

WPA Alabama Writers Project
Short Stories by:
Woodrow Hand, Editor (Bham)

J. W. Hand
Alabama

MOON-EYED

"Hain't never done so much hoss tradin'; never did own many hosses. I liked mules. But hit seems to me that I did skin a feller wunst. Hit's so long ago that I can't recollect for certain, but I think hit was Betsy that I traded to a feller fer his mule.

"'Pears to me that I had saddled Betsy with a old wore-out saddle that musta' been no better'n a board covered with cowhide and was ridin' her over to Bailey's Mill - hit was about six mile - to git me some corn ground. I had hit layin' across the front of my saddle.

"Betsy looked pretty good. She was right fat and could pace a little. She didn't have no scars or sores or no limp.

"Betsy was pretty to look at; and easy to ride, but she had moon-eyes.

"Atter I had rode along a mile or two, a feller come out of a side road ridin' one of the prettiest mules I ever see. He was slick as a fat-tened hog and stepped along like he was running over with pep. The feller was sittin' on a brand new saddle too.

"We'n the feller spoke. He rode along with me a little way, all the time lookin' at Betsy. I could see what was in his mind, but I didn't let on. You kin tell a trader as fer as you kin see 'im.

"Just like I expected, the feller said. 'That's a good-lookin' mare.'

'Yep', I said, 'she's all right.'

"We rode along, talkin' about this and that. The feller kept twistin' about on his saddle so's I could see hit. I let him keep hit up fer a while, then I said, 'That's a new saddle, hain't it?'"

"'Yep,' he said, 'Jest bought it last week. Hain't been set on enough to git shiny.'

"The feller slapped the mule's rump with his hand, and he pretended he had a hard time keepin' the mule from runnin' off and leavin' me. 'Darn near got that hoss-fly,' he said.

"I could see the feller had a lively mule, jest the kind I needed, but I still didn't let on. We rode on a ways, then the feller popped out in the worst kinda form: 'How'll you swap?' he asked. Jest like that. No ways a-tall like experienced traders do. They talk about everything under the sun 'ceptin' the trade. So I figgered I could take the feller easy.

"'I don't know as I care to swap,' I said. 'I like this mare mighty well. But she wouldn't suit you.'

"'How come?' he asked. 'What's the matter with her?'

"'Nothin' you could lay your hand on,' I said. 'You jest wouldn't like her.'

He commenced lookin' closer an' closer to see why he wouldn't like her. 'Course he couldn't see nothin' becuz there warn't nothin' he could see.

"Well sir, the more that feller looked at Betsy, the less he could see wrong with her. He let me git in front of him so's he could see her hind part and he got in front so's he could see all of that end. He switched sides of the road. I jest waited and finally he said:

"'In spite of what you say, I don't see nothin' wrong with that mare.'

"'I didn't say she had anything wrong with her,' I told him. 'All I said was that you wouldn't like her.'

"'Is she shy?' he asked.

"'Scare her and see fer yourself,' I said.

"He rode up close and jerked his hand across Betsy's eyes. She dodged

just a little bit. 'Well,' he said, 'that shows she hain't blind. And she ain't shy either. Has she got sores under the saddle?'

"'Nope,' I said. 'But you can look fer yourself.'

"'I'll take your word fer hit,' he said. 'Anyhow, she don't act like she's sore the way she's carryin' you and the saddle and corn.'

"The feller didn't seem to notice how I was lookin' at his mule. He was the best-lookin' mule I ever saw, and I was gittin' anxious to swap, but I knew hit wouldn't do to let the feller know about that.

"All of a sudden, the feller said: 'Let's swap even.'

"'Nope,' I said. 'I won't swap for less'n fifteen dollars boot.'

"The feller studied a little bit, then he said: 'I'll give you five dollars boot.'

"'Nope,' I said. 'You're the one what wants to swap. Its fifteen dollars or nothin'.'

"'I can't trade like that,' the feller said. We rode on a piece and I could see that he still wanted to trade mighty bad. Some people jest can't stand to own a mule when they think they can get a hoss. Finally, he said: 'I'll give you my new saddle and five dollars boot fer your hoss and saddle.'

"I told him all right. That suited me. In fact, I was tickled all over. We swapped right there and he even helped me move the sack of corn offa Betsy over to the mule.

"But when we was all set again, I said: 'This is a trade. You won't like Betsy, but I told you before we swapped.'

"He didn't say nothin'; jest looked at me like he thought he had skinned a crazy man and rode off.

"But he hadn't. A moon-eyed horse can't see nothin' a-tall durin' the full moon. He's plumb blind till the new moon. But the feller couldn't tell nothin' 'bout that a week before the moon fullled; and he didn't ask me."

THE PROGRESS OF EDUCATION IN ALABAMA

Public Schools-

A chart line of Alabama's educational progress would be an irregular mark on the graph, but it would show a steady upward climb since the days of Bienville in Mobile. The soldiers of France brought education in the person of Father Anastase, who presided over the stockade and taught the children of settlers and friendly Indians. Governor Bienville attempted to establish a school, but outside of teachers in the church, there is no record of any great success. Education was entirely in the hands of the priests and parents, with the exception of those few tutors employed by the wealthier families.

The Old Boat Yard on the Tensas River marked the location of the first school in Alabama and was established in 1779 by John Pierce, of Connecticut. What prompted Mr. Pierce to come from Connecticut to Mobile to open the school is not known, but it was the Old Board Yard that the Descendants of the Taits, Durants, McGillivrays, and Weatherfords learned to read and write.

Before 1800, with the exception of Mobile, Alabama was a wilderness filled with settlers far too busy trying to earn a living and protect themselves from hostile Indians to worry over general education, but in the minds of a few who were fitted to cope with the situation, the progress of education was the first consideration.

The Mississippi Territory assembly in 1811 saw introduced the first legislation affecting education. A bill was passed appropriating \$1,000 for academies, and to share these St. Stephens Academy was soon chartered in Washington County, followed the next year by Green

Academy in Madison County.

When Alabama became a state December 14, 1819, the Federal Government gave the sixteenth section of each township for common school; two townships for a "seminary of learning", and having fallen heir to the territorial Academies, plus ample natural resources, the state was well prepared for educational advancement at the time of its entrance.

Immediately following entrance into the Union, the varying values of the school lands created educational difficulties. The Government had given the section with the State as trustee and the land failed to produce an adequate revenue. Settlements having the richest soil received the largest endowment, whereas, in order to keep educational facilities on an even basis over the State, the larger fund should have gone to the poorer sections. This was largely due to the control of social and political forces by wealthy land owners. Mismanagement in the purchase and sale of these school lands, sometimes resulted in a complete loss. The legislature comes in for its share of the blame for failure to enact constructive and protective laws regarding school endowments. Despite the fact that the first constitution of Alabama, adopted in 1819, provided for the establishment and encouragement of public schools, education as a State duty had not been recognized.

Tuition and subscription fees were introduced in 1823 by an act which organized the school system under district trustees, and the revenue derived from the school land was used for the tuition of the underprivileged children. Recognition of education as a public duty became established through the legislature creating, in 1826, a board of school commissioners, whose duty was to establish and regulate

schools. This law was primarily for Mobile County schools, but it appeared applicable to the State and was hailed as a solution of all school troubles.

Briefly, the law stated that school revenues were to be realized from land grants, certain fines and penalties, small fees in court suits, 25% of ordinary county tax, and taxes on auction sales and theatres. It seemed logical that if sufficient finances could be had, constructive and protective laws would come in due time. The school commissioners, however, proved to be merely agents who issued receipts and disbursed money to private institutions that should have been used in the organization of a state-wide public school system.

To effect this failure, a law was passed in 1839 whereby the State bank was to pay \$150,000 annually to the schools and in 1840 this was raised to \$200,000. In 1843 the bank failed, throwing the schools entirely upon their own resources.

This blow to financing seemed to the public school system doomed to failure. Elementary schools were maintained in the communities by private subscription. The teachers fitted the schools. They weren't settled in their positions nor prepared to hold them. Those students advanced beyond the elementary grades and attended academies, which sprang up over the State. Between 1819 and 1854, which finally saw the establishment of a State public school system, there were 166 private academies.

A climax was reached in 1852 when the Barton Academy in Mobile, the first public school in Alabama, erected in 1835-36, was proposed for sale. This situation awakened the State's leading citizens and so aroused the public to the danger of an educational decline as to bring about in 1852 the appointment, by the Governor, of a State

superintendent of education.

After the organization of the public school system and until the outbreak of the Civil War, Alabama had in operation one of the most effective school systems in the South. In Superintendent G. B. Duval's report of 1858, the last before the war, the school term was $6\frac{1}{2}$ months with several counties having 9 months term. School enrollment was 54.5% of the school population and the average attendance was 23.4%. There were 2579 schools and the total expenditure was \$564,210.46, about \$292,831.49 being raised from tuition and other sources. In some counties the revenue from the sixteenth section lands was sufficient to support their schools. The State superintendent was instructed to equalize, as far as possible, the distribution of revenue.

The war, despite its destructive results failed to break the foundation of the school system, and when then men of the former regime came into power after the Reconstruction, they ignored the changes made by the government and began where they had left off.

