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"THIS OLD BOOK"

The Civil War Diary of
Mrs. Mary Sale Edmondson
Of Phillips County, Arkansas

Edited By

R. P. Baker, Archivist
Arkansas History Commission
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PART IV

PREFACE

The vast majority of Civil War diaries which have come down to this present time are those of the soldier himself. They give a thrilling account of the battlefield, the campfire and the march but usually little else. This diary is different. It is an account of a different kind of battlefield, the home front in the South. But it is no less a story of privation, destruction and bravery.

This is the diary of a very literate southern gentlewoman. It reflects her interests in the welfare of her home, her husband and children, and her Negro slaves. In it is captured the essence of a way of life rapidly being destroyed forever by Yankee Soldiers. Gone were the gracious ways, the leisurely civilization and finally, life itself.

INTRODUCTION

MARY FRANCES SALE EDMONDSON was born November 16, 1816, in Amherst County, Virginia, the eldest of the eight children born to the Reverend Alexan-

der F. and Sarah Crenshaw Sale. In 1821, the family emigrated with a large number of their fellow Virginians to Lawrence County, Alabama, and settled near the county seat of Moulton. Here they made their home for a number of years.

In 1848, Mary's brother, John B., a lawyer by profession and the fifth County Court Judge of Lawrence County, "was seized by a desire to try a new Country" and removed to Aberdeen, Mississippi. It was no doubt through her brother's new friends and acquaintances that Mary met a widower from Pontotoc County, Mississippi, Dr. Albert G. Edmondson. Dr. Edmondson's first wife was Caroline Pinson, and they were the parents of three children: William, Mary E., and Caroline L. The first Mrs. Edmondson died about 1848 or 1849.

Dr. Edmondson and Miss Sale were married in Mississippi on May 23, 1854. Their first child, Alexander, was born April 20, 1855, but died eight days later. Their second child, John Albert, was born on May 23, 1856.

In 1857, Dr. Edmondson, his father-in-law, Alexander Sale, and two of his brothers-in-law, William and Melville Sale, joined the great American move westward. Choosing Phillips County, Arkansas as their new home, they settled northeast of Walnut Corner. Here they bought over one thousand acres of land in the Blackfoot or Central neighborhood, along Spring Creek Road. William named his plantation Grammedi, and the home shared by Dr. Edmondson and the rest of the Sale family was called Holly Grove. Some of the other families which made up this neighborhood were those of: Judge John T. Jones, George R. Johnson, Richard Ford, Thomas and John Gist, Joseph Green, Arthur Robinson, Richard Anselm Blount, Amos Jarman, James Cook, Alexander Graves, Warren and Jack Smizer, Dr. T. R. Welch,

F. H. Dade and David Threlkeld.

On September 20, 1858, Mrs. Edmondson's third child, Sarah Susannah, or Sallie, was born - only to die on June 24, 1860, ironically the same day as the birth of her fourth and last child, Louise Titus, or Lou. Mrs. Edmondson died on February 7, 1865, after several months of illness. Dr. Edmondson died in Phillips County in 1885.

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DIARY

October 29, 1863, Thursday. Dr. started over Big Creek today to try to find a person to whom I could entrust letters to William (her brother) and to my mother--also some clothing to Will. I trust he may be successful. Could not see the man, (J. C.) Shell¹ -- (William H.) Govan² promised to send them.

October 31, Saturday. The last of October. A frost this morning like a snow--lines at Helena closed by (Gen. Napoleon B.) Buford.³

November 1, 1863, Sunday. Another white frost. Dr. rode to Eugennia Scaife⁴ --got a pair of shoes from her for son--This has been a pleasant day to me--Calm in mind and more trustful in feeling. Went to see _____ Lansford, who is quite sick--read many chapters in the Old Testament to my children; Albert delights to hear it read; God grant he may always do so, and that His Holy Spirit may govern (and) guide him in paths of righteousness and peace. At present he gives me much pain by disobedience--I wish I could find out the best way to govern him--the effect of the rod remains so short a time that I wish I had never began its use.

Today Carrie and I, with Mahala, planted some 200 rose slips and bulbs from the Green's. Dr. came late in the evening and went with us to the burial ground ⁵ where I planted White Lilies, Tube roses and a shrub of Tue Box at the head and foot of little Sallies' grave--would that her grandfather and sister Mollie were in the same enclosure-- My dear father selected that place to bury my child--and expressed the wish to be laid by her but alas, both he and my poor Mollie lie hundred of miles away in Louisiana.

November 2, 1863, Monday. Dick came in tonight with a letter for Carrie brought by Percy Green from...someone who had left it there. It proved to be a letter from her aunt Josephine Wilson ⁶ and gave us our first information from our mother Edmondson since the war broke out-- with the exception of a short call Mell made at her house in passing nearly a year ago. Our cousin Jane Kinpatrick (sic) is dead; and Cleveland, and Parson Miller has been killed-- and Hugh Miller also. This letter gives us direct intelligence of our son William, the first we have had since last January. He was well and doing well. It has been a great comfort to hear again from him and (my husband's) mother and our Pototoc (County, Mississippi) friends; (I thank)...God that it is as well with them as it is.

November 3, 1863. The 8th day since our poor Davy died.

November 17, 1863, Tuesday. Dr. drove with Lou and me over to the Robinson's, which was pleasant recreation to us all there. I had been sick since the Sunday before, having been taken with a chill while writing a letter, or (a) note rather, to Will, which was to accompany his clothing by (William R.) Coates. ⁷ I had written

also a long letter to Mell by Mr. (J. W.) Stansel-- mentioning Davy's death--Nov. 16th was my 47th birthday. Oh that God may enable me to spend the residue of my days to His Glory. This was also Essie Blount's ⁸ birthday. The children were invited to tea with her. Lou carried Essie an evergreen to plant in memory of her and my birthdays. They all came home at 8 o'clock--Mr. Jennings (Blount) accompanying them to the gate. Both Albert and Lou enjoyed the little gathering of the children of the neighborhood exceedingly-- and Carrie too was refreshed by it--so dreary is the monotony of our long captivity; we feel under obligations to Mrs. Blount for the occasional diversity she brings about with the birthdays of her little family.

