

All the fourteen children of John and Mary Ann Collins Bouldin were born on the East side of Paint Rock River in Jackson County, Alabama. The first seven were born near the present iron bridge, East and a little north of Princeton. The younger seven were born on the John Baker place about three miles up the river which is northeast of what is now (May 13, 1960) called Swaini.

The first seven all lived to maturity, and are mentioned in Terril Bunyan's book "Know Your Cousins." But of the second seven two little girls passed away in early childhood; they were the eleventh and thirteenth of our mother's children. All told there were seven boys and seven girls, but all seven boys grew up with only five living sisters.

This farm on which the present writer was born September 28, 1881, contained 350 acres of which about 150 acres was cultivated land and about 200 acres lay on the side of Cumberland Mountain and was covered with timber; cedar and many kinds of hard wood. Paint Rock River flowed against the west side of the farm for about one mile. The home was almost exactly eight miles south of the Tennessee line.

My arrival took place in a large room built of hewed cedar logs, having a big fireplace at the east end of the room. Entrance to the room, my mother's bedroom, eighteen feet square, was from a hall ten by eighteen feet on the west of this room and between this room and another the same size called the parlor. There were beds upstairs over both rooms. The north and south ends of the hallway being left open, when we crossed the hall from one room to the other we spoke of going into "the other house."

When I was six years old and my sisters were getting grown, the family built the present frame house just north of the house of cedar, the new one facing west instead of north.

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This place was bought and the family moved about 187⁴ "when Bettie was a baby" and only one wedding among the children took place in the cedar house: that of our oldest sister Amanda who was married to Mr. Ed Robertson in this parlor in 1887. I was six years old and remember that when Brother Billie Thompson in pronouncing the ceremony used the word God, two year old Bunyan who was by my side said "Dod."

Early Memories. Maybe we hear a thing related so many times that we come to think we saw it happen. I am willing to think this one was that way: That legend day spanking I was said to have received by the fireside. It was often told in my presence that I said "Don't Pa, you'll make sores on me." I don't remember any pain, or what I had done, or seeing any of the onlookers. But it happened they say.

I retain a perfect picture that I think came through my own eyes, of my little sister Loula who died July 12, 1885, more than two months before I was four years old. Her little body was sitting erect in a large pan and Dr. Duckett was bathing her. My father told me to kiss Loula and I remember that I did. That is all that I remember about that day.

Little Julia, four weeks old had died April 1, 1880 before I was born September 28, 1881. This left a vacancy of more than seven years between Tom and Bun, and it has taken me till now to realize that I was the only child to fill that gap. I was glad, and still feel glad that I could wash the dishes, do the churning, milk the cows and do many things the little girls would have done to help their mother and mine, but how I missed them! I am expecting it will all be more than made up to me when I meet them Over There.

I was washing the dishes in the diningroom one cold night and the door was open between me and the livingroom where father and the others sat before a big fire. He was asking questions about arithmetic. "If a third of six be three, what would a fourth of twenty be?" "seven and a half" I answered from the diningroom.

Virgil and Laura were teaching school at the Bouldin school house soon after the second room was built. I was not of school age, but I went one day.

They had "chapel" in one room and then I remember the part of them that went to the other room kept step as they marched and Laura stood by the door and kept time for them, "left, right:" "left, ~~and~~ right." We ate the noon meal on the big lime-stone rocks under the big oak trees. And do I remember the old sow with little pigs, that came to eat up the scraps from the dinner². Well, the old sow chased me—and I don't even know how I got home, or any other details!

Then before or after this, my sister Amanda was teaching on the hill near Larkins Fork, two miles or more to the west of our home. She rode "Old Julie," one of my father's gentle mares. One day I rode behind her and went to school with her. She stopped under a peach tree and got some peaches. I thought strange, but I soon learned she was engaged to marry the owner of that peach tree!

