam. I also told him about the County Clerks name being off the license. Mr. Christian first said he was going to see if anything could be done to a preacher who that married people under age. Before he left he asked if I could go with him and find Mandy and if she wouldn't go back home for me to get the license fixed up and marry them legally – of course I went with him. We went here and yonder, wherever we thought they might be. Finally we located them on Big Indian Creek at Aunt Dood Butlers, at least five miles from home. I was almost tried to death when I got there. Soon after we got there Tom and Walt began to cuss and talk, at last Walt jumped up and said, "Mandy, who do you want to stay with, your daddy or me?" Mandy said, "I want to stay with you." When Mandy said this, Tom and Walt locked horns, and needless to tell you I left the house, and of all the knock down and dragging out they had it there.

After the fighting was over they came out and asked me to come back into the house. They said Tom had agreed to let her stay there and sleep with Aunt Dood, and I was to go the next morning and get the license fixed and marry them again legally. When Tom left I told Mrs. Butler that I was dead tired, and wanted to spend the night there. She told me that I was perfectly welcome – so she fixed me a bed and I was soon snoring. I wasn't asleep though. Soon Mandy lay down behind Aunt Dood – Walt came back to the bed and said, "aunt Dood let me get over behind!" Aunt Dood whispered emphatically, "No, No!" "Then Aunt Dood let me put my hand over on her." I thought I would holler out loud. Soon Walt went upstairs to bed.

The next morning after breakfast I went up the road a short distance and saw two men on the hill side plowing. I hollered and asked them if they had a horse I could get to ride to Boma. One of them said, "No!" In a moment he said, "who is that?" I said, "J. R. Clayton." He said, "Yes, I've got a good saddle horse, I'll be down there in a minute." He came on down and introduced himself as Bill Shanks, a first cousin to Hattie. We lived neighbors for years and the best of friends until he moved to McEwin. I went to Boma, called Gossage. He told me to sign his name to the license – which I did. I came back got Walt and Mandy, took them down to where Bro. Henry Puckett, whom I knew was running a saw mill and let his outfit see me marry them so I could have witnesses that everything was alright. He set his mill down and they all came down to the road to see the wedding; after the ceremony Walt and Mandy went off rejoicing – and for years after they were either in good humor or parted. And finally they split the quill and have never gotten back together again. They raised several children. Two of the boys could have been great artists if they had had a chance. After the ceremony was said Bro. Puckett asked me to have dinner with him that day, that they were having coon for dinner. So I stayed.

One the morning of Dec. 27, 1905, Uncle Joe Carr and one or two more wagons drove up and we began loading them with our furniture etc., moving to Sleepy Hollow. Soon after we got started we met a man who wanted me to hold a burial service. They all told me to go right on, and Uncle Joe said that he would see that everything was fixed up alright. The next morning when I got home, I have never met a more pleased bunch than Hattie and the children. I found that Uncle Zeb Carr had come down the evening before and brought a big bucket of milk and butter. We had a good cow but he said he knew we wouldn't have any milk moving. Uncle Zeb made us a wonderful neighbor but only lived a few years. Before spring came around he said he had a present for me and when he brought it out it was as fine a bull tongue plow as I ever saw.

Soon after this I had a shepherd dog that would go after the cows anywhere on the farm. I had bought a cow from Uncle Zeb. A stock of which had been in the family for forty years. One day I had sent Sally after the cows – failing to find them in our pasture, she had went to Uncle Zeb's. She spotted a cow she thought was mine, and after barking and barking Uncle Zeb came out and seeing that Sally was mistaken he said, "Sally, that ain't your cow." He said she walked around the cow, took a good look, turned and jumped the fence went down in the pasture and soon came back with my cow, and drove her home.

Last winter I was at Filmore Browns. I was telling them about the many smart things that Sally did, when O. D. Anderson said, "why Mr. Clayton, I had a dog that was smarter than that. I never could slip off from him to go fishing. One day I was determined to leave him at home. My dog was in under the house asleep so I slipped out of the house and got my pole and when I got around behind the smoke house there he was with a can, filling it with worms."