November 18, 1863, Wednesday. Got a note from brother Will most unexpectedly today. It was written in Shreveport Nov. 4th and brought here by Capt. Martin. ⁹

November 19, 1863, Thursday. Doctor started today on a perilous trip for some of the necessities of life. They (Federal troops) have shut us in on all sides--have stopped us--everything but bedding, clothing and house, with a few tools, farming utensils, cows, and hogs. (They) have taken from us the means of supporting ourselves and refuse to let us have anything unless we lie or smuggle (and they) have rendered the latter difficult (and) dangerous. Oh my God protect the husband and father in his laudable endeavor to provide food and clothing for a helpless family--and bring both him and our only dependence for wood and meal-- and two oxen, safely back to us. We have some inklings of encouraging news from beyond the Mississippi--the Yankees are nearly driven from E. Tennessee, but that will not replace the house and other property of my dear Aunt Stringfield which

they have destroyed--nor cousin Frank Butler's either, nor give food, clothing and shelter to his excellent wife and large family of young children. Dick hills up my celery today for a beginning; our wheat is planted also.

November 20, 1863, Friday. Dr. got home this evening in a heavy rain. I was much rejoiced to receive him again from his unsuccessful trip for I had heard the Yankees were out destroying all the salt they could find--and in other ways oppressing the poor helpless citizens. Our prospect for salt is very faint and obscure. I have been busy cutting and sewing--have had some sausage made--have given Jake a new pair of pants and a nice vest, Albert a pair of pants, and Lou two dresses, all since I got well the last time.

November 21, 1863, Saturday. Very cold, Mrs. (Jennie F.) Fraser ¹⁰ came after dark and stayed till next morning.

November 22, 1863, Sunday. A lovely, pleasant Sabbath, after reading in the Bible with the children and talking with them, went up to the (slave) cabin to see Dick--who is not well today--found him with fever--talked with him and Jake awhile and on turning round to leave observed my dear old father's hymn book on the mantle. He had given it to mother months ago not knowing how much I wanted it or how highly I should have prized it on account of the Hymns he had marked all through it. I borrowed it from Dick and hastened in with my treasure, sat down in my room and read with tearful eyes several hymns designated by his well known marks--found one over which he had written with his pencil "read this when I am gone." It was a hymn committing wife and children to God's care--one that he had told me expressed his feelings in regard to us--I could not refrain from a

burst of feeling which greatly distressed my dear little Lou--when his dear fingers marked that hymn, my beloved father was here with us, my dear mother also, and my good daughter Mollie (Mary Elizabeth). Now alas! he is buried in La., Mollie beside him. My darling mother I shall never see again--for it is impossible for her to come to me or for me to go to her. Dear old Diddy is dead and Davy is dead; brothers John and Melville (are) in Georgia with Bragg's retreating army, having doubtless, with our son William, participated in the last dreadful battle--but whether they were all killed or not we may not hear for months! Brother Will is with Kirby Smith, I suppose, and I know not if we shall ever hear from him again. I and my children, and Carrie (Carolina) and her father are here alone, and oh, such a life of dreariness--only bared by some new distress--it would have been difficult at one time for me to conceive of, but amidst it all God has been good to us and though cast down we are not utterly destroyed. Oh, for the guidance of His Holy Spirit in the crisis that we all feel is approaching. Our dread is that our necessities will compel us to take the oath of allegiance to the Lincoln government. It is deeply repugnant to every feeling of our heart, but how else can we get the necessities of life? We are cut off from our own people and almost every means of making our support. I do not yet think I can take an oath to save us from starvation, and utterly disregard it, as many have done--and yet to renounce all that are dear to me on earth--is simply impossible. Oh, heavenly father save us from Sin; Guide us by thy Holy Spirit, and open a way for us--make the path of duty plain, and help us to walk steadily therein, I pray. I heard last week of the death of old Mahala--one of our misguided negroes, who left her comfortable home to die with the Yankees and Freedmen (free Negroes) in town. I presume

she never received my message to come home on certain conditions and I would take care of her. Poor old creature--I suppose it is likely she was never able to come after she was able to do so, and that she died in great desitition. She is the sixth of the family whose death may be laid to our Yankee foe.

November 23, 1863, Monday. All our efforts to procure salt have failed thus far--our hogs are eating up our small supply of corn fast. What shall we do? We were almost overcome by the apparent necessity of our case, and went so far as to make out our bills and prepare to go to town last night. I left my heart (sic) to God in prayer for directions, begging him to save us from (this) sin, ¹¹ and if under the circumstances, with our feelings and sentiments, to take the (loyalty) oath of allegiance to the Lincoln government, he would help us to see it, and open a way for us to get what seemed to us absolutely needful in salt. This morning my dear husband concluded to wait and skimp a little longer in the hope of being saved from so repugnant and perhaps sinful an alternative (as was taking the oath). He has gone now to see what he can learn from others and what he can do. O, may God guide, direct and help him to decide right; our cause looks hopeless indeed to us, yet we know not but it may be in God's power to humble us still farther in the dust before he will lift us out of it, that we may, as a people, become conscious of our sins and repent, forsaking them, or it may be for our unfaithful stewardship (that) we may be cast into outer darkness--Lord keep us from sin and sustain us under chastisement, pity our unworthiness, forgive our willfulness and bring all back to Thee by Thy Holy Spirit.

*

FOOTNOTES

¹Private J. C. Shell, Company "K", Dobbins' 1st Arkansas Cavalry. He enlisted at Helena; age: 36, eyes: gray, hair: red, complexion: fair, height: 5' 11½". Muster Rolls, Dobbins' 1st. Arkansas Cavalry.

²William H. Govan 28 North Carolina
A. R. Govan 21 Tennessee

Household Number 3, 1860 U. S. Census, Big Creek Township, Phillips County, Arkansas.

³Brigadier General Napoleon B. Buford, U. S. A., was the commander of the Eastern Department of Arkansas, headquartered at Helena.

⁴There were several Scaife families in Big Creek Township, Eugennia Scaife has not been identified.

⁵This was the Sale family burial plot, evidently located on the plantation. Family slaves were also buried there.

⁶In Pontotoc County, Mississippi.

⁷He was in Company A, Dobbins' 1st Arkansas Cavalry. Muster Rolls Dobbins' 1st Arkansas Cavalry.

⁸Sarah E. Blount.

⁹Perhaps W. M. Martin.

¹⁰An aunt of F. B. Blount, Carolyn Sale's husband.

F. B. Blount 39 (Husband) North Carolina

Carrie P. Blount	30 (Wife)	North Carolina
Mary E. Blount	3 (Daughter)	Mississippi
Jennie Blount	1 (Daughter)	Arkansas
Sarah E. Blount	58 (Mother)	North Carolina
Jennie F. Frazer	47 (Aunt, divorce)	Virginia

11 That is, the oath of allegiance.

HISTORY OFF THE MAIN ROUTE

by

Annetta Beauchamp

An hour's drive south of Helena on Highway 44 leads to what may be the most isolated spot in the state of Arkansas. A narrow, bumpy, black-top road ends in a cotton field---and here lies the small town of Snow Lake. There are no other roads in or out of this settlement for there is simply no place to go. This 50,000 acre area is bounded on the east by the Mississippi River, on the west and south by the White River, and the Arkansas River is just a little further to the south. There are no ferries or bridges crossing any of these rivers at this point. Yet here in this seldom visited region lies a bit of our state's most interesting history. This was the first measure of land to be sectioned off west of the Mississippi River, and it was here that the first levee west of the Mississippi was built. This levee, called Laconia Circle, remains intact today and runs in an 18 mile circle around several plantations. The people keep it in good condition as it gives them extra protection against the almost yearly threat of flood waters.