And the Home! It was a busy place. Money did not grow on trees in those days. Money was scarce and hard to get. There were few opportunities for members of the family to earn money outside of the home and farm. I was a good big boy when I earned a quarter by helping drive a drove of hogs my father had sold, for several miles. As the boys grew up and needed new "store-bought" clothes we were sometimes allowed to cut some cedar on the mountain, "snake" it out with mules and sell it.

The Table. Our mother was a good cook and the twelve of us children grew up to more than overage height and sufficient weight, with very little sickness and not much expense for doctors bills. And we were lucky to have a total of three good doctors, sometimes in succession, and sometimes two at a time, no more than half a mile away, just across the river. We crossed the river on horse-back, but we always had horses which could both wade and swim, according to the depth of the stream. The three doctors were all of the same family: Dr. Felix Grant, a bachelor; Dr. James O. Robertson, lineal descendant of General James Robertson, founder of Nashville Tennessee and half-brother of Dr. Grant; and Dr. Duckett, son-in-law of Dr. Robertson.

What went on the table? It is safe to say that more than 95% of all our food was produced on the farm. Of course all the corn bread originated there. The corn was ground into meal at Graham's Mill at a dam in the river, or at a mill with an "over-shot" wheel owned by Cousin Joe Reid, or by Cousin Pete Reid's "breast-wheel" water mill, or at one or another steam-mill in the valley.

Our wheat was produced on the farm too, and carried eighteen or twenty miles to a mill in Tennessee to be ground into flour, and ^{we got 33 or 35 pounds of flour} ten pounds of bran for each bushel of wheat. (How much flour can you get for a bushel of wheat now?)

We always had plenty of milk and butter, for we kept at least two to four cows. The male calves would usually be sold for beef at three years of age. A fine one would sometimes bring \$30.00 on foot. The heifers were usually kept for cows and sometimes sold when "fresh" with a first calf.

Meat was in the main from the lowly swine: ham, bacon, shoulders, jowls, sausage, backbones and spare ribs when fresh, pressed meat (with vinegar) pickled pigs feet and brains. We didn't talk of eating "high up on the hog" for it was all good, properly prepared. Of course we or a neighbor would sometimes kill a beef or a sheep or some squirrels and, especially when preachers came, plenty of chickens were fried, and in the winter a turkey or a fat hen graced the table many a Sunday.

Farming and Stock Raising. To the decadent gentry of Egypt every shepherd was an "abomination" (Ex.) so the Hebrews who were still good at caring for livestock, were gladly welcomed by Pharaoh because he needed shepherds. Examples could be multiplied. Look at the active days of the Spaniards, when they were transporting horses, cattle and all kinds of live stock and opening up the New World! Maybe the search for "spices" in the great east was the beginning of the decline of some European races.

John Bouldin told his children of the days when he wanted to go to the new Burritt College at Spencer, Tennessee. The president of the school asking about the young man's financial resources was told "I have a sow and pigs. "Bring them along and come on to school." And John did.

When the family moved to the John Baker place there was the river running alongside for about a mile. But we almost never had to build a fence into the river to get water for the stock. The springs at the foot of the mountain and the lanes running in different directions made it possible to pasture stock in eight or ten fields without the animals having to pass through another field.

Without riding this hobby to death it ought to be said out loud that the modern disappearance of the farm home is following the disappearance of fences.

Our home had plenty of timber, plenty of water and plenty of land for pastures and diversified farming, but labor was required to erect fences to get the fullest use of the land. John Bouldin knew the value of animals, and they found him a good master. And with plenty of good timber at hand to make fences, he did not hesitate to do, and train his sons to do, the work necessary to fence the farm.

Since the method has changed so greatly in America let us jot down here a bit of history for those who may have to learn it from books.

It is about rail fences. The rails usually ten feet long and not too big to be easily handled. In the early days they were from logs of cedar, chestnut, walnut, other durable timbers, but later they were made mainly of oak as this timber was more plentiful and not so valuable.