The constitution of 1875 provided a State appropriation of \$100,000 and directed that additional funds were appropriated as conditions justified. A poll-tax, for the benefit of public schools in the counties where collected was authorized, and thus added education a change resulting in improvement of school supervision, was a requirement that teachers be certified. This automatically raised the educational standards.

A branch experiment station was established in 1885 and the next ten years saw one in each congressional district. This period also covered a gradual expansion of teacher training.

John W. Abercrombie was appointed superintendent of education

in 1898 and it was on his recommendation that several progressive measures were adopted in the constitution of 1901, the most important being a State uniformity of text books, authorization of State certification of teachers, and a five-months term of free school.

However, the people found disappointment in this constitution. It made no provisions for self aid, the State remaining the chief source of support for the schools. A district tax was permitted in a few cities, and a local tax for general municipal purposes still could be levied. Provisions was made for a ten-cent county tax and obligatory State school tax of thirty cents on the hundred dollars. It was the aggregate school funds which showed the greatest increase. City schools flourished due to municipal revenue, but in the rural sections, which are supported only by State and county taxation, there was suffering from lack of funds. Nevertheless, a renaissance of building and education between 1901 and 1910 resulted from the act of 1907 which gave aid to the rural schools. This period covered the development of the high school system; the grading of the elementary schools; improvements in the quality of teaching, and the systematic organization and articulation of all the schools.

This system was under the direction of the superintendent of education until a State board of education was established in 1919. This and a more comprehensive school system won the attention and approval of national educators.

A special act in 1927 equalized instruction opportunities by placing all county school on a seven-months basis. \$900,000 was appropriated and in the next four years forty counties had received aid from it for one or more of the four years. Thirty-two of the forty counties had benefited. The average school term in these 32 counties

previous to the equalization law, specifically the period 1925-26, had been 119 days. The next four years showed an average of 143 days, an increase of 24 days. One county increased its school term three months, and three counties increased theirs by two months. The remaining thirty-five counties had an average increase of 8 days.

Among the school laws adopted in 1931 is an act permitting Commission courts, county commissioners, and like governing bodies to use convict labor and county equipment to build, improve, and beautify schools. Another act of the same year authorized appropriations for the support of the public schools out of county treasury funds.

The courts of county commissioners were authorized in 1932 to use 20% of the fund received from the exise tax on gasoline to overcome difficulties in paying teachers' salaries. This applied only to counties with population under 18,000, but it was not entirely successful and in 1933 warrants were issued for back salaries in counties of not more than 150,000 population and not less than 111,000.

The 2% sales tax levied in 1937, and the close of that year marked the first full payment of appropriation to public education since 1932. The tax was instituted primarily to equalize educational opportunities and rural schools are its chief beneficiaries.

The State furnished 40% of revenue and local units 60% in 1929-30 as compared to 53% for the State and 47% for local units in 1937-38. Constitutional taxes are limited to 4 mills in counties and 3 mills in districts. Attendance in public schools in 1937-38 increased 20% over the attendance in 1929-30 and statistics also show a continued improvement in the public school system since its creation in 1854. Numerous progressive laws have been made, and the laws which fail to strengthened the school system are usually swiftly repealed.

Problems confronting the school system today are being met by a cooperative public; by coordination between communities and schools. This condition was brought about by the Parent-Teachers Association, which functions throughout the State. Its membership has grown to 40,228 since its foundation in 1911. The organization meets at regular intervals, and from their discussions of school affairs emerge decisions vital in matters of procedures and method.

In early days the youth of Alabama seeking education beyond grade school and academy facilities found it necessary to go east. The arts and science were the usual curricula for boys. The girls attended finishing schools and completed their training for the responsibilities of maturity with a tour of Europe. This method was costly and beyond the means of any except the wealthy planter class.

The first attempt to bring higher education within reach of the average student was made by the Jesuits, who opened Spring Hill College, near Mobile, in 1830. Soon after, the Methodist Episcopal Church South founded La Grange College. These two schools in opposite ends of the state afforded a greater impetus to educational development than had been felt in the previous 125 years.

The Constitutional Convention, meeting at Huntsville, Alabama Territory, had previously adopted an article providing for State encouragement of schools and education, also that the General Assembly make plans for improvement of lands given by the United States, the money raised from such land by rent, lease, or sale to be used for the support of a State University. In 1819, the Congress of the United States donated 72 sections, and in 1820 the act was passed establishing the University. On the vote of both houses, Tuscaloosa was selected as the site, and in 1831, the year after Spring Hill College was established the University of Alabama opened with 52 students matriculating the first day. The school progressed, despite injuries suffered by the Bank failure of 1843, and demolition of its property, with the exception of the astronomical observatory, by Federal forces here. Erection of new buildings began in 1867 and students resumed studies in 1869. Through the efforts of the Hon.

John T. Morgan, United States Senator from Alabama, Congress made a second donation of 72 sections of land in 1884. This land has proved rich in mineral wealth, and with the proceeds therefrom, the University of Alabama has strengthened its facilities and won recognition through the nation and in foreign lands.

Congress, in 1862, approved an act providing for Land Grant Colleges which were to embrace scientific, agricultural, and mechanical studies with the regular classical studies and military tactics. Alabama accepted her donations and appointed a commission to sell land script received from the United States and to invest the proceeds. Three years passed before completion of the sale. The proceeds were invested in Alabama State Bonds to the amount of \$250,000. This constituted the original endowment fund of the colleges. In 1872, the Alabama Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South offered donations for a college building and necessary apparatus and the State Legislature accepted and located the Agricultural and Mechanical College at Auburn.

The first ten years of this college was an experiment. Its aims and purposes involved new methods. All types of apparatus and appliance had to be provided out of the interest on the bonds. The school was the object of some prejudice and criticism, but it advanced steadily under the wise and conservative administration of its first president, Dr. I. T. Tichenor, and the next ten years were years of development and better understanding by the public.

State aid came in 1883 by an act appropriating \$30,000 for improvements and purchase of equipment. In the same year another act gave the school one-third of the net proceeds from the tax on fertilizer, to be used for an experiment station. The next year

saw another appropriation of \$12,500 to the department of Mechanical Arts, which immediately developed into what is now Mechanical Engineering.

An appropriation of \$15,000 per annum by Congress in 1887 so greatly facilitated instruction and investigation in agriculture that the college became distinctive as a school of applied sciences. The ten^{year} period following was outstanding by its phenomenal development. Mechanical art facilities increased by the construction of a separate housing Forge and Foundry work. Nine new laboratories were established in addition to a biology department. Before the end of the period, an act was passed by Congress another \$15,000 per annum for land grant colleges, 56% of which goes to the school in Auburn. The name was changed to Alabama Polytechnic Institute in 1899.

Since its inception in 1872 as the Agricultural and Mechanical College to its present day status as the Alabama Polytechnic Institute, the school has known a steady growth.

The establishment of Female Seminary at Marion in 1836 marked the beginning of higher education for women. The school met with such immediate success that Judson College for girls was opened at Marion two years later. These two schools enrolled over 400 students within the next five years. A steadily increasing need for higher educational facilities for women led to the founding of Alabama College at Montevallo in 1896.

The Church has been the State's staunchest support in the education of her youth, from the days of priests in Mobile through the present day. In addition to contributions, the churches are responsible for Spring Hill College, founded in 1830 by the Jesuits, Howard College by the Baptists, Birmingham Southern by the Methodist,

and Huntingdon College, for girls, by Methodists.

Alabama is not neglecting Vocational Education. Manual labor institutes have been established in Perry, Hale, Coosa, and Montgomery counties.

The State board of education under the Reconstruction government aware of the need for trained teachers, passed an act in 1868 establishing eleven normal schools. Under supervision of competent instructors, teachers were permitted to do practice work providing they later taught two years for the State, when they completed a training course. The Legislature founded the State Normal School at Florence in 1872 and schools at Jacksonville, Livingston, and Troy were established in the eighties.

No organized education was available for the Negroes before the Civil War, due to a law passed in 1832 which made any such attempt illegal, and also because of widespread white prejudice against education of the slave. Despite the abolitionist propaganda and fear of insurrection that caused this law, their education was not entirely neglected. Favorite servants were sometimes taught to read and write. Anti-slavery enthusiasts gave instruction in primary education, but the Negro's education for the most part was manual, including such subjects as shoeing a horse, making clothes, cloth and brick. Others became skilled in metal work and carpentry.

¹⁰² The Reconstruction brought Federal teachers and schools, but ignorance of the educational needs of the Southern slave, made their efforts superficial and sporadic.

The white people of the South were reluctant toward financing the Negro's education, with the Freedmen's Bureau, established to look after his interests, took the matter in hand and opened the first Negro school. The Bureau was assisted by Northern and Western organizations, the American Missionary Society, and certain philanthropic individuals. Talledega College was founded by the American Missionary Association in 1857, but did not open until 1890. Degrees were not granted until 1895.