When this rich Delta land was opened for settlement from the years 1830 to 1833, settlers were instantly attracted. Much of this part of Arkansas is still too marshy for cultivation, but an intricate bayou system kept this area well drained. Proof of the prosperity enjoyed here lies in the fact that before the Civil War there were fourteen very fine homes built in this territory. Only two of these are left, but architects have estimated

that any of these homes would cost large sums to build today.

As the plantations flourished so did the river trade. Transportation became easier, for as descendants of the first settlers still say, "There was a steamboat on every bend." There were countless packets running the Mississippi, and four packets, the Lucille Nolan, the New Mattie, the John Harbin, and the Eugene left Memphis regularly for their runs down the Mississippi, around Wild Cat Bend, the treacherous spot where the Arkansas empties into the Mississippi, and on up the Arkansas to Little Rock. The Eugene turned over and sank at this bend in 1898.

Some of these riverboats were called "floating palaces" for they were equipped with every known luxury. The prosperous plantation owners were willing to pay for the finest accommodations, and they enjoyed the leisurely trips. There were elegantly prepared meals, and there was plenty of time for dancing, gambling, and visiting with other traveling land-owners.

While the men sold their cotton and transacted other business in Memphis, their wives kept busy in the shops or at the dressmakers and milliners. Many a lady on the trip home had the sad experience of seeing her new bonnet blow into the river and swirl away in the current. One young bride, who suffered greatly from the sultry Arkansas temperatures, always had a large block of ice wrapped in tow-sacks before leaving Memphis. By the time the boat reached Snow Lake, the ice was just a small chunk, but she would hurry home, fix a pitcher of ice water, and sit on her front porch--enjoying this rare treat until the last sliver had melted away.

There is no way to put an exact date on the

Laconia Circle levee. It was built in bits and pieces. A plantation owner would put up a small strip of levee to protect a particularly low field. Then another and another portion was built until a fourteen thousand acre area was almost completely surrounded. Later the Cotton Belt levee was begun and moved down from the north, and the White River levee moved in from the west. In 1896 these two levees met, catching Laconia Circle in their southeast corner---and finally closing its last gap.

There have been six levee breaks in the history of Laconia Circle. The worst was in 1927 when the entire enclosure was under sixteen feet of water---but, in spite of these events, the people here still have the protection of their double levees.

Much has changed in the one hundred forty years since this section of land was pioneered. After the turn of the century the river traffic gradually gave way to the railroad. Now passenger travel had shifted to the automobile. Methods of farming have been up-dated and modernized, and soybeans have pushed cotton aside as the main money crop. Even though the years have brought many changes, a strange thing still happens when you drive over the levee and find yourself inside its high green walls. Within the circle a stillness settles over the land. The air seems quieter, the clouds hover a little closer, and life seems hushed and untroubled. A busy, ruffled world is briefly left behind, and time, for a little while, ticks off in a slower, more measured rhythm.

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AN ARKANSAN AT SHILOH

by

Bobby Roberts

Like the majority of Confederate officers, Major General Thomas C. Hindman, Jr., was not a soldier by profession, and like many of these men, he was not imbued with a military sense of obedience. In this respect Bruce Catton, the noted Civil War historian, described Hindman as a good soldier but difficult and tenacious of his own opinion.¹ Almost one hundred years before Catton's observations, a Confederate officer drew a similar conclusion concerning the Arkansas general. Writing shortly after the Civil War he described Hindman as "an officer of great dash, energy, and very ambitious" whose "imperious and exacting temper made him many enemies."² Thus from the end of the war to the present, time has not changed the historical judgment passed on Thomas Hindman. Undoubtedly both men were right, if one discusses Hindman's career after he was advanced to major general and had received command of the Trans-Mississippi District in May of 1862. However, prior to these events Hindman had performed as a competent officer who co-operated with and obeyed his superiors. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in Hindman's performance on the battlefield of Shiloh. Only when the general received an independent command did he fail to carry out his assigned missions. Therefore, to dismiss him as a headstrong individual who generally disobeyed orders is an incomplete analysis of this complex individual.

By 1 April, 1862, Brigadier General Thomas Hindman had been serving with the Southern armies in the west for ten months. During that time there had been many dreary marches and counter-marches, and on occasions some minor skirmishes. Still, neither Hindman nor the army he served in had been engaged in a major infantry battle. However, within a few days, both were to receive their baptism of fire on the fields and in the thickets surrounding Shiloh Church.

For the past several months, Hindman had been on duty with General Albert Sidney Johnston's army in central Kentucky. At the time the Kentucky-Tennessee theater of operations had settled into an uneasy stalemate. Brigadier General William T. Sherman, beset by fears of an impending Southern attack, refrained from any offensive action. Undoubtedly Sherman's timidity was a welcome respite to Johnston, who did not have enough troops to adequately defend the area. Quite naturally then, offensive operations by the South were out of the question, and Johnston was willing to wait passively for any Union advance. This stalemate did not end until Brigadier General Ulysses S. Grant, in February, 1862, captured Forts Henry and Donelson on the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers. With one brilliant maneuver Johnston's defensive line had been broken. Therefore, throughout the last weeks of February and all of March, the Confederate columns streamed south through the rain and snow. Their destination was the railcenter at Corinth, Mississippi.

