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In Cleveland County's Early Days

By MAMIE JONES

OUTSTANDING WOMEN OF CLEVELAND COUNTY

Continuing our discussion of a few of the many interesting women of the County:

SALLIE HOMESLEY was the daughter of one of the town's prominent families. And she was the town's daredevil. Though in all probability she would be considered quite tame now. Standards have changed greatly since the eighties. (Certainly Sallie would not have appeared in public with a bare midriff).

She lived across the street from the hotel. One Sunday afternoon Mr. Reese Roark—Senator Hoey's grandpa—left the hotel and passed

by the Homesleys' going home. When he reached home he was quite indignant, and said to his wife: "I just passed Ab Homesley's. And what do you think that girl, Sallie, is doing now? I don't know where she will land! We heard her at the Inn before I left, and we didn't know what to think." His wife said "What was Sallie doing?" He replied: "She was playing the piano! She was playing the piano on Sunday! When I passed she was playing 'In the Sweet Bye and Bye.' But this is Sunday!"

Sacred organ music on Sunday would have been all right; but the piano was for wicked dancing.

There is another story about Sal-

lie Homesley:

In 1856, we were a defeated people and our conquerors were over us. There was a Yankee Army of Occupation in Shelby. The soldiers loafed on the Courthouse and sang Yankee songs, which enraged and humiliated our returned Confederate soldiers, but they dared not retaliate.

Sallie dared! She lived but a stone's throw from the Square (in the recently demolished house below the Dixie Home store). She had her piano brought out on the front porch, and sang Southern songs loud and long all day and well into the

night.

One of the Yankees became so indignant that he offered her an unmentionable insult. (It is probable he was one of the many German soldiers quartered here). Later he died, and in defiance of all Yankee soldiers who dared insult Southern women, she danced on his grave, in Sunset cemetery.

LADIES WORE CAPS

In the 19th century—or at least until the eighties—it was the generally accepted doctrine that a girl became an old maid at 25; was withered and ready for a retreat at thirty; and fit only for the bone-yard at 35, at which age she was supposed to wear a cap.

Quote from Miss Leslie's *Behavior Book of 1853*: "Most American ladies beyond the age of 35 look better in caps than without them, even if their hair shows no signs of middle age. A tasteful and simply elegant cap, one with tabs or broad strings, imparts a grace and softness to a faded face, and renders less conspicuous, the inroads of time. A decidedly old lady, persisting in going with her head uncovered, is a pitiable object. Gray hair to a woman gives a masculine aspect—especially if worn without a cap."

It might be well to remember that the average life span at that time was from 28 to 33 years.

DON'T TALK ABOUT SEX

In those days, children thought beads were found in hollow logs and were brought to the house by a friend. Young girls were not "spoken to" by their mothers about sex. Sex! Nice people in the south

didn't have it! But even though they may not have had it in the south, other parts of the country were keenly conscious of it.

An English book on *Etiquette* written in 1865, said: "The perfect hostess will see to it that the works of male and female authors be properly separated on her bookshelves. Their proximity — unless they happen to be married—should not be tolerated." Someone sarcastically suggested that perhaps the division of living creatures into male and female was a vulgar mistake.

LILLIAN HOMESLEY, who later married Mr. Bott, was the daughter of Steve and Mollie Homesley. All the Homesleys were musical. She writes me: "I have had a colorful life and some little success as a singer. To answer your questions: I was abroad as a student and singer before the first World War—Berlin, London and Paris, for nearly four years. I was with the Y.M.C.A. all during the war as a singer. Then, with the Army of Occupation in Coblenz in 1922 for a year." She sang before the nobility of England specializing in Southern songs and ballads. Mrs. Bott adds in her letter that her brother, Will Homesley, was also quite successful as a musician. He conducted an orchestra, and was the author of a number of a musical compositions. Mrs. Bott now lives in Sparta, North Carolina.

MINNIE EDDINS, who married Josh Roberts, was also a successful singer. She made several tours of the state for benevolent purposes, and was referred to by the State papers as "the mocking bird of North Carolina." She was a teacher of music and voice at Shelby Female college for a number of years. Her children were: William J. Rob-

erts, Eddins Roberts, and George Roberts.

MRS. JANE MARKS

A consecrated Christian woman, had a school for children in the 1850's. She charged \$1.00 a month if the pupils were able to pay. Her chief purpose was to influence the children for God. She also conducted a school for young ladies in the 1860's.

Her great grandson, Roland Hamrick, tells me that Mrs. Marks established and taught the first **SUM-MORE MORE MORE** day School in Shelby. This is probably explained by the fact that she was an ardent Methodist, and the first church built in Shelby was the Methodist Meeting House in 1845, located on East Warren Street, just above the present jail, on the lot where now stands the Gulf filling station.

THREE MOTHERS

There are three women whom I shall mention because of the literary prominence attained by their sons. They are:

Hattie Jackson who, before her marriage to Will Blythe, lived on North Washington Street. Her son, **LeGETTE BLYTHE**, wrote *The Bolt*, *Gallilean*, and *Alexandriana*.

Nannie Hamrick who, with her husband, W. J. Cash, lives on West Sumter Street. Her son, **WILBUR J. CASH**, wrote that remarkable book, *The Mind Of The South*.

Martha Gold, who with her husband, J. Jack Hughes, formerly lived at Polkville and later at Grover. Her son, **HATCHER HUGHES**, taught playwriting at Columbia University, and was awarded the Pulitzer prize for his play, "Hell Bent For Heaven." In this play Mr. Hughes wrote about the kind of country people he grew up with right here in Cleveland county.

In a recent story about Susan Twitty (heroine of Graham's Fort) I said that her sons were: Dr. John F. Miller, Andrew C. Miller, Robt. B. Miller, and Wm. H. Miller, all of whom were prominent here in earlier days.

I should have said Susan Twitty married John Miller. That one of their sons was Dr. W. J. T. Miller, a leader in the county in earlier days; that the above mentioned men were his sons, and therefore were Susan Twitty's grandsons.

Later I shall write of other outstanding women.

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