Mobile was an exception. By 1868 four Negro schools were in operation with an aggregation attendance of 919. A fifth school was added the latter part of the year. A committee had been appointed in 1867 to study the advisability of teaching the Negro under the existing educational system. Working through the Freedmen's Bureau,

the committee acquired an appropriation of \$12,000 for building to be used as churches and schools. With the aid of the American Missionary Society, a building known as Penny's College was purchased for Negro schools. Other committees were appointed to determine the amount of taxes to be used for Negro schools and to see that these schools were properly located. The committee also placed the school term at no less than three months. There was no mention in the constitution of 1868 regarding separate school for Negroes and no provision was made until the constitution of 1875, which stated specifically that separate school should be maintained for children of African descent.

The sixteenth section lands had all been sold or built upon, so the Negro school drew their funds entirely from private donors and sympathetic organizations.

Secondary education was not neglected, but it was hampered by its cost to a war-weakened State. The Burrell School was founded at Selma in 1875 and was in operation until destroyed by fire in 1900. The school was moved to Florence in 1907.

The Alabama Colored People's University, located at Montgomery, was founded at Marion in 1883. It was called the Normal School and University. The act of 1887 which moved the school from Marion to Montgomery also appropriated \$10,000 for buildings and \$7,500 for support of the University.

These schools, due to lack of funds, attempted only the academic subjects, but vocational education was added with the growth of State appropriations and private demands.

The ten years following 1880 marked progressive advancement in education of the Negro. The State had begun liberal contributions

and churches were generous. Illiteracy among those over ten years of age was reduced from 80.6% to 57.4%.

The South's foremost contribution to Negro education came with the opening of Tuskegee Institute in 1881. The buildings were erected by donations from Northern friends and Tuskegee citizens. Contributions that year amounted to \$5,521.94. Since its opening under the first president, Dr. Booker T. Washington, the Institution has had the services many outstanding leaders and teachers, among them the notable Dr. George Washington Carver, eminent scientist who has achieved fame by extracting about 300 ingredients from the lowly peanut.

Alabama is alive to its educational needs and a steady improvement in standards of education and laws pertaining to education have improved its position among the states. New eras bring new problems which can be met only as they arrive. The day of awakening has passed. Alabama is now up and about.

"TOM" CAT, WEATHER PROPHET

^{is the}
 This story of a cat, namely one Tom (light gray with a white spot in his forehead, and inquisitive eyes) that developed a swami complex, ^{OK} is going to be told by me; and not by an outsider. I lived with the cat one year; and I watched the growth of his prophetic abilities over a period of eight years. I also got his name in the paper when he first became news. ^{I consider it as well as}
 Therefore, ~~it is~~ my privilege ^{and} duty to tell of Tom, the weather prophet.

A dull thud from toward the front yard of Johnie Gate's place proved one early morning to be ~~a~~ a spindley, brow-beaten cat making a three-point landing. Dust from down the road ^{indicated} ~~led to the conclusion~~ that the critter was tossed from an automobile by somebody who didn't like cats.

Johnie, however, has no ^{toward} ~~particular~~ aversion ^{about} cats. They're handy for catching rats, ~~and~~ ^{actually} besides, well, he ~~just~~ likes them. So he picked up the cat from off a peony bush, promptly determined that he'd bear the name "Tom," carried him into the house and fed him a few scraps of white meat and biscuits, and then turned him loose to make war upon the rodents. Thereafter, Tom and Johnie appeared to completely forget each other.

Each went about his duties. They spoke when necessary, but their friendship seemed not to develop beyond the casual stage. Of course, they had their spats. Tom went courting and failed to return for a week and Johnie, who had been forced to fight the rats alone, didn't fail to let Tom know what he thought about such gross neglect of duty for such ~~frivolous~~ ^{frivolous} things as tabby cats. Whereupon Tom, the ~~very~~ next time Johnie stepped on his tail, retaliated spitefully. But, they remained together.

Johnie's wife went off for a visit after Tom had been with them three years. She doesn't figure in this story except that she went visiting. Otherwise, she would be completely ignored. ^{However} She is important because her absence threw Tom and Johnie closer together. They began sleeping in the same room.

Sleeping thus, they naturally were thrown out together when a cyclone slipped up one night with all the ~~assets~~^{stealth} of four freight trains and scattered the house all over the four corners of the three acre lot.

The next daylight, Johnie checked over things and found ~~both~~^{most of} his assets ~~and~~^{including} Tom missing; ~~plus~~^{also} a wide expanse of flesh ~~that had got scraped by a~~^{scantling on its way back to the forest.}

Tom returned in three days. He came ~~meowing~~^{meowing} up to the big ditch back of the houseplace and crossed wonderingly over the footlog. He and Johnie eventually got together and had lunch. Johnie was using a door for a table and a quilt stretched across two planks for a bed room, but Tom seemed not to mind.

It was a murky day when Tom returned. ~~Shadows were~~^{Mid} colored clouds moved unusually fast ~~across the~~^{nearby} overhead and lightning flashed repeatedly from every direction. Johnie was openly nervous and kept eying a big sewer pipe/under the road. When the clouds finally got together and ~~produced~~^{produced} a great gust of wind, Johnie was inside the sewer in nothing flat. He wondered about Tom and then remembered the cat had streaked it across the footlog with his tail flying long before the clouds got fully organized. Tom's flying trip across the footlog became a ~~habit~~^{habit} common occurrence with approaching bad weather.

After Johnie complete his home, ~~he~~^{he} ~~was~~^{was} dug a storm cellar and reinforced it with concrete. He felt safe from future storms, providing he knew when to go inside the storm cellar. He had built it large enough to sleep in, but it was too damp to sleep in ~~night after night.~~^{as a regular practice}

~~that's~~^{the problem that brought} Tom ~~came~~^{came} into prominence and the undying affection of his master.

"TOM" CAT, "WEATHER PROPHET

He was just an ordinary cat with a white spot in the center of his ~~forehead~~^{forehead} that broke the monotony of his bleak gray coat when John Gates picked him off the dust of his front yard one morning ~~two~~^{eight} years ago.

So John named him "Tom" and gave him a breakfast of bread crumbs and white meat. "Tom" ate and commenced browsing around for mice and the incident was considered closed by both John and "Tom." They spoke when they met, but generally ~~both~~^{each} went about his own business and attended to his own duties.

This casual state of friendship continued for three years, each absorbed with his contribution toward maintaining a happy and substantial household.

Occasionally, rifts would occur, as in any home. "Tom's" tail would get under a careless foot and he'd raise a howl until his nerves settled, or maybe he'd go unnoticed after his nose told him that meat was being cooked. If he continued to go without his share, his howls would continue into the night.

But "Tom" wasn't always the victim. He had his faults, such as the time when John found a mouse scampering gaily around the kitchen and "Tom" was nowhere to be found, ~~or~~^{that} and the week ~~when~~ "Tom" spent with his girl ~~girl~~ friend.

However, these troubles were always ironed out to the satisfaction of both parties.

As said before, they were casual friends for three years. Then disaster struck; and the casualness tightened into a bond of unbreakable strength.

It was just before daylight and the early morning was chilly with the air of departing winter. May had just taken its ~~xxx~~ turn in the new year. A heavy thunderstorm had held sway most of the night, but had finally settled into a steady rainfall. "Tom" was asleep in front of the fireplace, his snores harmonizing with those of John, even though his bed was across the room.

Neither noticed the steady flicker of lightening that danced in the southwest, nor its steadily increasing intensity. When the rain began slapping the windows, neither ~~noticed~~ ^{knew} that wind was taking over the night; was fast growing into a gale.

The house swayed, then settled back to its foundation, and "Tom" and John slept on. They slept until the wind ~~xxx~~ sounded like a freight train roaring over the house, then they awoke, with what sounded like another train ~~xxxx~~ coming toward them. It gave the feeling of missing one train and suddenly having another roar around the bend.

They opened their eyes to a universe filled with a redly flickering glow ten times the brightness that bounces from the sky when great cauldrons of molten iron are being poured at the furnaces. They awoke too late. The house had gone like a puff of smoke before they could assemble their senses.

John picked himself ^{unhurt} / from the debris and called for Tom. He failed to get an answer and it was three days before Tom showed up.

He crept into John's rude shelter at dusk; meowing pitifully for food. John fed him and that night, they shared a cot made from ~~xxxxxx~~ a door of what had been their home.

Next morning, they faced a murky day. The sky was yellowish, and although ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ his knees felt weak from fear as he looked at low, boiling clouds, John went about the task of salvaging. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~

There was a sudden clap of thunder and John jumped, turning as he did in time to see Tom streaking across the garden with his tail waving in the breeze. John wondered; felt sorry for Tom; then as it thundered again, he raced for the shelter of a large culvert. There, he weathered a torrential downpour that threatened to float him out of the culvert. But by spreading his legs, he managed to stay in until the rain was over.

Time and fair weather eventually allowed John to ~~xxxx~~ rebuild his home. However on several occasions, there had been light thunder showers, and every time, he had seen Tom / ~~xxxxxxxx~~ racing, tail up, across the garden.

For his own safety ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~, John built a storm cellar. He made it large enough to ~~xxxxxxxx~~ sleep in, but he was at a loss as to when to use the cellar. He reasoned that ~~xx~~ ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ nights clear at bed-time could turn into *Stormy ones* ~~xxxx~~ before morning, but he couldn't sleep in the cellar

"TOM" CAT, WEATHER PROPHECY

This is the story of a cat, namely one Tom (light gray with a white spot in his forehead, and inquisitive eyes) that developed a swami complex. It is going to be told by me; and not by an outsider. I lived with the cat one year; and I watched the growth of his prophetic abilities over a period of eight years. I also got his name in the paper when he first became news. I consider it therefore, my privilege as well as my duty to tell of Tom, the Weather Prophet.