In spite of the losses incurred on the retreat from central Kentucky and Tennessee, Johnston had succeeded in concentrating forty thousand men in and around Corinth. Some of the troops were drawn from units as far away as Mobile, Alabama. They

also included Major General Leonidas Polk's forces that had been isolated in western Kentucky. ³

Only twenty miles away at Pittsburg's Landing Grant's Union Army was encamped. After the capture of Fort Donelson, the force of forty-two thousand men had pushed down the Tennessee River to Pittsburg's Landing, where Grant impatiently awaited Brigadier General Don Carlos Buell's arrival with an equal number of troops from Nashville. ⁴

Johnston, under heavy criticism stemming from the loss of Kentucky, was determined to strike Grant before Buell arrived. On 18 March he informed Jefferson Davis by letter that "if I join the corps (Johnston's army) to the forces of Beauregard (I confess a hazardous experiment), those who are declaiming against me will be without argument." ⁵

On 29 March Johnston consolidated his Kentucky army with General P. G. T. Beauregard's Army of Mississippi, under the latter designation. Beauregard was placed second in command of the army. Major Generals Polk, Braxton Bragg, William J. Hardee, and Brigadier General John C. Breckenridge were assigned to command the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and Reserve Corps respectively. The first two corps were formally subdivided into divisions, but the 3rd and Reserve Corps continued to be organized on the brigade level. Hardee's corps, containing three brigades, was informally divided into one division consisting of Hindman's 1st Brigade and Brigadier General S. A. M. Wood's 3rd Brigade, while the 2nd Brigade, under Brigadier General Patrick R. Cleburne, operated as a distinct unit. The division was placed under General Hindman, with Colonel R. G. Shaver taking command of the 1st Brigade. ⁶

On 2 April Johnston received reliable information that Buell's army, approaching from Nashville, was only a few days away from Pittsburg's Landing. At 1 A. M. on the next day, he issued battle orders for the Army of Mississippi to march against Grant. Hardee's corps was assigned to lead the attack.

From 4 April to 6 April Johnston managed to concentrate over thirty-eight thousand men within eight miles of Pittsburg's Landing. Since 4 April there had been sporadic contact between the armies, but the Union command was still not completely aware that Johnston's army was in striking distance. ⁷ In his official report of the battle Sherman, who commanded one of the two divisions nearest to Johnston's army, admitted that Confederate cavalry had had been active in his front, but added "yet I did not believe that he designed anything but a strong demonstration." ⁸

Grant's five divisions were encamped near the Tennessee River at a point where it runs "nearly due north from above Lick Creek to the Mouth of Owl Creek." The creeks flow into the Tennessee River about four miles apart, with Pittsburg's Landing about half way between them. The landing itself was located on a range of wooded hills that receded away from the river and lost most of its altitude near Lick and Owl Creeks. From Pittsburg's Landing to Mickey's House, eight miles away, the terrain was "rolling uplands, partially cultivated, interspersed with copses, thickets, and forests, with small fields cultivated or abandoned." ⁹

The terrain offered both advantaged and disadvantages to the Confederate Army. The very nature of the wooded area helped conceal Johnston's presence, but it also precluded the active use of

cavalry.¹⁰ Terrain dictated an infantry assault, but the checkerboard pattern of field and woods meant the advance would be uneven and consequently effective co-ordination of units would be hampered. The presence of Lick and Owl Creeks also prevented any flanking attempts by the South, but at the same time it protected them from any similar moves by the North. This meant the attack would be a frontal assault against the encamped Union Army.

Perhaps the greatest terrain advantage for the Confederate position was it offered Johnston an opportunity to completely eliminate, rather than just defeat, the Union Army. Grant's army was bordered on three sides by streams that would be formidable obstacles for any retreating army to cross. The fourth side of the box was Johnston's army. Defeat could mean annihilation for Grant. Johnston's battle plan, based on the terrain was fairly simple: "In the approaching battle every effort should be made to turn the left flank of the enemy and throw him back on Owl Creek, where he will be obliged to surrender." ¹¹

At dawn on Sunday, 6 April, Hardee's lines began to advance, and one thousand yards to his rear, five brigades of Bragg's corps began to move forward over the same ground. Behind Bragg four brigades under Polk supported the right flank. Hardee's line, covered on the left and right by cavalry, extended from Owl to Lick Creek, a distance at this point of three miles. Hardee's infantry brigades were deployed in the following manner. Cleburne's brigade was on the extreme left, and to his right Wood and Shaver's brigades, respectively, were under Hindman's command. On Hindman's right was Brigadier General A. H. Gladden's brigade, detached from Bragg's corps

and under Hardee's command.¹²

Wood's brigade, advancing along the Corinth road toward Shiloh Church, launched the first attack of the battle against the left flank of Sherman's 5th Division. Wood's men rapidly drove the advance guards of Colonel Jesse Hildebrand's 3rd Brigade back toward the main camp.¹³ Hildebrand quickly formed to meet the assault, but after a brief exchange of gunfire, one of his regiments broke, and it was subsequently followed by another. With the 3rd Brigade shattered, Sherman ordered his two remaining brigades to fall back and re-form.¹⁴ Despite the Federal confusion, the Confederate brigade had almost panicked; two regiments had fallen back and had to be persuaded by Wood and his staff into returning to continue the attack.¹⁵

In the meantime Shaver and Gladden's brigades fell on the right flank of Brigadier General John Prentiss' 6th Division. Hindman maintained his divisional headquarters with his old brigade and participated in the attack on Prentiss. Initially the brigade advanced swiftly until it was within a half mile of the main camp of Colonel Everett Peabody's 1st Brigade. While ascending the first two ridges in front of the camp, Hindman's men encountered a brisk fire but succeeded in occupying the crest. After moving down the ridge and starting up the final slope, Peabody's resistance increased. By the time Hindman's forces finally reached the top of this ridge, Peabody had successfully drawn up his entire brigade and poured a heavy fire into the Confederate lines.¹⁶

Hindman's men were stunned by the Union resistance. In the words of Private Henry M. Stanley of the 6th Arkansas Infantry Regiment, "There broke upon our ears an appalling crash of sound,

the series of fusillades following one another with startling suddenness." ¹⁷ In response to the actions on Hindman's front, General Johnston rode forward and found the brigade was suffering under heavy fire. "There were many dead and wounded and some stragglers breaking ranks." At the front Hindman was "rallying and animating his men who were advancing toward the camp." ¹⁸

Quickly appraising the situation, Johnston ordered Bragg to advance to Hindman's support. By now Confederate units were being channeled into different parts of the line as the situation warranted. Three regiments of Polk's corps were close at hand and Bragg ordered them to support Hindman. ¹⁹ Together these forces pushed into the Union camp and Peabody's brigade was forced to withdraw three hundred yards to the rear. ²⁰

The destruction of Hildebrand's brigade and the withdrawal of Peabody left a gap between Sherman and Prentiss' divisions. Hindman's brigades were squarely between the two, but he was unable to exploit his advantage. Instead of being in a position to envelop one of the two Union divisions, he found himself pinned down by a murderous crossfire. ²¹ Furthermore, the gap between the two divisions had been partially closed by elements of Major General John A. McClernand's 1st Division which had moved forward to help stem the Confederate advance. By 10 A. M. Hindman's brigades and Polk's three regiments were still between the 5th and 6th Divisions, but the attack had lost its momentum. ²²

Hindman, however, tried another assault against the jumbled elements of three divisions. In the fighting described by Bragg as "the most

obstinate resistance of the day." Hindman's command "recoiled under a murderous fire. ²³ In the assault an artillery shell pierced Hindman's horse and exploded inside the animal, lifting the rider and saddle "ten feet in the air." ²⁴ Stunned by the explosion, Hindman was removed from the field. The heavy saddle had, no doubt, saved his life.

