

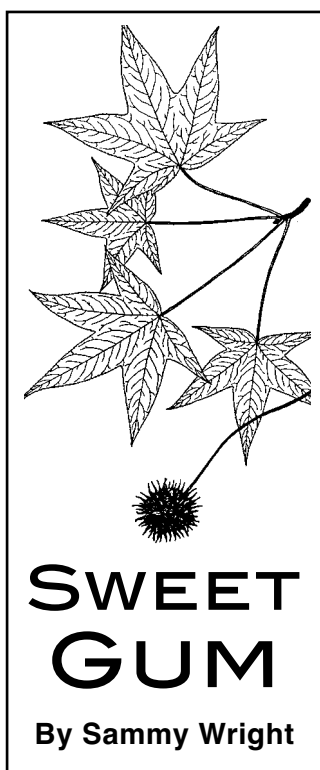
Historic Brightwater has many stories to tell

Rather than sinking into a state of despair when she lost her husband, Jeff Davis Miller, in 1930, Mary Miller's response included counting her blessings, for that was very much a part of her character. That response included counting her blessings for there was so much left. She had no doubt that the economic depression would last for several years, nor was there any doubt that her family could deal with it. She remembered how her father and mother dealt with the panic of 1893, and knew that she could follow their example.

Mary had a house full of children, and among them were several teenage boys who could do any kind of work on the farm. She called the family together and carefully explained that they would never miss even one meal by heeding her advice and following her plan. She would set aside five acres on the farm and reserve that land only for growing corn for their chickens. The rest of the farm could be used for other crops.

The second part of Mary's plan seemed strange at first, but after considering it, the children agreed that it was a well-planned strategy for dealing with hard times. More than that, the plan required very little work beyond the ordinary chores that had to be done anyway. After breakfast, every single morning of the year, one of the boys would go to the chicken yard and bring back a chicken. One of the girls would clean the bird, salt it and apply other seasoning, and place it in a baking pan and put it in the oven which was still hot. With just one firing of wood, the chicken would be baked and ready to eat at noon.

One of Mrs. Mary's children, the late Mr. Herbert Miller, proudly explained to us that his mother's plan worked well. Baked chicken is not everything, and it could grow tiring over the years, but no one ever went hungry eating it, because it really is a delicacy. The family owned a large farm just west of the Brightwater Methodist Church, and they lived well during



the Great Depression.

Because of the upcoming memorial on the fourth Sunday of this month, we went to Brightwater and took a random walk through the cemetery which can be divided into separate parts by the dates. The original, or ancient part, is the oldest part that is on top of the hill that is most distant from the church. It covers about two acres and contains numerous graves that are over a hundred years in age.

The old part is immediately easy and north of the ancient part. It stretches down to the paved road that runs throughout the cemetery. The old part can be separated from the ancient part only by dates. Graves in that part are newer than those in the ancient section.

The new part of the cemetery is everything between the cemetery road and the paved road that runs by the church. Check it out if you wish, and find that every grave between the two roads is newer than 1937, which is when that part of the cemetery was opened. Until that time, a fence ran south of the cemetery road and on up the hill where it joined the back fence of the cemetery. All these descriptions are not irrelevant because they provide clear marks to our history.

Several groups were

working in cemetery, and they made the day even greater. We left Mrs. Miller's grave and walked somberly along "Typhoid Row," which went by that name in earlier times because typhoid is what killed the twelve children who are resting there in a row. There are as neatly lined as "the poppies that bloom and blow, row by row, row by row, in Flanders Field."

All the children died within a few years after the turning of the last century. Some families were hit extremely hard because five of the children are Gavins, four are Whittingtons, two are Barefields, and one is a Smith. Typhoid wreaked havoc on Needham and the vicinity around Needham in the earlier years of the last century.

Dr. Eli Needham led a fund raising drive in 1905 to finance the drilling of a deep well. He was convinced that the typhoid came from water in the open wells. When everyone began using water from the deep well, the death rate from typhoid declined to almost nothing.

But Brightwater is more than typhoid deaths and those from other causes. It is also our Arlington, for resting there are fighting men and veterans of most of our wars, from the Civil War until the present. Fortunately, we have lost no one in the present war in the Middle East.

There are numerous stones in the ancient part of the cemetery that cannot be read because the inscriptions have faded to nothing. There are more than a dozen stones that were never inscribed. Those stones are really natural rocks from creek beds or the sides of hills. Considering the economic problems of those earlier times, we have no criticism for the people who placed those stones, for they worked within their own limitations.

Rather than being cold and unfeeling, Brightwater can be serene and blissful as a visitor wants it to be. It is a proper gauge of our progress because we no longer are ravaged by epidemics of typhoid and tuberculosis. We can



Established in 1840, Brightwater United Methodist Church is one of Choctaw County's oldest still-active churches.

thank God for those benefits, because most of the deaths in the 1920s and 1930s were caused by tuberculosis. Those deaths are easy to recognize from the dates on the stones. Most of the people who died from tuberculosis were usually at a young age.

The date when the church was established at Brightwater is given on the signboard as 1840, and that is probably accurate. Rev. Lorenzo Dow of the New England conference of the Methodist Church preached in this area from 1804-1812 when he was told to report back to headquarters. Like John the Baptist, the Reverend established no churches, but he did leave instructions for his converts to worship together. The good preacher died in South Carolina on his way to New England, so the sheep were left without a shepherd.