A dull thud from toward the front yard of Johnie Gates' place proved one early morning to be a spindly, brow-beaten cat making a three-point landing. Dust from down the road indicated that the critter was tossed from an automobile by somebody who didn't like cats.

Johnie, however, has no aversion toward cats. They're handy for catching rats, and besides, well, he actually likes them. So he picked up the cat from off a peony bush, promptly determined that he'd bear the name "Tom", carried him into the house and fed him a few scraps of white meat and biscuits, and then turned him loose to make war upon the rodents. Thereafter, Tom and Johnie appeared to completely forget each other.

Each went about his duties. They spoke when necessary, but their friendship seemed not to develop beyond the casual stage. Of course, they had their spats. Tom went courting and failed to return for a week and Johnie, who had been forced to fight the rats alone, didn't fail to let Tom know what he thought about such gross neglect of duty for such frivolous things as tabby cats. Whereupon Tom, next time Johnie stepped on his tail, retaliated spitefully. But, they remained together.

Johnie's wife went off for a visit after Tom had been with them three years. She doesn't figure in this story except that she went visiting. Otherwise, she would be completely ignored. However, she is important because her absence threw Tom and Johnie close together. They began sleeping in the same room.

Sleeping thus, they naturally were thrown out together when a cyclone slipped up one night with all the stealth of four freight trains and scattered the house all over the four corners of the three acre lot.

The next daylight, Johnie checked over things and found most of his assets, including Tom, missing; also a wide expanse of flesh that had got scraped by a scantling on its way back to the forest.

Tom returned in three days. He came meowing up to the big ditch back of the houseplace and crossed wonderingly over the footlog. He and Johnie eventually got together and had lunch. Johnie was using a door for a table and a quilt stretched across two planks for a bed room, but Tom seemed not to mind.

It was a murky day when Tom returned. Mud-colored clouds moved unusually fast overhead and lightning flashed repeatedly from every direction. Johnie was openly nervous and kept eyeing a big sewer pipe nearby under the road. When the clouds finally got together and produced a great gust of wind, Johnie was inside the sewer in nothing flat. He wondered about Tom and then remembered the cat had streaked it across the footlog with his tail flying long before the clouds got fully organized. Tom's flying trip across the footlog became a habit with approaching bad weather.

After Johnie completed his home, he dug a storm cellar and reinforced it with concrete. He felt safe from future storms, providing he knew when to go inside the storm cellar. He had built it large enough

to sleep in, but it was too damp to sleep in as a regular practice.

That's the problem that brought Tom into prominence and the undying affection of his master.

There was Johnie. He had a storm cellar and didn't know when to and when not to use it. He had a cat able to foretell the weather; but he couldn't watch the cat throughout the night.

Tom solved the problem. He was inside the room with Johnie one night when he felt bad weather coming. He searched so hard for an exit that he became frenzied and finally jumped through the window. The crash awakened Johnie. He had plenty of time to get to the storm cellar.

Next morning, Johnie began turning his back porch into a glass-enclosed sleeping room. He put a light on the back of the house and arranged the beam on the footlog, which crosses the ditch about 75 feet behind the house.

Tom sleeps in the room every night. When he wants out bad enough a frenzy sends him crashing through a window. Johnie quietly switches on the light and watches the footlog. When Tom goes across, Johnie gets up, dresses leisurely, and retires to the storm cellar.

No one has ever discovered where Tom goes after he crosses the log, but it is a proven fact that he never crosses unless a storm is coming.

1/20/1939

S.J.

"TOM" CAT, WEATHER PROPHECY

This is the story of a cat, namely, one Tom (light gray, with a white spot in his forehead, and inquisitive eyes) that developed a swami complex. It is going to be told by me; and not by an outsider. I lived with the cat one year; and I watched the growth of his prophetic abilities over a period of eight years. I also got his name in the paper when he first became news. I consider it therefore, my privilege as well as my duty to tell of Tom, the Weather Prophet.

A dull thud from toward the front yard of Johnie Gates' place proved one early morning to be a spindly, brow-beaten cat making a three-point landing. Dust from down the road indicated that the critter was tossed from an automobile by somebody, who didn't like cats.

Johnie, however, has no aversion toward cats. They're handy for catching rats, and besides, well, he actually likes them. So he picked up the cat from off a peony bush, promptly determined that he'd bear the name "Tom", carried him into the house and fed him a few scraps of white meat and biscuits, and then turned him loose to make war upon the rodents. Thereafter, Tom and Johnie appeared to completely forget each other.

Each went about his duties. They spoke when necessary, but their friendship seemed not to develop beyond the casual stage. Of course, they had their spats. Tom went courting and failed to return for a week and Johnie, who had been forced to fight the rats alone, didn't fail to let Tom know what he thought about such gross neglect of duty for such frivolous things as tabby cats. Whereupon Tom, next time Johnie stepped on his tail, retaliated spitefully. But, they remained together.

Johnie's wife went off for a visit after Tom had been with them three years. She doesn't figure in this story, except that she went visiting. Otherwise, she would be completely ignored. However, she is important because her absence threw Tom and Johnie close together. They began sleeping in the same room.

Sleeping thus, they, naturally, were thrown out together when a cyclone slipped up one night with all the stealth of four freight trains and scattered the house all over the four corners of the three acre lot.

The next daylight, Johnie checked over things and found most of his assets, including Tom, missing; also a wide expanse of flesh that had got scraped by a scantling on its way back to the forest.

Tom returned in three days. He came meowing up to the big ditch back of the houseplace and crossed wonderingly over the footlog. He and Johnie eventually got together and had lunch. Johnie was using a door for a table and a quilt stretched across two planks for a bed room, but Tom seemed not to mind.

It was a murky day when Tom returned. Mud-colored clouds moved unusually fast overhead and lightning flashed repeatedly from every direction. Johnie was openly nervous and kept eyeing a big sewer pipe nearby under the road. When the clouds finally got together and produced a great gust of wind, Johnie was inside the sewer in nothing flat. He wondered about Tom and then remembered the cat had streaked it across the footlog with his tail flying long before the clouds got fully organized. Tom's flying trip across the footlog became a habit with approaching bad weather.

After Johnie completed his home, he dug a storm cellar and reinforced it with concrete. He felt safe from future storms, providing he knew when to go inside the storm cellar. He had built it large enough

to sleep in, but it was too damp to sleep in as a regular practice.

That's the problem that brought Tom into prominence and the undying affection of his master.

There was Johnie. He had a storm cellar and didn't know when to and when not to use it. He had a cat able to foretell the weather; but he couldn't watch the cat throughout the night.

Tom solved the problem. He was inside the room with Johnie one night when he felt bad weather coming. He searched so hard for an exit that he became frenzied and finally jumped through the window. The crash awakened Johnie. He had plenty of time to get to the storm cellar.

Next morning, Johnie began turning his back porch into a glass-enclosed sleeping room. He put a light on the back of the house and arranged the beam on the footlog, which crosses the ditch about 75 feet behind the house.

Tom sleeps in the room every night. When he wants out bad enough a frenzy sends him crashing through a window. Johnie quietly switches on the light and watches the footlog. When Tom goes across, Johnie gets up, dresses leisurely, and retires to the storm cellar.

No one has ever discovered where Tom goes after he crosses the log, but it is a proven fact that he never crosses unless a storm is coming.

1/20/1939

S.J.

WOLF BRAND

Shelby County voted dry in the recent prohibition issue and the people chorused: "Whiskey, whiskey everywhere; and not a drop to drink."

But they were only kidding. They knew that Shelby County was the one and only home of "Wolf Brand," that powerful beverage concocted from "shorts," or wheat bran, and whatever else chooses to fall into the mash pot.

"Wolf Brand" cannot date its heritage from away back as can the whiskies advertised so prettily in all the leading magazines. It is instead, a child of the depression, and as such is popular; as people are popular who blame the depression with a lot of things.

These "would-have-been millionaires" say: "I'd be rich today if the depression hadn't come when it did."

"Wolf Brand" vendors say: "It'd be corn whiskey if the depression hadn't come when it did."

Actually, neither could be without the other. If the would-have-beens could afford better whiskey, they'd buy it. Then "Wolf Brand" would be no more.

"Wolf Brand" can be had for fifty cents a quart anyplace in Shelby within five minutes after the desire is known. It is a miracle of the retail trade.

When the moonshiners discovered that "shorts" could be distilled in the same manner as corn, their only trouble was tempering it down so that ~~it~~ it would wait until ~~it was~~ inside the drinker before exploding.

"Wolf Brand" distilling has progressed to a fine art during the past ten years, being now of such delicate texture that it hardly ever removes the skin from inside the throat.

Its appearance has improved also. It is now a tempting red-muddish hue when "charred," but many prefer its virgin color; which isn't a color. It used to look like skimmed milk.