Bragg immediately ordered the first brigade of Brigadier General Daniel Ruggles' division forward to support Hindman's division, but the Union position held against the renewed assault. ²⁵ After a short battle Bragg reported that "This command fell back in considerable disorder." ²⁶ Two more attempts were made but the Union troops continued to hold their position. Shaver's brigade finally broke but retired only a quarter of a mile before regrouping. ²⁷ Some of the Confederate regiments eventually returned to their evacuated positions and found their adversaries had retired. Other units remained in the rear and went in bivouac for the night. ²⁸

Throughout the day Prentiss' division had borne the brunt of the Confederate attacks. At 5 P. M. he surrendered the remains of the 6th Division, some two thousand men, but his stubborn resistance had blunted the attack. It gave Grant time to concentrate all his available artillery and most of Brigadier General Stephen A. Hurlbut's 4th Division along the high ground in front of Pittsburg's Landing. This final position held and shortly after 6 P. M. Beauregard, who assumed command after Johnston's death, ordered the army to withdraw out of the Union range of fire. ²⁹

During the night fresh regiments from Buell's army crossed the Tennessee River and took position on the battlefield. The next morning the Union

Army counterattacked. All through the morning Grant's forces, aided by Buell's troops, pushed the Southerners back over the previous day's battle ground. Now greatly out-numbered, Beauregard about 1 P. M. ordered his army to retire to Corinth. 30

Johnston had hoped for a complete victory, but the timely arrival of Buell's army insured Grant's success, although both sides had been badly mauled. The 5 Union divisions initially engaged in the battle totaled 37,331. They suffered 8,114 casualties with an additional 2,830 captured or missing. Johnston's army of 40,335 suffered 9,735 casualties, in addition to 959 missing. 31

A week after Beauregard ordered his retrograde movement from Shiloh, Hindman was promoted to Major General and on 10 May, 1862, he received command of Ruggles' old division. 32 In less than one year Hindman had been promoted from Colonel to Major General and given command of the largest division in Beauregard's army. Similar to many officers in the Confederate service, his original appointment was a result more of his political connections than his military experiences, which were almost non-existent. His early promotion to Brigadier General occurred because both Hardee and Brigadier General Ben McCulloch were impressed by his energetic efforts to raise and equip new regiments in Arkansas during the summer of 1861. His second and final promotion occurred after his participation in the largest military engagement that had been fought in the West since the war began.

Hindman's promotion to Major General was a logical choice. Of the ten Brigadier Generals

designated as Brigade Commanders, Hindman was the senior officer of the nine still living after the Battle of Shiloh. His practical experiences included the command of an informally organized division in battle, and earlier in Kentucky he had been given wide latitude in his conduct of operations. In actual battle Hindman and his brigades performed their duties as well as most Confederate units. Indeed, they had done their jobs as well as could be expected, considering that for the most part none of the regiments had been involved in anything more than small skirmishes and rear guard actions.

By the time Hindman received command of his new division, the Union Army around Shiloh now numbered nearly one hundred thousand men and was slowly advancing toward Corinth and Beauregard's small army of thirty-five thousand men. On 30 May Beauregard was forced to evacuate the important rail center and move south to Baldwin, Mississippi. Hindman, however, did not accompany the movement. Three days before the retreat he had been assigned to command the entire Trans-Mississippi district that had been evacuated by Major General Earl Van Dorn after the Battle of Pea Ridge. At the time of Hindman's appointment, Arkansas was in eminent danger of being lost to Union control.

*

FOOTNOTES

¹Bruce Catton, Never Call Retreat (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1965), 233.

²Basil W. Duke, History of Morgan's Cavalry (Cincinnati: Miami Printing and Publishing Company, 1867, 104.

³Vincent J. Esposito, The West Point Atlas of the Civil War (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1962, map 31.

⁴T. N. Dupuy and C. G. Dupuy, The Compact History of the Civil War (New York: Collier Books, 1962, 81-84.

⁵U. S., War Department, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 70 volumes in 128 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1881-1901. Series 1, Volume VII, 261. (Hereafter cited as O. R. All citations refer to Series 1, unless otherwise noted.

⁶Ibid., Volume X, Part 1, 382-384, 573.

⁷Ibid., 386, 464, 567. ⁸Ibid., 248.

⁹Ibid., 567. ¹⁰Ibid., 393, 396. ¹¹Ibid., 397.

¹²Ibid., 567-568.

¹³Ibid., 567-568: William P. Johnston, The Life of General Albert Sidney Johnston (New York:

D. Appleton and Company., 1880, 587-588.

¹⁴O. R., Volume X, Part I, 262-264.

¹⁵Ibid., 591.

¹⁶Ibid., 573-574: William P. Johnston, The Life of General Albert Sidney Johnston (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1880, 588-589.

¹⁷Dorothy Stanley, The Autobiography of Sir Henry Morton Stanley (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1909, 189.

¹⁸O. R., Volume X, Part 1, 403.

¹⁹Ibid., 403, 465. ²⁰Ibid., 547.

²¹Ibid., 250, 278, 547, 591-592.

²²Ibid., 249. ²³Ibid., 465.

²⁴William G. Stevenson, Thirteen Months in the Rebel Army (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1959, originally published 1862), 117.