We lived joining farms with Uncle Joe Carr and Aunt Bett, Hattie's first cousin, for thirty seven years, and I want to say that a person never had better neighbors. After I had lived by Uncle Joe for thirteen years, I was in Cookeville and met Mr. Charlie Moss, an old acquaintance. He said, "Well, Bro. Clayton, I saw Joe Carr the other day and he paid you quite a compliment. I asked him if he didn't live down there by you and he said he did. I asked him how he liked you and he said, "why he's the strongest Republican I ever saw." I told him that I didn't mean that and he said, "Well, I'll tell you he's the first man I ever lived by and had many dealings with that I didn't catch him in a lie, inside a year and I've lived by him 13 years, and haven't yet."

I found Uncle Joe a man of his word, and I'll tell you a little incident to prove it. One day Uncle Joe and some others were upon the hill on the east side of our house cutting rail timber. When they split the log

open the bark would slip off and it would make two troughs ten foot long. Uncle Joe said to carter and Lige Anderson, his grandson, "Boys, take these down yonder and lap them end to end and you'll have a good place to slide in". When it was fixed the boys wanted Uncle Joe to ride first. Uncle Joe said, "No, I'll not ride first, but Carter, if you'll ride first I'll ride next. So in Carter got and down that slick trough he flew; when he reached the end of their tacks right on into the briars he went, over and over. Finally when he was able he hobbled back up on top again and told Uncle Joe to take his ride. "Why, no, Carter I was joking I can't do that?" Carter said over and over - 'You're just an old liar - you said you would!' Uncle Joe said, I'll do it if it kills me - and he got and away he went, and it's needless to say he was skinned all over and bruised too, but he proved he couldn't and wouldn't have those boys lose faith in his truthfulness.

I tell this next one to show the inside of Uncle Joe. I was teaching school at Hopewell when I bought the farm. I went to stay all night with Grover, who was going to school to me. I am sure this was my first visit to their home. I saw three of four good fox hounds laying around so I said, "Mr. Carr, do you fox hunt?" He said he did and asked me if I liked to. I told him that I did, so he told me to come back a certain night with Grover and he'd send for John B. Huddleston and Whitten Wallace and we'd have a big hunt. When the night came I went back, and before night I heard the horns blowing out the ridge, and soon rode up Whitten and John B., with their dogs. We had supper, fed the dogs and soon started for Tite Fit. Before we got to the top of the hill the dogs struck the fox. We went on up to the top where we could have a good place to listen. We stood there for two or three hours, and then started home. On the way back he said, "Boys, did you know there was a big water melon patch right over from where we were standing?" We all said, "No." One said, "Why didn't you tell us?" Uncle Joe said, "No, I couldn't do that, for it would have gone out all over the country that the preacher had gotten into the water melon patch."

After we had lived in the Hollow for two or three years my brother C. W. came to see me. He asked me if I was acquainted around Gordonsville. I told him that I was. He asked if I remembered a marble yard there. I told him I did. He said when he was coming through there that he inquired where I lived and a man said he didn't know exactly, but that he could tell him where to get to where everyone knew me. He said when the man found out that he was my brother he related this little incident to him. One Sunday on my way back home from Bollens Branch I was riding through Gordonsville and rode up where they were playing marbles. They had it fixed to perfection with ring side seats etc. While I was sitting there on my horse idly watching them, a man I knew came over and asked me if I didn't think that was a fine marble yard. I said I indeed did, but I was just thinking. He asked me what I was thinking and I replied, "I was just wondering if



after this same gang had been in hell for a thousand years for violating the Sabbath if their children's children would be congregating there playing marbles as they." He told my brother that this broke up Sunday marble playing. This reminds me of what Solomon said.

(Pictured in 1946: L to R: Rev. James Robert Clayton; Matilda Askew, daughter of Sam Askew; Jephtha "Jep" Tubb Askew; little boy is Richard Askew).

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of sliver." By 1919 I had come to the conclusion that if I gave our girls an education we would have to leave the farm and move to Baxter. Hattie and I now had six girls. All my children by my other wives were now married. Carter had just about this time married. When I first talked about my plans Hattie was against leaving the farm. I got the girls altogether and told them how things were and asked them what they wanted to do, go to school or stay there on the farm. They voted for school so I began to make plans for buying a house in town.