The name "Wolf Brand" has been under controversy as to origin. Some claim that the original distiller got drunk and while trying to say "wheat bran" twisted his tongue and said "wolf bran." Others say that the wildness of the country in which it is made gave its name by the expression: "Its a wolfish whiskey from a wolfish country."

WOLF BRAND

Shelby County voted dry in the recent prohibition issue and the people chorused: "Whiskey, whiskey everywhere; and not a drop to drink."

But they were only kidding. They knew that Shelby County was the one and only home of "Wolf Brand," that powerful beverage concocted from "shorts", or wheat bran, and whatever else chooses to fall into the mash pot.

"Wolf Brand" cannot date its heritage from away back as can the whiskies advertised so prettily in all the leading magazines. It is instead, a child of the depression, and as such is popular; as people are popular who blame the depression with a lot of things.

These "would-have-been millionaires" say: "I'd be rich today if the depression hadn't come when it did."

"Wolf Brand" vendors say: "It'd be corn whiskey if the depression hadn't come when it did."

Actually neither could be without the other. If the "would-have-beens" could afford better whiskey, they'd buy it. Then "Wolf Brand" would be no more.

"Wolf Brand" can be had for fifty cents a quart any place in Shelby within five minutes after the desire is known. It is a miracle of the retail trade.

When the moonshiners discovered that "shorts" could be distilled in the same manner as corn, their only ^{problem to} ~~trick~~ was tempering it down so that it would wait until inside the drinker before exploding.

"Wolf Brand" distilling has progressed to a fine art during the

past ten years, being now of such delicate texture that it hardly ever removes the skin from inside the throat.

Its appearance has improved also. It is now a tempting red-muddish hue when "charred," but many prefer its virgin color. It used to look like skimmed milk.

The name "Wolf Brand" has been under controversy as to origin. Some claim that the original distiller got drunk and while trying to say "wheat bran" twisted his tongue and said "wolf bran." Others say that the wildness of the country in which it is made gave its name the expression: "Its a wolfish whiskey from a wolfish country."

1/25/39

E.J.

WOLF BRAND

Shelby County voted dry in the recent prohibition issue and the people chorused: "Whiskey, whiskey everywhere; and not a drop to drink."

But they were only kidding. They knew that Shelby County was the one and only home of "Wolf Brand," that powerful beverage concocted from "shorts", or wheat bran, and whatever else chooses to fall into the mash pot.

"Wolf Brand" cannot date its heritage from away back as can the whiskies advertised so prettily in all the leading magazines. It is instead, a child of the depression, and as such is popular; as people are popular who blame the depression with a lot of things.

These "would-have-been millionaires" say: "I'd be rich today if the depression hadn't come when it did."

"Wolf Brand" vendors say: "It'd be corn whiskey if the depression hadn't come when it did."

Actually neither could be without the other. If the "would-have-beens" could afford better whiskey, they'd buy it. Then "Wolf Brand" would be no more.

"Wolf Brand" can be had for fifty cents a quart any place in Shelby within five minutes after the desire is known. It is a miracle of the retail trade.

When the moonshiners discovered that "shorts" could be distilled in the same manner as corn, their only ^{trouble} ~~trouble~~ ^{was to} tempering it down so that it would wait until inside the drinker before exploding.

"Wolf Brand" distilling has progressed to a fine art during the

past ten years, being now of such delicate texture that it hardly ever removes the skin from inside the throat.

Its appearance has improved also. It is now a tempting red-muddish hue when "charred," but many prefer its virgin color. It used to look like skimmed milk.

The name "Wolf Brand" has been under controversy as to origin. Some claim that the original distiller got drunk and while trying to say "wheat bran" twisted his tongue and said "wolf brand." Others say that the wildness of the country in which it is made gave its name the expression: "Its a wolfish whiskey from a wolfish country."

1/25/39

S.J.

230 words

I HEAR OLD REUBEN MOANIN'

The scene may be any place in Shelby County where there is a crew of men working. A foreman walks up and spots a loafer. He yells:

"I hear old Reuben moanin' so stop mashin' him."

It is the new method of telling loafers they'd better get the Hell back to work; or go home and stay there.

The expression was born in Helena after a cyclone in 1933. All the man power in town had to go to work rebuilding. Naturally, there had to be a goodly number of foremen.

One of these, Reuben Simmons, directed the trucking crews and spent most of his day riding a truck. He rode to the chirt pit to boss the loading; then rode back and bossed the unloading.

It was necessary that two men ride each truck. Therefore, with Reuben, it made three on the narrow seat and somebody had to sit on somebody.

Everytime Reuben was on the bottom; he moaned and complained until he became fairly well disliked by everybody.

Thus, when a foreman walked beside his crew of workers one day putting a tune to "I hear old Reuben moanin'" it was immediately understood that somebody was being more trouble than he was worth.

It took hold. Reuben, being a petty road official whose work carried him over the county, was well known by working men. The saying spread.

J.W.H.

1/19/39

230 Words

I HEAR OLD REUBEN MOANIN'

The scene may be any place in Shelby County where there is a crew of men working. A foreman walks up and spots a loafer. He yells:

"I hear old Reuben moanin' so stop mashin' him."

It is the new method of telling loafers they'd better get the Hell back to work; or go home and stay there.

The expression was born in Helena after a cyclone in 1933. All the man power in town had to go to work rebuilding. Naturally, there had to be a goodly number of foremen.

One of these, Reuben Simmons, directed the trucking crews and spent most of his day riding a truck. He rode to the chirt pit to boss the loading; then rode back and bossed the unloading.

It was necessary that two men ride each truck. Therefore, with Reuben, it made three on the narrow seat and somebody had to sit on somebody.

Everytime Reuben was on the bottom; he moaned and complained until he became fairly well disliked by everybody.

Thus, when a foreman walked beside his crew of workers one day putting a tune to "I hear old Reuben moanin'" it was immediately understood that somebody was being more trouble than he was worth.

It took hold. Reuben, being a petty road official whose work carried him over the county, was well known by working men. The saying spread.

J.W.H.

1/19/39

230 words

I HEAR OLD REUBEN MOANIN'

The scene may be any place in Shelby County where there is a crew of men working. A foreman walks up and spots a loafer. He yells:

"I hear old Reuben moanin' so stop mashin' him."

It is the new method of telling loafers they'd better get the Hell back to work; or go home and stay there.

The expression was born in Helena after a cyclone in 1933. All the man power in town had to go to work rebuilding. Naturally, there had to be a goodly number of foremen.

One of these, Reuben Simmons, directed the trucking crews and spent most of his day riding a truck. He rode to the chirt pit to boss the loading; then rode back and bossed the unloading.

It was necessary that two men ride each truck. Therefore, with Reuben, it made three on the narrow seat and somebody had to sit on somebody.

Everytime Reuben was on the bottom; he moaned and complained until he became fairly well disliked by everybody.

Thus, when a foreman walked beside his crew of workers one day putting a tune to "I hear old Reuben moanin'" it was immediately understood that somebody was being more trouble than he was worth.

It took hold. Reuben, being a petty road official whose work carried him over the county, was well known by working men. The saying spread.

J. W. H.

1/19/39

CALLING ON MISS LUCY.

Nobody knows exactly when the tradition of "calling on Miss Lucy" started, but it has been going on in Shelby county, and possibly all of Alabama for years and years. Neither is the reason for its origin known, but it easily could have been like this:

City boys used to ride through the country and yell, "Hello, Hayseed," at the farm boys. That made the farm boys mad enough to smack corn with their teeth, but they didn't know what to do to the city boys because they didn't know anything about city boys. They didn't know what they liked and what they didn't like.

However, when good roads were built, and all good farmers and all farmers who weren't so good bought automobiles, the country boys began going to town. They found out what city boys liked and what they didn't like.

In the meantime, while country boys were getting acquainted with the city, more city boys began going to the country. The fresh air was a novelty. They'd go out in the sticks and get drunk on the clean atmosphere like opium fiends. But they kept calling country boys "Hayseeds" and asking about their crops. They didn't realize that country boys were getting wise.

So all the enlightened country boys got together down behind a barn one day and drew up a plan for getting even with city boys once and for all and forever after, so long as there were any city suckers left. The boys put their heads together and when they came out of the huddle, they felt that they really had something.

Well, pretty soon after that, three boys came out of the city to get some of that remarkable stuff called fresh air. They were a high and mighty trio and held themselves quite aloof for several days, but finally they got lonely and went down to the depot to mingle with the country boys who had gathered to watch the train come in.

They stood around awhile and then edged over to where four country boys were standing. They didn't know of course that the country boys had been waiting for just that very thing. One of the city boys said:

"What you fellows do when you get lonesome around here?"

The country boys knew what city boys did when they got lonesome, but they didn't let on.

"Aw, nothin, much," one of the country boys replied. "Once in awhile, there's a box supper or some other sociable. Iffen we ain't too tired, we go. That's about all we do."

The city boys looked a little funny. It was easy to see that they couldn't understand these country boys.

"I'm afraid you don't understand," one of the city boys said, "what we mean is this. Don't you ever get tired of just being around boys all the time?"

"Oh sure," was the reply, "but we jest git our gun and go shoot rabbits by ourself. We know all about how folks has get to be to theirself once in awhile."