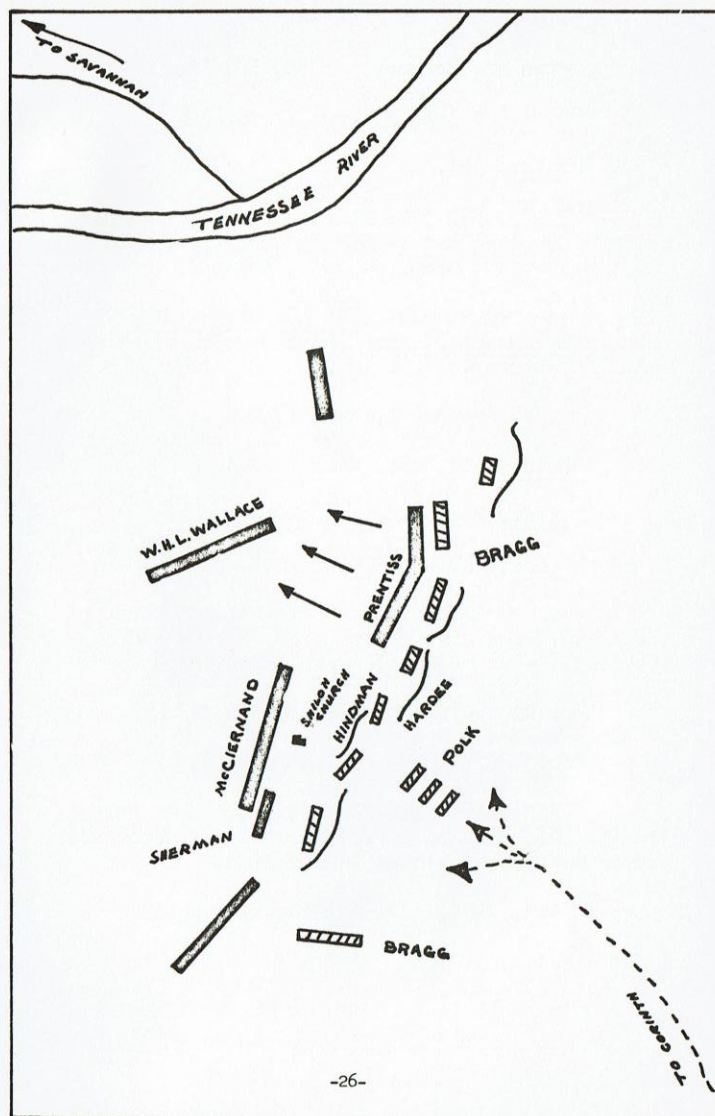
²⁵O. R., Volume X, Part I, 466.

²⁶Ibid. ²⁷Ibid., 755. ²⁸Ibid., 577, 579.

²⁹Ibid., 387, 467, Johnston had been wounded in the thigh around 3 P. M. and died shortly afterwards because of excessive bleeding.

³⁰Ibid., 108, 388. ³¹Ibid., 105, 395.

³²Ibid., 510.



THE NORTH CREEK COMMUNITY

by

Gene K. Bradford

The North Creek Post Office was established in 1848 making it one of the oldest inland communities in Phillips County. No one seems to know when the area was first designated North Creek. When talking with Mrs. Mitchell I asked her if there was an actual creek named North Creek. She was not sure but said that back of her childhood home was a large ditch or small creek which could have been North Creek. Mr. Win Cook confirms this. He says "The real North Creek was one of those wet weather ditches about four or five feet deep, but only had water in it when it rained. It came down in front of the Warfield's home and back of Central Church and big brick home of the Robinsons. Spring Creek Road went through it and in making an easy right hand turn to the north, you passed over a bridge about ten or twelve feet long. Guess I was never there at the time of rain to see the amount of water it carried on down into Little Caney Creek and then into Big Creek." He went on to say in those days the stores were well stocked with whiskey and not too many miles apart. One in North Creek was on the north side of the road and operated by Mr. Wells, until voted out by the people.

Mrs. Marian Louise Newkirk remembers going with her father, Boss Hicks, on Sundays to Barton to buy the Sunday paper which came out on the train.

Barton was a thriving little town then and the trip quite a treat for a little girl. No railroad ever ran near the North Creek community and until the 1950's the roads were dirt. Both facts probably contributed to its demise.

Neither dates nor incidents in the North Creek memories have been researched. They are wholly the memories of two lovely ladies. I first talked with Mrs. Mitchell and sons, and on their recommendation visited Mr. Jim Carruth and his sister, Mrs. Mary Mullen.

Mr. Jim has been in poor health for several years and is quite weak. When asked about the Neville place, he grinned and scratched his head in his endearing way and said, "Now that was way before my time, but Robert Sanders lives on the old Nevill place." In answer to a question about the origin of Blackfoot he said, after several moments of study, "I would never want this told as the truth, but I heard that way before the Civil War a man named Blackfoot lived there and built a school. He was buried in the woods behind Otto Von Kanel's house."

Pictures were taken by Mrs. Newkirk when her family was leaving her childhood home, and one of them is of the North Creek School which had a covered well in the yard. Water was carried into the school house to fill a large cooler which sat to the right of the door as one entered. The Hicks Gin shows the old smokestack and water tanks of the steam gin before its conversion to electricity.

*

NORTH CREEK PART 1

As Remembered by Clyda Foster Mitchell

by

Gene Bradford

Sometime in the 1890's Annie and Clark Sellers decided to trade their old home place at North Creek for land near La Grange. Dr. G. F. Foster of La Grange heard of their plans and, having land at La Grange, made a trade with the Sellers. Thus he became the owner of a lovely two story home with seven fireplaces. One chimney had four fireplaces, two back to back downstairs and two similar ones upstairs. This place was just west of Central Cemetery, and it was the Sellers family who had given the land for the Cemetery.

In 1895 or 1896 Thomas W. Foster also of La Grange, leased this farm from his brother and moved his family there. The Fosters had nine children at this time and two deceased. Three more were born at North Creek. Of the fourteen children only two are now living--Clyda Foster Mitchell and Heber Ambrose Foster. Clyda's mother, Lou Spears, died in 1887. Mr. Foster then married Mattie T. Terrell, Heber's mother, who died in 1926. Mr. Foster died in Pine Bluff in 1933.

The Foster family attended Central Church where Mr. Foster often acted as lay preacher.

Others attending at that time were George and Charlie Warfield, Win Cook, and Sue Cook Hicks.

Across the road from the Fosters' and to the west was the old Williford home occupied by the Roland Cook family. The North Creek School was just west of here on the north side of the road, and it was here the Foster children attended school.

The Carruth farm was just west of the Cook farm. East of Central Cemetery was the Ligon farm.¹ The Hicks plantation began at the North Creek Gin (still in operation under the ownership of the Young Brothers) and extended to the south. E. A. Hicks² operated and owned the gin and across the road on the Ligon farm he operated a store.

Across the road from the Fosters was a log building which was Mr. Arthur Scott's³ store. Mr. Scott, who also served as postmaster, was always addressed as Judge Scott and was a Civil War veteran. Mrs. Scott was Dora Williford, who had earlier married Mr. Hanley. At one time she taught school at North Creek, but Mrs. Mitchell recalls her as teaching at Bonner School, which was to the northwest of North Creek. Several times a year Bonner School and North Creek School held spelling bees, and the rivalry was very intense.

In 1900 John Walker Mitchell⁴ came to clerk for Mr. Scott. Mr. Mitchell had worked in several stores and post offices and must have heard Mr. Scott needed help. Clyda Foster's school teacher lived near Vineyard and attended the same church as Mr. Mitchell. She introduced Clyda to John, and in 1906 they were married and moved near Lee County. In 1917 they returned to the North

Creek community and while they readied a house, lived in the store building where Mr. Mitchell had clerked earlier. The Mitchells had two children by this time, John Foster and Edward. Mrs. Mitchell began taking her children to Central Church, the same church she had attended as a child. By then the church had acquired an organ, and this was played by Cassie Campbell, wife of Dr. W. A. Campbell.⁵ Dr. and Mrs. Campbell lived about one mile east of North Creek where Jim Von Kanel now lives.

