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In Cleveland County's Early Days

By MAMIE JONES

WOMEN I HAVE KNOWN

"Service to others is the rent we pay for the space we occupy on this Earth."

In writing of the builders of Cleveland county, I would be derelict in my duty should I fail to mention the women, as home-makers and neighbors. Today, I send my thoughts down memory's lane to recall a few of those outstanding women I knew many years ago, whom I have not heretofore talked about.

None of the women I shall mention performed any spectacular feat; they did not get themselves elected to any political office. Most of them were just mothers and home-makers who, through unobtrusive neighborliness and kindness lent a helping hand to others, and paid their rent on this Earth many times over.

Before the turn of the Century there were few trained (registered) nurses, and no local funeral parlours where the dead could be taken and prepared for burial. When there was sickness in a home the neighbors felt it their duty to go to the aid of the afflicted family and help with the nursing. When there was a death they gave their services to prepare the dead for burial.

Among those especially gifted in nursing, and in "laying out" the dead was Mrs. Sarah (T. P.) Alexander. Another who was fre-

quently asked to be on hand to welcome the stork and help care for the mother and new baby was Mrs. Ben (Granny) Babington.

My first acquaintance with Mrs. Adeline Hamrick was when she and her husband, Sheriff N. M. Hamrick, and their family lived at the Jail, just across the street from our home. Mrs. Hamrick, even as a young girl, was a competent manager. She helped run the family farm while her father, Dr. G. G. Holland, was serving in the Confederate Army, and wrote many letters for illiterate women whose husbands were fighting with the Confederate Army for State's Rights.

CHURCH HAS INCOME

Today, St. Mary's Catholic church has an excellent income from the lease of Glenn's Service Station, located at the convergence of E. Suttle and E. Marion streets, due to the gift of the Hall family. Mrs. Emily Hall Ray and her son, Warren V. Hall. Nearly sixty years ago they bought this lot for the Catholics, hoping that some day a Catholic church might be built on it. Instead, Catholic funds were used to build a filling station — a most profitable investment — and the income therefrom is used toward maintaining St. Mary's rectory, and probably other church expenses.

The Halls, who were Yankees, came here from New York about 1880. After Mr. Hall's death Mrs.

Hall married Clayte Ray. She and her two daughters, Elsie and May were charming persons. Her mother, Mrs. Thompkins, operated a small millinery shop here in the late 1880's and early 1890's. They lived in a big white house where Dr. Hunter's clinic now stands.

Do they still use peacocks for ornamentation in yards of country homes as they used to? I recall that Mrs. Lena Putnam Wilson, usually called "Aunt Leny", used to make such handsome fans and fly-minders out of peacock feathers. They were like those fans one sees in Oriental scenes in the movies.

The first local telephone exchange was set up by Will Shuford in 1895, over what is now Cohen's store on LaFayette street. Among the first operators were Misses Luna and John Young and Miss Hattie Durham. "Miss Hattie" continued with the telephone company for many years, until she was pensioned by Southern Bell. She often remarked that in those early days she had plenty of time to listen to private telephone conversations and that, had she revealed the secrets she overheard, she could have started a local war. But she paid her rent in service to others by not talking about other people's affairs.

NONAGENARIANS

To live to be past ninety years

(See LIFE page eleven).