The city boys looked at each other and shook their heads, all the time thinking that country boys were even dumber than credited. They forgot all about how easy it was for a country boy to go to town.

Finally one of the city boys decided that he'd have to talk

straight out to these country boys, so he said:

"What do you do when you feel like if you don't get to hug and kiss a girl you'll blow up?"

The country boys laughed. One of them said:

"Why didn't you say first off that was what you wanted to know?[?] When we feel like that, we go to see Miss Lucy."

The city boys were amazed to find this situation so easily taken care of, so they began wheedling to be taken on a visit to Miss Lucy. The country boys were doubtful awhile but they finally gave in, but not without a word of warning.

"Lucy's pa is mighty strict, but he works nights, and Lucy likes a lot of company, so I reckon we can take you over tonight."

The city boys get to feeling right good. They had wanted to hug and kiss a country girl for a long time. So they rushed off to get dressed in their best clothes.

That evening all dressed up in white suits and white shoes, they met the country boys at the depot. "Them's mighty pretty clothes," one of the country boys said, and proceeded to lead the city boys across boggy land and muddy land and through thickets until they had gone about two miles and darkness had set in but finally they came to an old house. The city boys thought it looked vacant, but decided it was because it was a country house.

They all walked up almost to the front porch. The country boys got the city boys together and whispered:

"One of us will go in with you to meet Lucy and the rest of us will stand around the house and watch for Lucy's pa. Then when its our turn we'll come in, and you can watch for us."

That suited the city boys. They wanted to be first anyway. So they walked up on the front porch with one of the country boys.

The others scattered out around the house and one slipped in the back door. He eased up to the front room and was standing there in the dark while the city boys knocked on the door. In a thin girlish voice he said:

"Come in." At the same time, he pulled a gun from his hip pocket.

The city boys pushed open the door and walked across the threshold.

Then, like rolling thunder, the country boy began shooting. The city boys jumped backward out of the door. One of the country boys yelled, "Her pa's home!" and scatted out through the woods.

The city boys, when they jumped backward, hit the muddy yard on the seat of their pretty white pants and streaked it through the thickets with no idea of the way home.

Next morning, quite crestfallen, they again were down at the depot waiting for the train. This time they boarded it.

And that's how "Miss Lucy" became a popular legend in Shelby county.

12/14/38

L.H.

Facklow

Woodrow
Hend

Joe's Tall Story

Maybe I would have disputed Joe Lowery when he told me how he got out of a coal mine explosion, but I didn't know enough about it to argue. Anyway, he ~~perimped~~ ^{forestalled} any idea I might have had by saying:

"Funny things happen in a coal mine. Lotta' times you get killed when you watch you^v step; and a lotta' times you don't get killed when you oughta'."

"Now, I wuz supposed to get killed when Red Ash mine exploded. I had a chance to get burned out, smoked out, or drowned out; but I got by^{it} all ~~of~~ ~~them~~. I coulda' even been starved out.

"Here's how it wuz:"

"When I heard the explosion, I run outta' the room where I wuz workin" and found the slope fulla' fire. Burnin' gas makes a hot fire.

"Well, I got ~~burned~~ good and wet and run through the fire, but when I got outta' that, the smoke commenced to choke me.

"So I put my nose to the ground like a dog and smelled my way up the slope toward the surface. I helped myself up by pulling along on the pipe line from the pump at the bottom of the mine. It wuz about a eight inch pipe.

~~"I wuz makin' it fine, till I heard the fall above me and when I got there, I found the slope completely blocked~~

"I wuz makin' it fine 'till I heard the roof of the slope cave in up above me and felt the pipe shake in my hand. I kept pullin' up to where I heard the fall, and when I got there, I found the slope blocked up tight. I couldn't find no way to get through or over it, so I jest had to set there.

"Nobody could get through from the other side to clean out the fall ^{as figured,} on account of the smoke and fumes from the explosion, so I set there for what seemed like a month and I still couldn't see no way to get out. I commenced to get hungry and then after awhile I got weak. I couldn't ^{hardly} hold to the pipe and when I'd try to keep my nose to the little trickle of water that seeped through the dirt and rock, I'd fall flat on my face.

"I wuz beginnin' to get sleepy every once in awhile, but I'd catch myself jest before I'd drop off. If I'd ever ~~wuz~~ gone to sleep, I'd have not waked up.

"I musta' been dozin' when I heard the dirt and stuff move a little, but I didn't really get awake 'till I felt water runnin' all over me and gettin' stronger all the time. I had to grab a tight hold on the pipe, but the water kept comin' so fast, I wuz nearabout washed down the slope. It tugged at me like a team* of horses and finally covered me over. If it hadn't stopped ^{in fifteen or twenty minutes}, I'd have drowned, but when it did stop, there wuz a nice big hole for me to go through and a clear path to the surface, but I couldn't leave the slope 'till night.

"The fall had busted the water pipe and dammed up the water. It jest kept fillin' up till it got to the top of the slope and was runnin' out over the grass. Then the water finally seeped through the fall ~~up~~ 'till it ~~was~~ opened up a hole. Then

all that water run back down into the mine,
nearly drownin' me on the way. If I hadn't kept a tight hold on
the pipe, I would have been washed clear to the bottom.

As I said, I couldn't leave the slope 'till
it got dark. That water rushed over me so fast and strong it
tore off all my clothes and left me naked as a fresh telephone
pole."

So, as I don't know ~~anything~~
anything about mining, maybe
joe was telling the truth.

m

JOE'S TALL STORY.

Maybe I would have disputed Joe Lowery when he told me how he got out of a coal mine explosion, but I didn't know enough about it to argue. Anyway, he forestalled any idea I might have had by saying:

"Funny things happen in a coal mine. Lotta' times you get killed when you watch your step; and a lotta' times you don't get killed when you oughta'."

"Now, I wuz supposed to get killed when Red Ash mine exploded. I had a chance to get burned out, smoked out, or drowned out; but I got by it all I coulda' even been starved out.

"Here's how it wuz:"

"When I heard the explosion, I run outta' the room where I wuz workin' and found the slope fulla' fire. Burnin' gas makes a hot fire.

"Well, I got good and wet and run through the fire, but when I got outta' that, the smoke commenced to choke me.

"So I put my nose to the ground like a dog and smelled my way up the slope toward the surface. I helped myself up by pullin' along on the pipe line from the pump at the bottom of the mine. It wuz about a eight inch pipe.

"I wuz makin' it fine 'till I heard the roof of the slope cave in up above me and felt the pipe shake in my hand. I kept pullin' up to where I heard the fall, and when I got there, I found the slope blocked up tight. I couldn't find no way to get through or over it, so I jest had to set there.

"Nobody could get through from the other side to clean out

the fall, I figgered, on account of the smoke and fumes from the explosion, so I set there for what seemed like a month and I still couldn't see no way to get out. I commenced to get hungry and then after awhile I got weak. I couldn't jardy hold to the pipe and when I'd try to keep my nose to the little trickle of water that seeped through the dirt and rock, I'd fall flat on my face.

"I wuz be^ginnin' to get sleepy every once in awhile, but I'd drop off. If I'd ever gone to sleep, I'd have not waked up.

"I musta' been dosin' when I heard the dirt and stuff move a little, but I didn't really get awake 'till I felt water runnin' all over me and gettin' stronger all the time. I had to grab a tight hold on the pipe, but the water kept comin' so fast, I wuz nearabout washed down the slope. It tugged at me like a team of horses and finally covered me over. If it hadn't stopped in fifteen or twenty minutes I'd have drowned, but when it did stop, there wuz a nice big hole for me to go through and a clear path to the surface, but I couldn't leave the slope 'till night.

"The fall had busted the water pipe and dammed up the water. It jest kept fillin' up 'till it got to the top of the slope and was runnin' out over the grass. Then the water finally seeped through the fall 'till it opened up a hole. Then all that water run back down into the mine, nearly drownin' me on the way. If I hadn't kept a tight hold on the pipe, I would have been washed clear to the bottom.

"As I said, I couldn't leave the slope 'till it got dark. That water rushed over me so fast and strong it tore off all my clothes and left me naked as a fresh telephone pole."

So, as I don't know anything about mining, maybe Joe was telling the truth.

R.S. Cook
Herend, Ala.

HORSE TRADE

By J.W. Hand

Grandpappy Cook had just finished bragging about selling a five-dollar calf for eighteen dollars, so to egg him on I said:

"Grandpappy, did you ever do any horse trading?"

We were sitting in front of my fire. He rolled his cud of twist around over his tongue and squashed it a few times with his seven teeth, then sprayed the fireplace from mantle to floor with amber^e. He studied the freckled effect while he propped his feet across a vacant rocker, my newest chair. I knew the signs. They were the forerunners of one of Grandpappy's long tales. (But don't call them tales to his face) He started the chair to rocking, adjusted it to a comfortable speed, then he said:

"Hain't never done so much ~~horse~~^{How} tradin'; never did own many ~~horses~~^{Horses}. I liked mules. But hit seems to me that I did skin a feller wunst. Hit's so long ago that I can't recollect fer certain, but I think hit wuz Betsy that I traded to a feller fer his mule.