Now let's look at the "worm" of a rail fence. To get the rails to lie on each other at each end, they had to lie at an angle to each other. If a fence going to the south started at a point the first rail should have the other end four feet to the east, the next one four feet to the west, then back and forth, back and forth toward the south. This "worm" was four feet wide.

A "ten-rail" fence was supposed to be high enough to turn all ordinary animals, for if the thickness of the rails averaged three and a half inches the height of a "ten-rail" fence would be seventy inches. But such a fence needed stakes on both sides at each place where the rails lay on each other.

These stakes were made of cedar and sharpened at one end to go into the ground. The top end was made smaller to go into a two-inch hole in a cap. This cap, about twenty inches long had two holes bored with a two-inch augur (bit). This made a wonderfully strong good fence. Later, when steel got cheap this wooden cap was given up and the two stakes tied with a piece of strong wire. The "fence corners" of such fences produced many black-berries in those days.

Now with barbed wire, woven wire fencing and sometimes steel posts, fences can be erected much quicker and with much less labor, but it costs much more money than formerly.

This book is not written as a rival of "Know your Cousins" by my youngest brother Terrill Bunyan Bouldin, but assumes that facts related there will be generally known by those who read this. And this hopes to bring suggestions about education to its readers.

With this end in view we here discuss a home and its economies as being something which in any age ought to be an educational institution in itself as well as a place from which to be sent to school. So we make no apologies for trying to describe a home where a living was made from the gifts of nature, where hands and heads were kept busy at useful work, and where from the oldest to the youngest the thought was upward toward the graduation day of those away at school, and then when they came home, even for a few days, what a wonderful time it was! It was June then, and if those at home were "up with their work" on the farm, maybe we'd make a boat to go fishing with. Some fine minnows caught in a glass minnow trap made fine bait to catch some bass. But these dressed up college graduates—how they stirred the ambitions of us little ones!

An Orderly Home. We took it for granted then. But now, after seventy years we are amazed. How could it have happened? We try to unravel the secret. Two human hearts—of one man and one woman—had one day agreed and formed a union. I stayed with them most of the time till I was twenty-two. Then we laid father's body to rest. Then, after seven years in Japan we came back and saw the withered flowers on mother's grave.

I think back and cannot think of one single time when father told us one thing and mother told us a different thing to do. She didn't discuss with us about the head of the house, she acted on it. With all her unbelievable activity and responsibility, and a head full of ideas, she always said "ask your pa."

When in my public and private talks it grew on me and I spoke with enthusiasm above the wonders of our mother, brother Virgil would agree with me, but one day he said to me "But his was the vision" meaning our father. And I agreed.

This fact and example of unity and orderliness outworks and outlasts any and all kinds of preachments. And I give you this example for what it may be worth.

An Economical Home

By "economical" I do not mean "stingy" or "penny-pinching". Economic and all its forms come from two Greek words:-oikos-house and nomos-law. The law of the house, properly built on a proper foundation. It means something that is sound. We always heard that the 350 acres cost \$7,000 about 1873 when seven children had arrived and there were seven more to come. Mr. Russ Clay, father of Alex Clay, loaned father the money he needed to pay all in cash. Of course, 8% was the rate of interest, we never had to pay compound interest I am sure. This was all paid and the lender never complained. That was the policy and practice of this home— Don't make promises we can't keep, and be sure to keep them. I stayed home from school for four weeks after father's death to settle up every thing and there were no debts to be paid, rather, a little cash on hand for some animals we sold.

Paint Rock Valley— above Princeton

When I was thirty-two years old a young man told me this story at Birmingham.

"I was working in a store at Gurley, Alabama. A young farmer from upper Paint Rock Valley was in the store and when his bill was footed up he was a little short of cash. Would the store credit him for the balance? I went to the boss "can we credit this farmer?" "Yes. Wrap up the store if he wants it. People who live above Princeton pay their debts."

This really happened. We had little money in those days, but we were far from starvation. We needed more good reading matter, but isn't that always true?

