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**LOCAL CYCLISTS OF THE MID 'NINETIES**—  
 Photographed in 1896 or '97, the young cyclists  
 above were posing in what was then the yard  
 of Major Sam Greene, on the corner of East

Graham and South LaFayette streets. They are  
 identified in the account below. (Photo courtesy  
 of Mrs. Everett B. Lattimore).

**LIFE**

*Aug 10 - 1950*

**In Cleveland County's Early Days**

By **MAMIE JONES**

**SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND  
 SONGS OF THE 1890's**

As I have heretofore written, the first bicycles were used in Shelby in the early 1880's. By the mid 'nineties women were using them, too, and bicycle parties were definitely a part of the town's social activities.

The above picture was made about 1896 or 1897. The scene is the yard of what was then the home of Maj. Sam Greene, on the corner of East Graham and South LaFayette streets. This is the side yard, facing Graham street, near the present City Hall. Pictured in the above group are: Standing, Annie Wood, of Gaffney, who mar-

ried Mr. Butler; Paul Webb, who married Alma McBrayer; Hattie Taylor, who never married; Fonz Borders, who married Catherine Beauchamp. Those seated are: Joe L. Suttle, who married May Walker; Cora Barnett, who married C. Mills Lattimore; Elsie Hall, who married Sims Rogers; and George Blanton, who married Ida Wood. Note how much higher these bicycles are than those in use today.

**DIVIDED SKIRTS  
 SCANDALIZED 'EM**

These ladies were dressed — and low! for this picture. A very few years later women were wearing divided skirts for bicycling. Of

course the men protested loudly about women riding astride. Some conventional ladies turned their heads the other way when a female bicycle rider wearing divided skirts rode by. One of the famous paraphrased quotations of the day was, "Of all wise words of tongue or pen, the wisest are these, leave pants for men". With voluminous skirts such as those in the picture, there certainly was no showing of limbs. (Ladies did not have legs.)

Please notice the leg o'mutton sleeves, and the high collars the women are wearing.

## LIFE

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**SUMMERTIME STRAW RIDES**

With the exception of bicycle parties, probably the most popular social activity of the young people in the summertime in the 1890's was a straw ride and picnic supper. The groups went in four-horse wagons half filled with straw (not hay).

Mrs. Inez Babington recalls a straw ride one Easter Monday when a dozen boys and girls set out for a picnic at Patterson Springs. About the time they were going up still-house hill they were caught in a terrific shower of rain. They stopped at a farmhouse, and their hosts very graciously made a big fire in the parlour to dry out their soaking wet clothes.

During the Cleveland panic in the mid 'nineties, men's suits were frequently made of inferior materials, and sometimes sold for as little as \$5.00 to \$7.00 each. That Easter Monday afternoon, when the young gentlemen's pants began to dry out by the hot fire, they also began to draw up. When the party was ready to leave, some of the boys looked down and saw to their humiliation and chagrin that their cheap pants had shrunk so much that their white "unmentionables" were showing above their shoetops.

**DANCED AND GOT HUSBANDS**

From time beyond memory people have danced. We read in the Bible (in the last chapter of the book of Judges) how the daughters of Shiloh danced and got themselves husbands. But in the early days of Shelby dancing was considered a heinous sin.

A contemporary of my mother's told me that when she was about 15 or 16 years old she, with a group of young boys and girls, danced one evening — probably the square dance and the Virginia reel. She said that the following Sunday the preacher called her up before the congregation, made her confess that because she had danced she was a great sinner, and lectured her severely. As a rule, the churches expelled from fellowship those members who danced. Sometimes, however, if they would say they were sorry, they were let off with a lecture.