"'Pears to me that I had saddled Betsy with a old wore_out saddle that musta' been no better'n a board covered with cowhide and wuz ridin' her over to Bailey's Mill - hit wuz about six mile - to git me some corn ground. I had hit layin' across the front of my saddle.

"Betsy looked pretty good. She wuz right fat and could pace a little. She didn't have no scars or sores or no limp. "

"Betsy wuz pretty to look at; and easy to ride, but she had moon-eyes."

~~Before~~
Before I could ask what he meant, Grandpappy twisted his cud some more and I expected to see the tiled hearth take on another growth of freckles. But nothing happened. Grandpappy gulped and settled back into his chair. I recalled the time I swallowed juice in my only tobacco-chewing attempt and felt a little faint; but Grandpappy seemed not to be bothered with the drink of ~~some~~ liquid tobacco.

Grandpappy continued:

"Atter I had rode along a mile or two, a feller come out of a side road ridin' one of the prettiest mules I ever see. He wuz slick as a fattened hog and stepped along like he wuz running over with pep. The feller wuz sittin' on a brand new saddle too.

"Me'n the feller spoke. He rode along with me a little way, all the time lookin' at Betsy. I could see what wuz in his mind, but I didn't let on. You kin tell a trader as fer as you kin see'im.

"Just like I expected, the feller said; 'That's a good-lookin' mare.'"

"'Yep,' I said, 'she's all right.'"

"We rode along, talkin' about this and that. The feller kept twistin' about on his saddle so's I could see hit. I let him keep hit up fer awhile, then I said, 'That's a new saddle, hain't it?'"

"'Yep,' he said. 'Jest bought it last week. Hain't been set on enough to git shiny.'"

"The feller slapped the mule's rump with his hand, and he pretended he had a hard time keepin' the mule from runnin' off and leavin' me. 'Dern near got that ^{Ass} ~~horse~~-fly,' he said. ~~Shush~~

"I could see the feller had a lively mule, jest the kind I needed, but I still didn't let on. We rode on a^lways, then the feller popped out in the worst kinda' form; 'How'll you swap?' he asked. Jest like that. No ways a'tall like experienced traders do. They talk about everything under the sun 'ceptin' the trade. So I figgered I could take the feller easy."

"'I don't know as I care to swap,' I said. 'I like this mare mighty well. But she wouldn't suit you.'"

"'How come?' he asked. 'What's the matter with her?'"

"'Nothin' you could lay your hand on,' I said. 'You jest wouldn't like her.'"

At this point, Grandpappy without warning nearly drowned out the fire, and amber mist settled in front of us. I hastily excused myself and returned with a small can which I put in front of Grandpappy.

"As I wuz sayin', " Grandpappy picked up his story, "when I kept tellin' that feller that he wouldn't like Betsy, he commenced lookin' closer and closer to see why he wouldn't like her. 'Course he couldn't see nothin' becus there warn't nothin' he could see. You can't tell nothin' about moon-eyes ~~but~~ ^{'till} the full moon, and hit wuz a week yet 'till then."

I saw Grandpappy's jaw workin' and mentally patted myself on the back for thinking of putting the ^{cupidor} ~~can~~ in front of him. But he worked up his cud and very carefully avoided the ^{cupidor} ~~can~~. The fireplace took on another coat of amber.

I took ~~more careful~~ ^d note ~~of~~ the angle and moved the ~~can~~ ^{cupboard} a little more to the front of Grandpappy. I didn't see how he could possibly miss it the next time. He continued his story:

"Well sir, the more that feller looked at Betsy, [;] the less he could see wrong with her. He let me git in front of him so's he could see her hind part and he ~~let me git~~ ^{got} in front so's he could see all of that end. He switched sides of the road. I jest waited and finally he said:

"In spite of what you say, I don't see nothin' wrong with that ~~horse~~ ^{Mule}."

"I didn't say she had anything wrong with her,' I told him. 'All I said wuz that you wouldn't like her.'"

"Is she shy,' he asked."

"Scare her and see fer yourself,' I said."

"He rode up close and jerked his hand across Betsy's eyes. She dodged jest a little bit. 'Well,' he said, 'that shows she hain't blind. And she ain't shy either. Has she got sores under the saddle?'"

"Nope,' I said. 'But you can look fer yourself.'"

"I'll take your word fer hit,' he said. 'Anyhow, she don't act like she's sore the way she's carryin' you and the saddle and corn.'"

Once more I saw Grandpappy get set to spray the termites but this time, I had no worries. The can was in good position. The cloudburst came, but the can remained perfectly dry. Once more I took the angle and moved the can. Next time, ^{I thought} even the law of averages would be on my side.

"The feller didn't seem to notice how I wuz lookin' at his mule. He wuz ~~possibly~~ the best-lookin' mule I ever saw, and I wuz

gittin' anxious to swap, but I knew hit wouldn't do to let the feller know about that."

"All uva' sudden, the feller said: 'Let's swap even.'"

"Nope,' I said. 'I won't swap fer less'n fifteen dollars boot.'"

"The feller studied a little bit, then he said: 'I'll give you five dollars boot.'"

"Nope,' I said. 'You're the one what wants to swap. Its fifteen dollars or nothin'."

"' I can't trade like that,'" the feller said. We rode on a piece and I could see that he still wanted to trade mighty bad. Some people jest can't stand to own a mule when they think they can get a ~~horse~~ ^{Horse}. Finally, he said: 'I'll give you my new saddle and five dollars boot fer your ~~horse~~ ^{Horse} and saddle.'"

"I told him all right. That suited me. In fact, I was tickled all over. We swapped right there and he even helped me move the sack of corn offa' Betsy over to the mule."

"But when we wuz all set again, I said: 'This is a trade. You won't like Betsy, but I told you before we swapped.'"

"He didn't say nothin'; jest looked at me like he thought he had skinned a crazy man and rode off. ~~■~~"

Grandpappy stopped to roll his chew around and I took advantage of the pause. I said: "Well, Grandpappy, It looks to me like he did skin you."

"Oh, no he didn't. Didn't I tell you Betsy wuz moon-eyed?" Under the accusation, Grandpappy spat viciously at the fireplace, clearing the can by two feet. I moved it again. Grandpappy said:

"Iffen you don't stop movin' that can around in fronta' me, I'm a'gonna' spit right in it!"

That set me back a pace, but I said: "Well, it still looks to me like he skinned you."

"No, he didn't. A moon-eyed horse can't see nothin' a'tall durin' the full moon. He's plumb blind 'till the new moon. But the feller couldn't tell nothin' 'bout that a week before the moon fulled; and he didn't ask me."

Alabama
R.S. Cook
Helena, Ala.

HORSE TRADE

By J. W. Hand

Grandpappy Cook had just finished bragging about selling a five-dollar calf for eighteen dollars, so to egg him on I said:

"Grandpappy, did you ever do any horse trading?"

We were sitting in front of my fire. He rolled his cud of twist around over his tongue and squashed it a few times with his seven teeth, then sprayed the fireplace from mantel to floor with amber. He studied the freckled effect while he propped his feet across a vacant rocker, my newest chair. I knew the signs. They were the forerunners of one of Grandpappy's long tales. (But don't call them tales to his face). He started the chair to rocking, adjusted it to a comfortable speed, then he said:

"Hain't never done so much hoss tradin'; never did own many hosses. I liked mules. But hit seems to me that I did skin a feller wunst. Hit's so long ago that I can't recollect for certain, but I think hit wuz Betsy that I traded to a feller fer his mule.

"Pears to me that I had saddled Betsy with a old wore-out saddle that musta' been no better'n a board covered with cowhide and wuz ridin' her over to Bailey's Mill - hit wuz about six mile - to git me some corn ground. I had hit layin' across the front of my saddle.

"Betsy looked pretty good. She wuz right fat and could pace a little. She didn't have no scars or sores or no limp."

"Betsy wuz pretty to look at; and easy to ride, but she had moon-eyes."

Before I could ask what he meant, Grandpappy, twisted his cud some

more and I expected to see the tiled hearth take on another growth of freckles. But nothing happened. Grandpappy gulped and settled back into his chair. I recalled the time I swallowed juice in my only tobacco-chewing attempt and felt a little faint; but Grandpappy seemed not to be bothered with the drink of liquid tobacco.

Grandpappy continued:

"Atter I had rode along a mile or two, a feller come out of a side road ridin' one of the prettiest mules I ever see. He wuz slick as a fattened hog and stepped along like he wuz running over with pep. The feller wuz sittin' on a brand new saddle too.

"He'n the feller spoke. He rode along with me a little way, all the time lookin' at Betsy. I could see what wuz in his mind, but I didn't let on. You kin tell a trader as fer as you kin see 'im.

"Just like I expected, the feller said; 'That's a good-lookin' mare.'"

"'Yep', I said, 'she's all right.'

"We rode along, talkin' about this and that. The feller kept twistin' about on his saddle so's I could see hit. Illet him keep hit up fer a while, then I said, 'That's a new saddle, hain't it?'"

"'Yep,' he said, 'jest bought it last week. Hain't been set on enough to git shiny.'"

"The feller slapped the mule's rump with his hand, and he pretended he had a hard time keepin' the mule from runnin' off and leavin' me. 'Dern near got that hoss-fly,' he said.

