

I Remember Old Tuscaloosa

By Fred Maxwell

THE FIRST article entitled "I Remember Old Tuscaloosa" appeared in the Dec. 10, 1970, issue of GRAPHIC. With this item scheduled to appear in the Dec. 9, 1971, issue I feel that it is high time that I say adieu and "cease fire."

It has been one of the most gratifying experiences of my life to see how you good people who have read some of the articles have accepted them and expressed your reactions in such a warm manner. I thank you all.

It was not the purpose of these articles to make them of any historical value but only to chronicle some of the things about Tuscaloosa that brought fond memories back to me. I've left it to historians to write the history of the Druid City-Tuscaloosa.

It amazed me how many different articles touched on so many different individuals. Included below are some of them that stand out in my recollections. The dates given are when that particular item appeared in GRAPHIC.

12-24-70: The city artesian well at the intersection of 6th St. and 24th Ave. Mrs. Austin Bennett (nee Mary Fitts) told me that she was the one who unveiled the fountain when it was dedicated by the City of Tuscaloosa. I.N. Hobson wrote me that he was standing on the sidewalk just north of the underground pump for the operation of the well when he heard the explosion and saw Clayton Strickland emerge through the hatch with his clothing on fire. He rushed to assist others in extinguishing the flames which left such extreme burns and scars on Clayton's face.

1-7-71: Gonzales and "bushy-tail" cigars. It was with warm appreciation that I received a letter from his daughter, Mrs. J.W. Bowers of Amarillo,

Texas. She said that her father, Spanish by birth, spent his reclining years operating a cigar and candy shop in the lobby of the Court House at Amarillo where he was frequently called into court as interpreter for Spanish speaking Mexicans who had run afoul of the law.

1-29-71: The granddaughter of "Bill" Rohrer, who operated the "Whole Hog and Biscuit," Mrs. H.D. McCallon, contacted me and showed me several pictures of this establishment.

2-4-71: There was much interest in the silvertoned church bell that no clarification resulted from this item.

2-25-71: The boiler explosion item brought forth many who had heard of this accident but so far I seem to be the only one left who saw the boiler on the second floor of the Atlanta Store.

5-27-71: I was pleasantly surprised when the president of the Early and Pioneer Naval Aviators Assn. called me over long distance from California and asked for a copy of the article to include in the organization's scrapbook.

6-3-71: The ink hardly dried on the article about Summer stock tent shows when I received a telephone call that the show "East Lynn" would be presented shortly in Morgan Hall by local talent. I feel that no one enjoyed the performance more than I did.

6-17-71: I found that the Rosicrucians are still very active and I received an invitation to join this ancient order.

7-1-71: This article said Della Jackson was a woman. 'Taint so. Delaware Jackson was a man. Let's call this a typographical error.

7-8-71: The dummy line, and 10-24-71, the M&O Railroad articles should have embarrassed me over the extreme trouble I put others in supply.

ing me with certain information. Two outstanding aides were John T. Cochran of Mobile, whose father operated the dummy line for several years, and J.N. Ogden, current vice president and general counsel of the GM&O. I thank them both from the bottom of my heart.

9-2-71, 9-9-71, 9-16-71 and 9-23-71: I found many who recalled one or more of the old swimming places but none who had tried all I mentioned. Many remarked "Fred, you sure did get around."

11-4-71 and 11-11-71: Windham Springs. It was amazing how many told me of visiting this Summer resort in its heyday. I received a letter from Mrs. J. Brown Farrior, Sr., (nee Evelyn Searcy, daughter of Dr. James T. Searcy, longtime superintendent of Bryce Hospital) and she told me that her father's and mother's romance began at the vacation resort, Windham Springs, when at the age of 17 he first met Annie Ross. It was not until he finished medical school at the age of 29 that they were married. Their 12 children were all very prominent in Tuscaloosa's history. Dr.

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Grover Shamblin waxed eloquent over Windham Springs, frequented in his early medical practice.

11-18-71: The sinking of the Ophelia article prompted Philip (Dago) Frank, a former U. of A. student of mine (class '34) who was chief engineer for the Sinclair Oil Co. and now retired and living in Gainstowne, Ala., to inform me that his family was in the leather business (saddles, harness, etc.) in Mobile. It seems that his grandfather and great uncles had a shipment of leather goods aboard the illfated packet when it sank.

I do not know which particular article or articles aroused Robert Jemison, Jr.'s (a pioneer of Birmingham) interest but I appreciate his several letters, and also one from Joe Duckworth.

It warms my heart to see how graciously my articles were received and I thank each and every one who has shared my memories. So au revoir and auf wiedersehen. Thanks for your warm reception of "I Remember Old Tuscaloosa."