After Rev. Dow's death, the preachers in this area were mostly circuit riders who preached at several churches. Because of the travel that was involved, which was by horse and wagon, or just by horse, services were usually held once each month. We are talking about Methodist ministers. Since we are of that persuasion, our knowledge of other ministers is limited. Other denominations probably had circuit riders also.

We did not find any stones in the cemetery whose death dates preceded 1840, but several stones have birth dates that precede that time. This seems to indicate that the cemetery was planned and laid out after the church was established. We do know from older people that the memorials were once two-day affairs.

An interesting story went around about one of those early memorials. Saturday morning were devoted to singing and preaching, and Saturday afternoons were to singing only. Sunday morning were devoted to singing and preaching, but Sunday afternoons were devoted to preachers who were trying to get ordained in the Methodist Church. They had to give a short sermon before the congregation, and before a board of deacons.

Most of the preachers who were seeking ordination were young and without a lot of experience. One lad chose as his subject Jonah and the whale. He did a real good job of showing how Jonah's disobedience before God led to the lower realms, or more specifically to the belly of the whale. It seemed certain that the lad would be ordained, right up almost to the end of his sermon. He then proclaimed: "If we are obedient, we too can be like the obedient and

repentant Jonah, for we too can swallow a whale." Well, the Methodist are forgiving people, so the deacons voted to ordain the lad.

The memorial at Brightwater will be observed on the fourth Sunday, April 22, and the services will begin at 11 a.m. The sermon will be given by Rev. Rebecca Harper. There will be a break for lunch after the morning service, and singing will be gone.

If you visit the cemetery, pay attention to two monuments. One, the Barefield monument, is a replica of a tree. It is precise and intricate in detail and is a symbol of the Woodmen of the World, a very influential organization in this area during the early decades of the last century. The monument bears the date 1908, which means that it is approaching the century mark.

The other monument is the Buckalew grave stone which is near the back fence. It is also intricate in detail. Hand-made in 1923, the stone is really the edifice of a temple such as were erected in Greece and Rome by the followers of Saint Paul. Even in our miniature culture, Choctaw County is still — — —

In the race.

Whatley served aboard the USS President Hayes

USS PRESIDENT HAYES AP-39, APA-20 President Hayes was laid down as hull number 55 by Newport News Shipbuilding Co. She was launched on October 4, 1940, and turned over to the American President Lines on February 20, 1941. The U.S. Navy acquired her in July 1941, and designated AP-39, attack personnel, commissioned December 1941.

In January 1942 she sailed for the West Coast by way of the Panama Canal. Her first duty was evacuating civilians and dependents from Pearl



Our Veterans

By SFC Richard M. 'Pete' Allen (Ret.)



Harbor, and Marine amphibious landing training before sailing to Tonga Islands to stand by for the landing on Guadalcanal.

We had some men

from the county that could have made the trip aboard the President Hayes and her sister ships. Men in the 3rd Marine Division and 4th Marine Regiment made invasions on

Bougainville, then on to Emirau Island.

The President Hayes would make supply runs on many of the Islands in and around the South Pacific. February 1943 she was changed to APA-20, now she could take on more cargo to the troops.

She sailed for Leyte, unloading her troops, she witnessed the explosion of the ammunition ship Mount Hood, and she was not hit and helped with fire and rescue of the Hoods Crew.

President Hayes sailed for the West Coast for needed repairs, and

after two days she sailed again for the Far East of the Pacific. Hayes along with her sister ships landed the 81st Army Infantry Division on Okinawa.

She sailed for the West Coast, in Pedro, CA., she was loading troops for the Pacific when the Japanese surrendered.

After the war, USS President Hayes was a part of the Naval Transportation Service, President Hayes carried service personnel and their dependents around the Pacific until she was

decommissioned in June 1949.

She became a part of the Navy's Pacific Reserve Fleet until transferred to the Maritime Administration in 1958. She was sold for scrapping in 1973.

USS President Hayes earned Seven Battle Stars for World War II. On board the USS President Hayes from Choctaw County during WWII was, Frank E. Whatley.

(ED. NOTE: Pete may be contacted by email at allwis64@yahoo.com.)

Restaurant Review

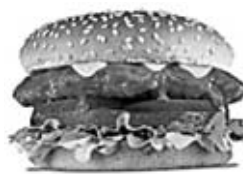
Hardees introduces new sandwich

Hardees has a new spicy sandwich in town and it's called the Red Hot Buffalo Chicken sandwich. Their website describes this sandwich as a "crispy chicken fillet smothered in Frank's Redhot sauce, topped with red onions, tomatoes, lettuce, with a creamy ranch dressing sauce on a seeded bun."

Hardees has added several new hamburgers to their menu lately bringing a variety of tasty burgers to suite everybody's taste buds touting their Six Dollar burger as the king of their menu. And for those who miss the glory days of milkshakes, drive up to the restaurant for a

delicious frothy treat with several flavors available.

The staff is friendly and brings your order out to your table usually with a smile and the burgers are wrapped in butcher paper and served in a basket letting you know this is no longer just an ordinary fast food restaurant. Visit their website at www.hardees.com to download monthly coupons. The restaurant is located at 109 E. Pushmataha Street in Butler, and can be reached by dialing 205-459-4240.



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