

EARLY EXPEDITIONS

When I first saw a railway train.

It was "three weeks before Christmas," and as good a guess as any would be 1888 when Benjamin Franklin Bouldin would have been eighteen and this writer seven. The trip was to Huntland, Tennessee a distance of eighteen miles north and west of our home. The trip was usually made in a two-horse wagon once or more each year. Huntland or Bean's Creek, Tennessee was the nearest railroad station to our home.

From early times there were flour mills on Elk River near Huntland and it was an old custom of our family to take our own wheat to one of these mills and have it ground into flour. These mills were run by water-power. We would get 33 or 35 pounds of flour and 10 pounds of bran for each bushel of wheat, and the bran was fed to the cows.

The garner or granary for the wheat raised on the farm was one of the landmarks about the home. It was well built of good yellow poplar lumber, was pretty sure to keep the wheat dry and safe from the rats, and would hold 100 bushels or more. The building stood on its own legs and was located well removed from other buildings.

The Trip. Over the poor roads of those days, with a pair of mules a trip of thirty-six miles could not be made in daylight of one short day. So brother Frank and I took off in the afternoon and stopped with a cousin about ten miles from home. I well remember the cousin's voice on that long winter night.

"Have you slept enough"? was what I heard and we were soon at the table and on the way ahead of the sun.

We reached Huntland and the most I remember is the long row of stores, mostly built of brick, and the railroad in front of the stores. By and by a train stopped at the station and I saw it as best I could, though the station building was between me and the train, and of course in the family when the story was told they usually got me "behind a house" and if I had put myself there!

But those were grand days anyhow.

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The First Sight of Scottsboro.

Then I must have been ten years old or a little more, for brother Frank was a college student, and he was eleven years older than I.

My mother and I made the trip on horseback, on two horses, as I remember. It was about twenty-five miles and more than half the way was on Cumberland Mountain.

It must have been in the early autumn as the weather was mild and fine. Mother must have known the way, for we seemed to have gone without making any inquiry to the home on the north side of the railroad: the home of Colonel Alexander Snodgrass who had married a Miss Hill, a relative of my father. No doubt Colonel Alexander had been a colonel in the Civil War, and was now postmaster at Scottsboro. We were announced by a servant who told the lady of the house that it was a woman and a boy "that looked like Tom". Tom, three years older than I, must have visited the home at an earlier time.

Frank King, a grand-son of Colonel Alexander, who was living with his widowed mother in the home, was barely big enough to go to school. At the time of the First World War, Frank King an honor graduate of the Naval Academy at Annapolis, went down by choice with his ship which was sweeping mines in the North Sea, near England.

We must have stayed two nights in Scottsboro, for we stopped at Colonel Alexander's the first night and one night, stayed with brother Frank who was boarding with Judge Coulson in the house that still stands just ^{north} west of Lee Highway on Market Street and is now the home of Albert Proctor (1961).

Scottsboro College (1892)

No doubt this ten or eleven year old was escorted to the college by the elder brother Benjamin Franklin Bouldin. At that time the class-room building stood where the main building of the High School now stands; looking down on Scott Street. The chapel was east of the class-room building and was the study hall as well as chapel and this brick building, with the windows that looked like church windows was the building called the "Brick Church building

by Keⁿⁿner and others, it may be taken for granted. It was erected in the early 1870's for what seems to have been use by any and all churches and not exclusively by the church of any particular denomination. It was finally demolished and removed about 1860 to make room for new High School buildings.

Dr. Baerecky.

If one wonders why and how from 1889-1893 Scottsboro could have had a school that could properly be called a college and could grant Bachelor of Science degrees to its graduates, there must be a number of things that came together rather remarkable. Winchester, Tennessee, "loaned" to Scottsboro for this period Professor J. M. Bledsoe who would be an out-standing educator anywhere at any time.

Dr. Baereky, recently come from Holland was a great teacher of modern languages, science and mathematics. He moved on to Florida and taught at Stetson University. Scottsboro had an eloquent and ambitious young preacher, Rev. W. R. Ivey. But what can not be so easily stated, is no doubt the fact that a number of farmers who had large families and a fair income for the time had an unusual interest in education and were willing to join together in providing a guarantee of economic stability for an educational institution.

This was my first visit to an institution of the rank of college and the recollection is very clear as to Professor Bledsoe with his erect form, his black whiskers and his usual black suit presiding at the morning service in the big chapel. The impression of Miss Jayne in the reading class and English lesson with a large class of boys and girls about my age seems now almost as clear as if it were yesterday, instead of almost seventy years ago. Dr. Baereky's class was I guess in higher mathematics and brother Frank was in the class, which was held in a room upstairs overlooking Scott Street.

If this trip was planned and carried out because of our mother's interest in brother Frank's senior year in college, or if I was taken on this visit to the county seat for what it would be worth in my future life and education in any case this memory is a grateful memory.

months' school the boys probably had to be out some days when corn was to be gathered. Turn the hogs into the corn fields in August—and in November they will be fat. That gave us a good many extra days in school.

