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Ralph Lamar Webb - News Clipping from Cleveland County Early Days column

Mamie Jones

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LIFE**In Cleveland County's Early Days**

By MAMIE JONES



(Photo Courtesy of Mrs. Bloom Kendall)

Happy picnickers at a Methodist Sunday school picnic at Thermal City in 1897, half of whom were courting couples, are shown above. Reading from left to right, standing are: Ben Kendall, Bessie Riviere, Clyde R. Hey, May Wells, Ralph Webb, Johnnie Wray, Kate Webb, and Ladd Eskridge. Seated: Bloom Kendall, Ethel Gaffney, Salile Whisnant, Ed Blanton, Mabel Smith, A. C. Wray, Sallie Lee, Clara Martin, and John Wells.

Look at those long-sleeved, high-necked blouses the women were wearing in mid-July! In those days a lady always wore her hat on the street.

MEMORIES OF THE 1890's

Sunday school picnics in the summertime! Each year, usually in July, the Methodists (and I suppose the Baptists and Presbyterians) arranged an all-day picnic for the members of their church schools. Of course the older folks had to go along to take dinner and look after the children. Sometimes these gatherings were held at Patterson's Sulphur Springs, but nearly always at Cleveland Springs.

I went with the Methodists who conveyed the children to the picnic in big horse-drawn carry-all wagons, half filled with straw. The road to Cleveland Springs was not then the smooth stretch of pavement it is today. There were (and are) two small streams—call them branches if you prefer—between the church and Cleveland Springs, and there was no bridge over either of them. It required nearly two hours for a team of horses to pull a heavily-loaded wagon over the rutty road and up the high hills. Sometimes the wagon driver would ask the children to get out and walk up the hill.

Mr. and Mrs. Billy Miller and Miss Amanda Lee, who owned and operated the Cleveland Springs hotel at that time, were very gracious to the visitors. If the children did not care to drink the famous white sulphur water (with the funny odor) there were half dozen other springs from which they could drink, including lithia, iron, freestone, and red sulphur (iodin).

EXCURSIONS TO THERMAL CITY

On two occasions the Methodists chartered a train and the Sunday

school members and others went to Thermal City. It was at one of these picnics that the above picture was made. Mr. and Mrs. Kit Carpenter who operated the Thermal City hotel made Shelby visitors welcome.

Kate Crowder and Inez Babington tell me that when coming home from one of these picnics the passengers were

frightened when they realized the train was going around those mountain curves at a (then) terrific rate of speed, and that the cars were rocking from side to side.

John D. Lineberger and some of the other Methodist leaders went to the engineer's cab to protest the

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