Before getting too far into the matter of "One Man's Education" let us look at the situation when this writer was born, that is, say, September 1881. Amanda was past sixteen. Virgil in another month will be fifteen, and Laura is thirteen and a half. John Bouldin had been a teacher, but he is now too busy with immediate duties. But we can't fail to see what he was thinking about. He must have had something to do with the coming of Fleet Reid from Tennessee to Paint Rock Valley, and the coming of Miss Gate Johnson from Madison County to the same valley.

When I was grown Gallatin Johnson told me this story. A young man showed up who wanted to teach. The community needed a teacher. Someone, maybe a school trustee, said to the young man "Go and see Mr. John Bouldin and let him give you an examination." When he went Mr. Bouldin said "young man, can you prove that the square of the hypotenuse of a right triangle is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides?" The young man said he could and proceeded with such means as were at hand, to prove the proposition. Then he was told "young man, you can teach", and it seems that he did.

But the need for good teachers was keenly felt. Probably it was late summer 1881 when father took the three oldest children, mentioned above maybe in a wagon pulled by oxen, or possible by horses, and started toward Spencer on top of Cumberland Mountain in VanBuren County, Tennessee. Part of the trip may have been taken by rail, we cannot now tell. But when I visited Burritt College at Spencer, Tennessee in the summer of 1937, I was shown a book with names of students who had entered the school in the early eighty's and the first names were Amanda Bouldin, Virgil Bouldin and Laura Bouldin. I was told that the school had experienced a fire about that time and the old record books were destroyed.

Burritt College was founded in 1848, apparently by people who had been stirred by the great Alexander Campbell. John Bouldin had been a student there perhaps in the school's earliest years, and after thirty years had past took his three oldest children a good one hundred miles and entered them in the school where he remembered there were some good teachers. He kept on this trail to the end of his life as we expect (D. V.) our story to continue to show.

The cold north room upstairs. The old house, behind the two big cedar trees that were set there more than ~~forty~~⁷⁰ years ago by the four youngest boys among us—a house built almost entirely of yellow poplar produced on the farm—still stands and could offer some suggestions to builders of homes for large families of boys and girls.

The main south room with a stone chimney was always the living room, for the family, and here was always a good fire with wood in the winter time, and in fact there were coals of fire in that fire place almost the whole year. The big bed for father and mother was west of the fire place, or in the South-West corner of the room which was about eighteen feet square. There was sometimes another double bed in the Northwest corner of that room, if any boy were sick or if there were only two boys left at home.

But the girls' room was just over the living room, and there a special stairway for the girls only in the Northeast corner of this big room. There being no door at this stairway which turned at the corner ~~and~~ so that ^{the} upstairs room was almost as warm as the living-room itself, with no entrance except from the living room. Wasn't that nice for the girls? They had two double beds always in that room, and sometimes there were three for we sometimes had girl boarders who stayed there to go to school at the Bouldin school house. I remember that they sometimes paid two dollars a month each for their board.

Miss Gertrude Collins stayed in that room in 1897 when she taught five months for \$99 and did not have to pay for her board. (That year she taught me geometry.)

Now we get around to the cold north room upstairs. Let us say it is about seventeen feet square, as the house, being one and a half stories high drew in the walls on the East and the West about one foot to make it possible to have a some what higher ceiling. Still it usually had three double beds for six boys or for some of the boys and some hired men or boarders.

The stairway to the boys room went up in the Northeast corner of the hallway, which itself was about ten by eighteen feet in size. There was a stone chimney at the north end of the "parlor," but usually there was a fire there only occasionally.

The reader can imagine how cold the boys' room would be on cold winter nights. But I do not recall any complaining on the part of the boys, and I do not remember that any illness was ever said to have been caused by sleeping in a cold room. What boy could complain when he had five or six older brothers who did not complain? We remember that those four-posters were corded with strong cotton ropes and on this was^a straw bed and on top of that a feather bed, and then blankets and quilts as long as we called for more "cover