"I could see the feller had a lively mule, jest the kind I needed, but I still didn't let on. We rode on a-ways, then the feller popped out in the worst kinda' form: 'How'll you swap?' he asked. Jest like that. No ways a' tall like experienced traders do. They talk about everything under the sun 'ceptin' the trade. So I figgered I could

take the feller easy."

"I don't know as I care to swap," I said. I like this mare mighty well. But she wouldn't suit you."

"How come?" he asked. "What's the matter with her?"

"Nothin' you could lay your hand on," I said. "You jest wouldn't like her."

At this point, Grandpappy, without warning nearly drowned out the fire, and amber mist settled in front of us. I hastily excused myself and returned with a small can which I put in front of Grandpappy.

"As I wuz saying," Grandpappy picked up his story, "when I kept tellin' that feller that he wouldn't like Betsy, he commenced lookin' closer an' closer to see why he wouldn't like her. 'Course he couldn't see nothin' becuz there warn't nothin' he could see. You can't tell nothin' about moon-eyes till the full moon, and hit was a week yet 'till then."

I saw Grandpappy's jaw working and mentally patted myself on the back for thinking of putting the cuspidor in front of him. But he worked up his cud and very carefully avoided the cuspidor. The fireplace took on another coat of amber.

I noted the angle and moved the cuspidor a little more to the front of Grandpappy. I didn't see how he could possibly miss it the next time. He continued his story:

"Well sir, the more that feller looked at Betsy, the less he could see wrong with her. He let me git in front of him so's he could see her hind part and he got in front so's he could see all of that end. He switched sides of the road. I jest waited and finally he said:

"In spite of what you say, I don't see nothin' wrong with that mare."

mare."

"I didn't say she had anything wrong with her," I told him. "All I said was that you wouldn't like her."

"Is she shy?" he asked.

"Scare her and see fer yourself," I said.

"He rode up close and jerked his hand across Betsy's eyes. She dodged just a little bit. 'Well,' he said, 'that shows she hain't blind. And she ain't shy either. Has she got sores under the saddle?'"

"Hope," I said. "But you can look fer yourself."

"I'll take your word fer hit," he said. "Anyhow, she don't act like she's sore the way she's carryin' you and the saddle and corn."

Once more I saw Grandpappy get set to spray the termites but this time, I had no worries. The can was in good position. The cloud-burst came, but the can remained perfectly dry. Once more I took the angle and moved the can. Next time I thought even the law of averages would be on my side.

"The feller didn't seem to notice how I wuz lookin' at his mule. He wuz the best-lookin' mule I ever saw, and I wuz gittin' anxious to swap, but I knew hit wouldn't do to let the feller know about that."

"All uva' sudden, the feller said: 'Let's swap even.'"

"Hope," I said. "I won't swap fer less'n fifteen dollars boot."

"The feller studied a little bit, then he said: 'I'll give you five dollars boot.'"

"Hope," I said. "You're the one what wants to swap. Its fifteen dollars or nothin'."

"I can't trade like that," the feller said. We rode on a piece and I could see that he still wanted to trade mighty bad. Some people jest can't stand to own a mule when they think they can get a hoss. Finally, he said: 'I'll give you my new saddle and five dollars boot fer

your boss and saddle."

"I told him all right. That suited me. In fact, I was tickled all over. We swapped right there and he even helped me move the sack of corn offa' Betsy over to the mule."

"But when we wuz all set again, I said: 'This is a trade. You won't like Betsy, but I told you before we swapped.'"

"He didn't say nothin'; jest looked at me like he thought he had skinned a crazy man and rode off."

Grandpappy stopped to roll his chew around and I took advantage of the pause. I said: "Well, Grandpappy, it looks to me like he did skin you."

"Oh, no he didn't. Didn't I tell you Betsy was moon-eyed?"

Under the accusation, Grandpappy spat viciously at the fireplace, clearing the can by two feet. I moved it again. Grandpappy said:

"Iffen you don't stop movin' that can around in fronta' me, I'm a'gonna spit right in it!"

That set me back a pace, but I said: "Well, it still looks to me like he skinned you."

"No, he didn't. A moon-eyed horse can't see nothin' a'tall durin' the full moon. He's plumb blind 'till the new moon. But the feller couldn't tell nothin' 'bout that a week before the moon fullled; and he didn't ask me."

12/8/38

S.J.

Thirteen years in a
Hotel Kitchen

A thousand hunger-provoking odors stream densely out into the alley. The timekeeper ~~and~~ watchman who sits by the side-door alley entrance to the Tutwiler kitchen has a perpetual wrinkle around his nose from sniffing. It is an inquisitive sort of wrinkle; gives him the appearance of ~~having~~ ^a ~~spent a lifetime trying to identify odors.~~ ^{always} ~~smelling something, never knowing just what.~~

He ~~is~~ ^{won't} is a fattish person, maybe fifty, maybe seventy years old. He ~~wouldn't~~ say. He has a contented expression. After seeing the tray of food that was his lunch and after hearing him say that breakfast and dinner ~~were~~ were even larger, such contentment is understandable. ^{So is his figure}

"Why do you want to know about my work?" he asks. "All I do is sit here in the door and see that everybody punches the timeclock like they're supposed to. I can't give you no hotel kitchen story. Go on in and see Fay Lindsey at the pantry. She'll give you a story. She oughta'. She's been in that spot thirteen years."

So we didn't even bother to ask the gentleman's name, but stepped into the door and walked down a little hall to the right until we passed a fresh meat "station." A big, yellow Negro stood with a knife a yard long poised in the air, so we didn't bother to ask him any questions either.

Left was a big icebox and a counter with a fellow in between making sandwiches out of different stuff and then chopping them asunder with a long knife. The ~~Tutwiler~~

kitchen seems well supplied with long knives.

To the right was the range, stretching all the way across the kitchen. Three cooks ~~were~~ ^{ed} cavorting from one pan to the other and every once in a while slinging a plateful of food to waiters who came in and yelled at them in an unknown tongue. Once we distinguished "O'brien" and managed to connect the name with potatoes. Feeling quite happy ~~that~~ ~~and~~ after establishing this truth, we looked around for Fay and spotted her over behind two coffee urns; a counter covered with dishes of sliced lemons; fruit salad; tomatoe salad; several other salads; a toaster, and several other various instruments belonging to general utility. She was protected from the rear by an icebox, a garbage can, a sink-full of lettuce, and an open doorway that later proved to go through the bakery to the store room.

"Oh, hello," she said. She looked to be about twenty-five, had a neat figure, reddish hair, strong capable hands, and legs with burst blood vessels showing through the skin.

"How come," we asked.

"That's what I get for standing on my feet ^{thirteen} ~~ten~~ or more hours a day for ~~ten~~ years," she said.

Fay didn't stand still enough to talk. She kept bouncing from one end of her station to the other, trying to fill the orders of a steady stream of waiters. One time it would be pie; the next time coffee, then butter, toast, a salad, milk, and once a slice of watermelon.

"Don't you ever stop to nibble?" we asked.

"Naw," she flared. "Who wants to eat anything they have to look at all the time. I'd rather go home and eat milk and bread. Only I don't stay at home. A lot of us live up on the ~~four~~ thirteenth floor. Didn't even know the Tutwiler had a thirteenth floor, did you? No hotel that can help it has a thirteenth floor...to hard to rent the rooms.

"That's funny too..about the thirteenth floor here. When the NRA..you remember the NRA?..tried to make salaries go up, the management told that our salary was high, but it got down to forty-five dollars a month because room rent and food was deducted. Can you tie that?

"We have a table set here in the kitchen at ten in the morning - that's breakfast; and at five in the afternoon I don't know what meal that is, but I do know this. A room that can't be rented nohow and two meals a day ain't going to cut my salary from what the NRA asked to what it is now.

"Why don't I take my meals and room someplace else? I tried that, but it didn't raise my salary any.

"But I reckon after ^{thirteen} ~~five~~ years, anyplace would seem like home. That little room of mine is furnished with a dresser and a bed, with a table in the corner. I have a closet to hang my clothes in. Comes in mighty nice on cold nights. All I have to do is catch the elevator and ~~XXXXXX~~ I'm home.

"I go to work at two in the afternoon and am supposed to get off at twelve, but sometimes there's a party and I work the night through. Usually, when we get off, ~~XXXXXX~~ all of us cross the alley to

Greenwoods and drink a couplaa' bottles of beer. You oughta' see the Tutwiler crew lined up down the counter about one o'clock in the morning. When somebody gets to where he can't line his bottle up straight with the rest of us, we go back to our rooms and sleep until time to go to work the next day. If I didn't get my one day off a week, I reckon all I'd do would be ~~see~~ work and sleep, work and sleep. On my offday I usually run out to my mother's. That's where I get bread and milk.

"Why don't I stay out there instead of at the Hotel? That would mean extra carfare and going home after midnight. Besides, the Tutwiler was my home ~~before~~ a long time before my mother ever moved to Birmingham.

"You see, I'm thirty-six. I married when I was seventeen and lost my husband five years later. I stayed home for ~~two years~~ ^{a year}, then started here at the Tutwiler and have been here every since."

"I don't have any time for politics and such as that. Friday is my off day, so I don't even get a chance to go to church. Seems like all I do is work and sleep.