Mr. Hicks, better known as Boss Hicks, was president of the school board. John remembers playing hookey once along with Hayden Evans and hiding out in Central Cemetery. They were evidently spotted by Mr. Hicks, with whom the teacher boarded, as they had to stay in for two weeks. Attending North Creek school at that time were: Kate and Rufus Carruth, Mae, Charles and Robert Duthu,⁶ Fred and A. W. Williamson, Louise Hicks, Helen Terrell, Hayden and Martha Evans, Josephine Bryant, and Cassie and Wilma Campbell. The school teacher was Miss Marion Cowan, who later married Clifford Cooper. Another teacher was Miss Ann West who lived in Lexa, and rode a horse the six or seven miles to school each day.

In 1920 the North Creek school was consolidated with the Barton School, and the contract for transporting the children to Barton was awarded to Mr. J. B. Weedman and Mrs. Cassie Campbell. Mr. Weedman had a large Studebaker with jump seats which could easily accommodate the children. Mrs. Campbell had a Model T, and the Mitchells do not know how she ever managed to get them all into the car and to school. There were John and Edward Mitchell, Frank, Florence, and George Bryant, the Campbells and Mr. Weedman's nephew, Garnet Wallace. (Later Jim and Tom Carruth alternated weeks carrying

school children in Jim's station wagon. There were so many children, some rode on the hood, holding to a rope so they would not bounce off on the rough roads--maybe not the most comfortable way to travel, nevertheless found to be exciting to a group of youngsters).

At that time the mail came by carrier from Lexa. The carrier was a black man named Perkins, who had a buggy boxed up with only a slit in the front for the reins to come through, and a side door which he opened to deposit mail in the boxes. Although this was a horse-drawn buggy, it had a glass window front. When he had mail for a family, Mr. Perkins always whistled loudly at their box.

Regularly three times a week a peddler came through. He had a huge conch shell he blew, and all the cotton choppers or pickers, depending on the season, ran to the road-side to buy drinks, fruit, or whatever struck their fancy and/or pocket book. The drinks were bottled and bedded in a tub of ice covered with croacker sacks. By the time the peddler, who came from Helena, reached North Creek the drinks were usually packed in wet sacks only. These pop bottles had short necks, and into the neck of each bottle went a wire with a rubber gasket on the bottom end. When the bottle was filled, the wire was pulled up and the gasket closed the bottle. To open the bottle, the wire was pushed down.

Mrs. Mitchell, whose husband died in 1945, now lives in Pine Bluff. She comes back often to visit in the community which was her home for so many years. She has seen many changes take place. She has seen the fine old homes go down one by one, many of them built before the Civil War. Most of the landmarks she remembers are gone, and many of the people as well. North Creek as she remembers

it has disappeared, but the memories that linger with her are the heritage of all who have ever called North Creek "home."

One son, Edward, lives in California. John Foster married Albertha Bloesch, and they live near Barton on Highway 49.

FOOTNOTES

¹August 2, 1881--From some old correspondence we learn "that Mr. Liggon and family left yesterday for the mountains to be gone six weeks."

²Mr. Hick's grandfather, E. A. Hicks, came to Phillips County in 1844, and at the time of his death was one of the largest land owners in the county. Memoirs of Eastern Arkansas by Goodspeed.

³Mr. Scott was a relative of the noted Winfield Scott. In 1848 he came to Arkansas with his grandfather, John L. Shackelford. After the Civil War he was engaged in clerking until 1871 when he started in business for himself, opening a store of general merchandise. He held the office of postmaster at North Creek from 1872 until 1916. Goodspeed.

The sketch of Mr. Scott did not say when he came to North Creek. Mr. Win Cook remembers when visiting his cousin, Boss Hicks, he would get to see that most interesting fine old war veteran in action as he waited on his few customers. Mr. Scott, who was very hard of hearing and talked very little, had a soft voice different from any one else in the world. Boss Hicks could imitate him to perfection and used to amuse Win by talk-

ing like the fine old gentleman.

⁴John Walker Mitchell's parents', William H. and Mary Hopkins Mitchell, old homestead was east of Barton. His grandparents, Sterling Walker and Mary E. Mitchell are buried at the Camp Ground Cemetery. John Walker Mitchell's father died when John was quite young. His mother, Mary Hopkins Mitchell, had three brothers, (Albert, Frank, and Will Hopkins) to help her rear her family of three (Jim, John, and Suzie). She also had several sisters. Sarah, called Aunt Sally, married William Burnett, the founder of the Helena World. Mary H. Mitchell's father was John Hopkins, brother of the noted Mark Hopkins of California. (In 1849 Mark Hopkins went west in a covered wagon. He became a multi-millionaire and was one of the big four railroad builders of California. He built a very ornate home on Nob Hill, San Francisco, which later became the Mark Hopkins Institute of Art. The Mark Hopkins Hotel is also named after him.)

⁵From his daughter, Wilma Gibson, we learn Dr. Campbell was from Tennessee. While attending college in Memphis, he had spent several weekends in Phillips County with his close friend, a Mr. Sylar, who lived near Lake Ridge (now known as the county-farm). He later married Mr. Sylar's sister, Cassie, and on completion of his medical education at Tulane came to North Creek to practice. Dr. Campbell never refused a call and, I have been told, never drove a car. He died in 1939 and was buried under a tree near the home he loved so well. His wife died six months later and was buried at Central Cemetery.

⁶The Duthu family lived in the Williford home which had come to be known as the Cook home.

*

NORTH CREEK PART 2

As Remembered by

Mrs. Mary Carruth Mullen and

Mrs. James Montgomery (Jim) Carruth

by

Gene Bradford

Some time before 1850 Rufus King Carruth and family came to Phillips County from South Carolina by way of Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi living for a time in each of those states, as was done by so many of the families in that day, as they moved eastward. Mr. Carruth bought his farm from his step-father, John Prather, and settled in the North Creek area near relatives who had been there well over fifty years. Of his eight children it is known that the two oldest boys, Adam and Frank, attended the Locke Academy, a private school located in what is now a pasture belonging to Mr. Carruth's great-grandson, Walter Carruth. Mr. Locke ¹ is buried in the family cemetery on the place. Because the Carruth home was so near the school, over the years several of the teachers boarded with them.