Every teacher was God-fearing. That was practically true. Every teacher should know some Algebra and Geometry. That was almost an unwritten law. In other words almost every teacher left us something worth while. And we had not time and money and a good chance to form bad habits.

If we younger ones seemed to have a hard time, there were some advantages. The older ones would sometimes leave a book at home for us to read, or subscribed for a newspaper or a magazine for family use. They would bring school mates home with them and we could hear their conversations. Now and then great teachers would come to see us, and not a few preachers came—men with considerable education.

When the last of us got down to one or two at home—it was lonsome compared with former days but it was still the good old home!

Away to School; Scottsboro, Autumn 1899

Tom, three years older than I went to Howard College at Birmingham in the fall of 1897 and spent the full year there, till June 1898. In the spring of 1898 the Spanish-American war broke out and brother G. having had military training when in school at Scottsboro was promptly chosen First Lieutenant in Company I, Second Alabama Regiment of Volunteers. Brother Virgil though, older than G., and a lawyer for several years at Scottsboro enrolled as a private in the same company and regiment.

Since G. was in charge of a large farm on Mud Creek near Hollywood, Alabama and as a crop was already under way and a number of hands were employed, G. came home and said to brother Jim he would give him \$20 a month to take charge of the farming operations while he must be away. Jim agreed and had to give up the crop he had pitched on the old home place. So Bun who was twelve and I who was ¹⁶ ~~ten~~ were the entire working force left. We hired one or two boys and managed to finish the crop.

During the fall of 1899—1900 we had a fine fall in a good way, and

After Mr. Bledsoe went back to Winchester and Dr. Baereky went to Florida, my sister Bettie and also Mattie continued in the Scottsboro School for some time, but the financial difficulties must have been too great and it was decided that these two sisters should finish their schooling at Winchester where the oldest brother Virgil had taken B. Sc. in 1886 and several other brothers and sisters had attended school before the school at Scottsboro had undertaken to be a college.

It happened with me that my first visit to Winchester as the first to Scottsboro, took place because members of the family were in school at Winchester.

Bettie and Mattie had changed from Scottsboro to Winchester after some experience of teaching.

The two oldest sisters were conscientious school teachers. Neither was a college graduate, but both took their education seriously. Amanda married at twenty-two, and at thirty went home to heaven leaving four children who now have a host of descendents.

Laura was not physically strong and perhaps that is why she remained single till she was forty-six. But in spite of poor health she was one of the best teachers of her generation.

Eliza was the first of the girls to get a college degree, when she was barely twenty, and ranked, according to Dr. Baereky, number one in mathematics among those he taught at Scottsboro.

Eliza too was a teacher until her marriage in 1894. Her son, Bouldin Mothershead of Harlingen, Texas, now sixty-five is a chartered accountant of high rank in the U.S.A.

But to return to Bettie and Mattie the last of the girls to go to college.

At last in ¹⁸⁹⁷ ~~the mid-90's~~ they are to get their diplomas at Winchester—Mr. R.A. Clark principal and Mr. J.M. Bledsoe teacher of classic languages.

Again this scribe is innocent of any knowledge of whatever consultation took place in the family. (I guess the parents were never present at the graduation of any of their children). (There was a reason!)

Laura was at home and she and I went to the graduation. It was in June of course, just at the busy time for farmers. And what was the stage of our crops I have no recollection. To Huntland in a wagon of course, and the rest of the way by train. Where did we leave the team at Huntland? They were care for like all the details, and my mind recalls none of them, except that Laura bought me a new neck-tie in Winchester.

But the graduation scene stands out in my mind. Bettie and Mattie were on the platform with the other graduates. The address was made by a former graduate the Rev. John Royal Harris. His text was Jer. 8:20 "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Interpretation: We often don't get what we expect in this world.

At an evening meeting two business men of Winchester sang a duet "David and Goliath". A redheaded man, a Mr. Hall I think, sang the part of David, and he was not as large as the other man. The duet was such a success that the audience kept cheering hoping for an encore. After a few moments someone came forward and said "As far as all history records, there was only one David and Goliath."

Another cheer.

Meanwhile----

I cannot hope to go away to school till I am near my eighteenth birthday. The older children came thick and fast—seven children in less than ten years—and they all lived—and all wanted an education—Mother was twenty-one when she was married and father was nearly thirty-six. Father was fifty-three when his first child was old enough to go away to school. Bunyan was not yet eighteen when father was seventy-five and near the end of his pilgrimage on earth.

But the "vision" had not failed. There was still the plan to send all the children to school as much as possible.

How to prepare? That was discussed very little. If there was a three-month's school we tried to be there every day ~~is~~ possible. If there was ~~a~~ five

Perhaps the fall of ninety-seven was the first fall in a good many years that no one from that home went away to school. Jim came home before the end of the year and Tom I believe had began to work with G. before another winter came on. Already Tom had determined to study medicine but the winter of 1899-1900 was his first year as a medical student, and he was at Vanderbilt in Nashville, Tennessee. He took the second year at Sewanee in the summer of 1900, went to Atlanta that fall to the Atlantic College of Physicians and Surgeons and got his degree of M.D. there at the beginning of summer in 1901, having been in school only eleven months for the three years course. He had had typhoid fever at Atlanta and stayed in the Grady Hospital for three months of his senior year.