I found one that suited me which was for sale, and the last week of Sept. we left the hollow. Hattie decided that she had rather go with us than to say on the farm. When she saw her new home she was delighted, and again thought she'd never leave this place. The next morning we started our girls in school. Our baby girl, Irene, was only four, but nothing would do her but that she went to school too. The teacher told her she was too young but she said, "I'm coming." Everyday it was the same thing over, but finally the teacher just

gave up and Irene became a steady pupil, and I was amused at the way she could memorize little poems for programs, and her so small.

We stayed in Baxter for twelve years, and during this time my entire family got the equivalent to fifty six full years for one person.

In 1917 our District Conference met at Dodsons Chapel in Overton County. A bunch of boys were to go off that week to the army. I was asked to give a talk to them. I went on and gave the Gov't plan on the war etc. When I came to the last word in my talk, Bro. Blankenhorn our District Superintendent, jumped up and said, "I want you to understand what Bro. Clayton has said is a lie." He paused and said, "I don't mean that Bro. Clayton has told the lie for he is only stating the plans of the Gov't and England, for Germany is not to blame for this war." Can you imagine the state of the congregation? People seemed to be holding their breath. I have believed to this day had he not been a preacher, and a Methodist preacher in a Methodist community he would have been lynched that day. From that day on he would never go through the mountains by himself, for that spread on him like wild fire and his life was threatened. He was a native son of Germany, and took his German papers. When his sons refused to believe as he did it split the family, and he wouldn't even go home to see one of his sons leave for the army.

After the war was over, preachers were scarce. I was put on three circuits at once; Hayesville, Red Boiling Springs, and Sparta. At the first Quarterly meeting I told Bro. Blessing, our District Superintendent that I had a plan for getting my salary. I told him I didn't want any set salary or any Stewart out collecting for me, that I wanted each congregation to know just which time I would be there, and for everyone to give me whatever they wanted to. Bro. Blessing was afraid I wouldn't get anything much but I told him I was willing to try it anyway. The laymen of my circuits were for it so he said it would have to be alright by him. I want to say that I got lots more than I would have gotten if each one had been assessed, and I like the idea lots better.

**The following information was found in the Library at Nashville, TN:

John William Clayton was born in North Carolina in 1773. It wasn't shown to whom he married, nor the name of his father.

Hardy Clayton, son of John William, was born in North Carolina in 1797. He was married to Francis Parker. They lived in North Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee. They had four children listed: William, Hardy, Angeline and Micajah.

William, son of Hardy was born January 7, 1837 in Tennessee. He was married to Sarah Gallagher. He died March 13, 1880 in Giles County, Tennessee. They had two children to die in infancy and six others: Isabella born 1859, married to a man by the name of Snead; Frances born 1864, married to Wes Crowder. Died in Oklahoma; James Robert, born July 24, 1868, in Giles County; Kynette, born 1872 in Tennessee; John, born 1874 was married to Laura in Tennessee. Caffee Wilson born 1879 in Tennessee was married to Minnie. Died in Kansas.

James Robert, son of William July 24, 1868 in Wayne Co., Tennessee. He was married to Delia Lay, who was born October 1868 and died February 22, 1897 and buried at Lawrence County, Tennessee (Bolton Ham Church). Her father was Crick Lay and her mother was Elizabeth Sandusky. To this union was born: Stella, Harrison, William Kynette, Flora May, Edith Fay, Lena and Gracie.

Married to Laura White, who died 1901. To this union was born one child, Carter, born January 28, 1899.

Married to Hattie McCaleb. To this union was born six girls: Eva, Beatrice, Beulah, Ina, Inell and Irene.

***Because of the generosity of Deborah Barker who mailed me a copy of this historical story told by Rev. James Robert Clayton I was able to retype it and make it available for others to read.

*See more about Rev. James Robert Clayton in the History section – Putnam Co., TN at:
<http://www.ajlambert.com>.

H E A R
"The Hillbilly Philosopher"

REV. J. R. CLAYTON

of the Central Tennessee Conference
of the Methodist Episcopal Church

in

Special Lenten Services

on "Practical Thoughts From the Parables of Jesus"

at the

Harbor City Community Methodist Church

Corner 254th Street and Senator Avenue

Beginning

Tuesday Evening, March 24, 1936

and Every Evening Except Saturday, at 7:30

Also Sunday Morning and Evening, March 29



Rev. Clayton comes highly commended by Bishop
Wallace E. Brown, of the Chattanooga Area