The oldest son of R. K. Carruth, Adam, served in the Confederate Army and later married Mollie Hethcock. (In the summer of 1895 the Helena World carried the obituary of Reuben Hethcock of North Creek, stating he had lived in Phillips County

since the fifties, and "his only survivor was the wife of Adam Carruth.") The second child, Mary, married D. H. Crebs of Helena. Other children were: Frank, Rufus King IV (father of the two people who gave the information for this article) Walter, Tom, and Nannie who married Lafayette Huff and lived on the Old Little Rock Road west of Helena.

The elder Mr. Carruth made bricks for the entire community including those for the foundation and flues of the Central Church. Mrs. Mary Carruth Mullen who lives on the home place says one can still find bricks in the old hole which housed the kiln. Each brick is marked RKC. Mr. Jim Carruth also lives on the original farm. They are grandchildren of Rufus King Carruth and children of Rufus K. Carruth IV. There were four other children: Tom Humphrey, John S., Katherine Kabryn, and Rufus King V. When Rufus was about one year old, their father died.

Mary and Jim and their brothers and sisters attended North Creek School in the early 1900's. Other children attending then were: Frank, Harry, and Robert Malone; Mary² and Gertrude Bolivar; and Will, John and Alice Fitzgerald. Teachers remembered are: Mrs. Dora Hanley Scott, who was a Williford before her first marriage; Miss Beula Bautts, who lived below Barton and boarded at North Creek with the Fosters when the roads were impassable; Mrs. N. M. Blair, who before her marriage was Stella McGrew; and Miss Ophelia Holtzclaw, who stayed with her aunt, the former Mythenia Holtzclaw who was married to William Bailey Wooten, (The Wootens later moved to Poplar Grove and died there in the 40's), and walked through the fields to school. She later married Rufus Neal.

On Sunday the Carruth children walked through the fields to Central Church. They remember attending with the Warfields³; Bob Malone, his wife Mattie who was from France, and their children; the Gossits who lived east of Central across the road from where Otto Von Kanel now lives; Roland Cook, wife Lizzie, and daughter Annie; the Reverend Francis A. Jeffett and family (Reverend Jeffett was not the regular minister but did preach at times.); the Roberts who had a daughter named Quintine; and John Ligon whose house was on the place just east of Central Church. Mrs. Arthur Scott played the organ, and, as Mrs. Mary remembers the services, there were from fifty to seventy present most Sundays. Central Church has been torn down, but there are many burials in the cemetery each year. Its upkeep depends on voluntary contributions of interested persons.

Mr. Jim Carruth married Lily Bryant. They had three children: Faye Carruth Graves and Francis both deceased, and James M. (Jimmy) who is principal in the Pine Bluff School system.

Mary Carruth married Walsey Mullen who had five grown children and a small son, Robert. She had no children of her own. Before her marriage Mary taught school for several years in Monroe County, and also at the Novak School at Southland and at Barton.

FOOTNOTES

¹1840 U. S. Census, Spring Creek Township. James Locke (four males and two females), Thomas Locke (three males, three females, and seven slaves.) Jesse Locke was postmaster at North Creek in 1858.

²Mary Bolivar married Malcolm L. Hicks (Tab). At one time Mr. Hicks operated the Keesee Store

which was located west of the Keesee home. It was here their oldest child, Albert, saw his first car. Never having heard of cars, he was so frightened when he heard it coming down the road, he hid behind a door and no amount of persuasion could get him to look. Although he was only about four, it is still very real to him. The M. L. Hicks family next had a store and house about half way between the Central Cemetery and the present site of the North Creek Gin. He also owned and operated and, I think, built the North Creek Gin, then steam operated. Malcolm Hicks sold his holdings to Boss Hicks when he moved to West Helena in search of schools for his children, Albert, Charles, Clark Louis, Mary, and Tab. (Some of these children were born after he moved to West Helena.) For a short time Mr. and Mrs. E. A. (Boss) Hicks and daughter, Marian Louise, and Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm Hicks and family lived in the house together--probably until the end of the school year.

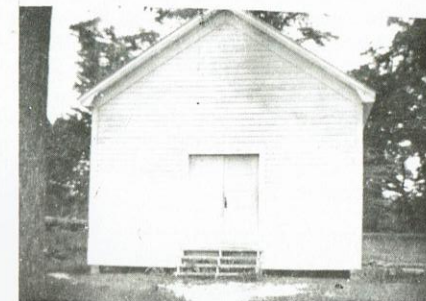
Malcolm Hicks' grandfather, John Haywood Hicks, came to Phillips County with his mother, Mary, and three brothers (Edwin Augustus, Jessie Hare, and Allen W.) around 1844. He settled near what is now known as Wycamp and named his home Hyde Park. Malcolm was born at Hyde Park, which by then was the name of the community, and went to school in his early years at Southland. He and his wife were both buried in Central Cemetery.

³The family of the Reverend Warfield lived north of Central Church, and it is believed he was instrumental in the organization of this church. His original home was a two story log building with two rooms downstairs and two upstairs. Later a dining room was added at the rear and also a kitchen which was connected to the main house by a covered walkway. Children in the family were Sam, Lizzie,

George, Robert, Charles and Gertrude (Jerdie). Several are buried in Central Cemetery where the Warfield lot cornered with the church. George's wife, Mary, played the organ at the church after their marriage. Gertrude married Mr. Clarence Gist, Lizzie married Roland Cook, and Charles married Beulah Connolly, who gave me this information. She attended Sunday School at Central Church as a child and her first leacher was Miss Lou Edmundson who was later librarian in Marianna, daughter of Mrs. Edmondson whose diary is being published in the Quarterly. She also reminded me that Happy Day (Green?) a former slave was sexton at the church as far back as she could remember.

Mrs. Beulah Warfield is a resident of Heritage Home, Helena, and welcomes visits from her friends.

NORTH CREEK SCHOOL



NOTES

The Historical Society has had a very successful year, in point of memberships and programs. As the current membership year draws to a close (May 1) the count stands at 234 members, and two complete files of the Quarterly were sold to libraries.

Our mid-winter meeting was a big success, featuring a program and a house tour. The program concerned the life and times of General James C. Tappan of Helena, and was presented by Thomas Tappan, President of the Historical Society. The tour took us to the home on Poplar Street of General Tappan, which is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Jerome B. Pillow. We were graciously received and had a most interesting and entertaining time. Real Southern hospitality!

A special meeting was held on March 25th to present Mr. and Mrs. Howell Purdue of Arlington, Virginia. Mr. and Mrs. Purdue have recently published their book Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, a work of twelve years research. To one interested in the history of our area, this book is a gold mine of fact and high entertainment. It is priced at \$10.50, and with 30¢ postage added, may be ordered from the Purdues at 1846 N. Herndon, Arlington, Virginia 22201.

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