

1924

MEMORIES AND MUSINGS

BY DAN W. WILLIAMS

My memory goes back to the days when we made long trips on horseback or in a wagon. The first trip that I can recall was that to the home of my grandfather, George D. Williams, down on Symmes Creek in Greenfield township in Gallia County. It was after hay harvest, perhaps in 1869. The day was sunny and Bull, my daily companion, a black dog, which seemed large to me, was sorry to be left behind when the wagon started out of the gate down the lane toward the east. The wagon was a new one, and it was equipped with an ore bed, and not the high bed that factory wagons have. The wagon had been built by David Jones, a blacksmith living at Cross Roads, the grandfather of Mendel Jones of Portsmouth, who is about the size of his grandfather.

Our house stood on a knoll south of Banner, and we took the lane to the east past the home of John Backus, which ran along the township line until we came to the Arthur farm. The lane then turned south a quarter, then east a quarter past the William Arthur home which burned down some years later. The lane crossed the farm then turned south past the Arthur school house. I and one of my sisters sat on the hay in the bed of the wagon, and when the climb of the Arthur hill came, I thought it very steep. The school house where Mrs. William Radabaugh lives now was a wonderful object to me, and so was the spring of William Shumate where we stopped to get a drink. I remember the house where Lester Lloyd lives now, because it was owned by a John Williams, but not a relative.

The next house that attracted my attention was the home of John D. Davis because it had been the home of Dr. William S. Williams. It was the first picture house that I had ever seen. South of that home there was one log house some distance in the field, which was the last that I remember until we came to the house of John Blind in Oak Hill. As I remember it now, it was a one story house then. The man's name was John Davis but he was called John Blind on account of his affliction. I remember the old mill next, which stood on the site of the United Brethren church, and the brick building now occupied by the Pastor store.

This was my first visit to Oak Hill that I can remember, and I rather think that the brick store room was the only brick building in the hamlet, which was called Portland then. I have a faint recollection that the station platform was high from the ground matching the platform of the cars that stopped to put off and take on passengers. East of the Pastor store building there was a small white cottage in a yard. Crossing the alley we passed the corner of the old Jones Hall, a three story building, the first three story building in Portland. The wagon stopped in front of the Jackson store, at the corner on the south side of Main street, opposite the Edwards' Hotel.

My father went up into the store, there was a high platform in front of it, and remained inside for a little while. Then Eben Jones, now deceased, father of Judge T. A. Jones and his brothers, came out, and in his hands were popcorn balls for us children, the first that I had ever seen. I have never forgotten them, neither have I ever forgotten Jones, the giver. In these days children enjoy so many luxuries, that small gifts of that kind can not impress them. Jones staid talking to my mother until father came back. Jones and my mother had been neighbors in Hewitt's Fork during their childhood and until both left their parental homes. My recollections of Portland as it was that day have faded, but I recall one small cottage on the north side of the street, where William W. Morgan lived, and the house at the corner opposite the residence of David D. Davis which was the home of Dr. William S. Williams until his death. He was our family physician, and he was the first Portland man that I came to know, or he was a visitor at our home on my birthday.

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