**INSANE HEALED BY DANCING**

Dr. H. T. Hudson, a great Methodist preacher and writer of more than sixty years ago, lived in Shelby for a long time. About 1890, he became mentally ill, and was confined in the State Hospital for the Insane at Morganton. When he was healed and came home he told how they had regular dances at the Hospital for the patients. He said Dr. Murphy, head of the Hospital, told him that he had cured as many mentally ill patients with dancing as with medicine. Dr. Hudson's comment was: "Solomon says there is a time for everything. I suppose the time to dance is when a person goes crazy."

Despite disapproval of preachers and elders, the young folks did dance. I have before me a note, written in fancy script, dated June 28th, 1852, which reads: "Miss L. Lattimore, The Pleasure of Your Company is Respectfully Solicited on Thursday evening at the Hotel at 6 o'clock, 1st July, 1852, at a Cotillon Party. Managers: D. A. Hudson, A. W. Burton, H. D. K. Cabiniss, A. I. Davidson."

Not all the young dancing set of the community were invited to Cotillon parties. And lacking any other place to dance, we find that a hundred years ago they sometimes slipped into the newly built Court House at night, and danced in its wide halls to the music of a fiddle, with only a flickering candle for light. Evidently this intrusion on County property irked the Justices who presided over the County Court, and in the summer of 1850 they issued a very emphatic order to the Sheriff to buy a strong lock for the Court House door and keep it securely locked at night to keep out dancing parties. (Joseph Carroll was Sheriff in 1850.)

In later years, dances were held at Cleveland Springs, Patterson Springs, and McBrayer Springs. At each of these watering places there was a big ball room for dancing. In the 1890's, music for these dances was frequently furnished by the Marks boys. These Marks boys were the sons of Sam

Marks, and the grandsons of F. L. (Fed) Hoke, each of whom had quite a reputation as a fiddler. Fred Marks and Bob Marks each played a violin. Their younger brother, Sam, played the bass violin. Carl Peterson usually played their piano accompaniment. Sometimes the Marks orchestra had an engagement at Green Park hotel at Blowing Rock for the summer. Later the family moved to Montana.

Within the last few years the clergy and elders and deacons and stewards are recognizing the square dance and Virginia reel and many other dances as good wholesome exercise to music. Now-a-days, the young people at some of the Church assemblies (in the summertime) engage in these dances in their recreation halls, and call them folk dances, with the approval of the church leaders.

**MUSIC OF THE 1890's**

I do not know music, but I recall two of the popular waltzes the Marks band played were: "Over the Waves" and "Washington Post".

Among the songs I recall hearing in the '90's are: "Sweet Marie, come to me . . . your soul so pure and sweet makes my happiness complete"; "Two little girls in blue . . . they were sisters, we were brothers and learned to love the two"; "Sweet bunch of daisies fresh from the dell, kiss me once darling, daisies won't tell"; "Just because she made them goo-goo eyes, he thought he'd won a home and copped a prize. She's the best that is"; "The hours I spend with thee, dear heart, are as a string of pearls to me . . . My rosary, my rosary"; "My pure young soul for an old man's gold, I'm a bird in a gilded cage"; "My Wild Irish Rose, the sweetest flower that grows"; "For you know I love you best of all, be my man, or I'll have no man at all. There'll be a hot time in the old town tonight"; "O, don't you remember sweet Alice, Ben Bolt, sweet Alice whose eyes were so brown"; "After the ball is over, . . . many a heart is breaking . . . Many the hopes that have vanished, after the ball"; "Mamie, come kiss your honey boy, while the stars do shine"; "Beautiful Daisy Bell, Daisy, give me your answer do, . . . It won't be a stylish marriage, . . . but you'll look sweet on the seat of a bicycle built for two"; "Tell me, pretty lady, are there any more at home like you" (from Flora Dora); two songs of the Spanish-American War, "One kissed a ringlet of thin grey hair, one kissed a lock of brown . . . just as the sun went down"; and "Just break the news to Mother, she knows how well I love her". There were several songs of an earlier day that remained popular: "O, dem golden slippers I'se a gwine to wear"; and "When you and I were young Maggie".

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