Scottsboro, August 1899

Virgil had been practicing law at Scottsborobabout ten years. He had early become a partner of W.L. Martin, the father of Tom and Logan Martin who at a later time would be well known lawyers and prosperous leaders of Alabama Power Company.

Mr. Martin had become Attorney-General of Alabama and in 1899 was living in Montgomery. Virgil had taken over the Martin home at the corner of Laural and Scott Streets. It was a one-story cottage and has since been changed to a two-story house and in 1961 is the residence of Circuit Judge John Snodgrass. It was a very large lot then reaching to what is now Martin Street.

My memory does not recall much of what happened before getting there, but has a lively picture of the next day of two. Virgil had married Miss Irene Jacoway in June 1895. Lizzie was an active and wide-awake three-year old, John was nearly a month old.

It was a new experience to live in town, and to live in Scottsboro, which had been the seat of the county government for thirty years already was a valuable experience to one approaching manhood. Bellefonte several miles to the East of Scottsboro had been the county seat until after the Civil war, had lost its courthouse by fire and it had been left off the railroad when the railroad was built in the 1850's.

My Uncle William Bouldin was a lawyer at Bellefonte until he was killed at Fort Donaldson in 1862.

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If it is not too late to say so, and it should not ever be too late, let it be recorded here that there still is in my bosom a deep sense of indebtedness and gratitude for having been made a member of one of the town's best families and introduced to so many of the town's most important people at the time of passing the eighteenth birthday. To feed two fattening hogs out of the corn crib and to feed my brother's buggy horse are about all I remember to have had as daily chores in return for my room and board and the fellowship of the family.

The school had three teachers—Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Smythe and a young man whom I remember as Mr. Thomasson. Of course things had changed greatly since the days ten years before, but I had a good deal of confidence in my teachers and the half-year was gone too quickly. Some of the school mates are well remembered: The oldest student I guess was Elmore Kennamer, a Spanish-American war veteran, who was later a Federal Judge in Oklahoma for many years and whose name will be found in Who's Who in America, Vol. for 1942-43. Elmore who was young and rather small felt very grateful to my two older brothers for kindness shown and help extended to him during the war and that may have had something to do with his choice of me as a buddy during those school days.

Though only eighteen, I must ^{have} ~~of~~ been of fairly good height because when called upon to take a part in a play given by the school and needing a soldier's uniform I was able to borrow a nice uniform from Mr. Fred ~~Am~~ who was, as I remember, a second Lieutenant in Company I Second Alabama Regiment.

Two things especially stand out in my memory:—

The Scottsboro Citizen, published every Thursday by James Armstrong came out one week with the brief announcement "George Bouldin is ill with measles." Just about the time that I was able to be up and to eat something besides "turnip-greens with vinegar" my mother walked in. She was fifty-six at the time.

Lawyers were lawyers then as now, but some of them had to keep busy to make a living. As the cold weather came on my sister-in-law took her two babies to Arkansas to visit her old home. My brother had some extra work to do in the long evenings by the fire. He had been asked to revise the Code of Alabama. It takes two: one to read a copy and one to correct. We put in a good many hours at that.

As the year 1899 drew to a close, the town found itself in the midst of an argument: When was the nineteenth century to close? Was that year to be the last year of that century?

How does it seem now to bring up such a question?

At first all seemed to be agreed: 1899 was of course to be the last year of that century. If there was anyone who held a different opinion he seemed to be keeping quiet. Then when the end of the year drew near suddenly it sounded as if everyone had changed his opinion: 1900 would still be in the nineteenth century.

How this all happened was never explained fully to us. First, someone said the German Emperor said the twentieth century would begin January 1, 1901. A few days later everybody seemed to be agreed that 1900 would be in the nineteenth century. I quoted to a merchant that a prominent man in Scottsboro was still of the opinion that the twentieth century would be with us in a few days. "He's no prayerbook" said the merchant.

What can a mere school boy do? Go around to the drug store. Just about where the Hodges Drug store is was a fairly new, a second, drug-store in December 1899. The head man in the store said he had spent some years in the regular army. He said the calender was like a military road. The concrete marker at the starting point had the figure "1" on both sides of it. The ~~first~~^{next} mile-post had "1" on the first side and "2" on the second. Then we gave up the argument.

Will that argument be repeated in 1999?

Scottsboro was then round—its radius was $5/8$ of a mile with the court house as the center of the circle. The population was moving on toward 1,000 people

But sometimes a really big man would come to town.

Senator John T. Morgan was one. We were allowed to hear his speech at the Court House. I can recall how he looked and a good deal of what he said. He had spent much of his life in the senate advocating "The Nicaragua Canal."

It was to be only a few years till President Theodore Roosevelt would have the opportunity to recognize the independence of Panama and dig the canal on the Isthmus of Panama.

I soon found that I should have to stay at home "after Christmas" and make a crop. So my Scottsboro school days had to come to a close. But I shall look forward to going to school at Winchester for a few months of the nineteenth century!