**Tall Tales Of People We Remember**

The first eight of the "Tall Tales" were written by Leslie Morse for me to include in these pages.

**Overflow Talk**

Some years back the Arkansas River was bank full and just ready to come out of its banks and some of the men in town were talking of how fast the river was rising; this was back in John Leakey's day, and he said that he had seen it rise 18 feet in one hour. Uncle Tom James was in the crowd. Someone asked Mr. James if he could remember the rise and he replied, "No, but I saw it fall so fast it destroyed all the boats on the river." First man doesn't have a chance.

**The New Drummer**

Years ago the "drummers" came to the stores, they are called salesmen today. Usually they had the same run or route for 10 to 15 years. I remember that it was up in the fall of the year and cold enough to have a fire in the old "pot-bellied" stove. I think it was John Smith's store that the salesman came in and had a new man training for his route. As usual a bunch of the "fellows" were talking. One said that they ran more trains through Dyer than through Mulberry or Alma. That afternoon on their way back to Fort Smith, the young salesman asked the older one how in the world could more trains go through Dyer than either Mulberry or Alma.

**Shipping Shed**

Just South of Mack Dyer's house and a little East there was a side track of the Missouri Pacific Railroad, and they built a large loading dock must have been at least two box cars long or longer for I remember two cars being loaded at the same time. They shipped Berries, peaches, and watermelons by the car loads. The watermelons were the big long white Irish gray ones. Bill James, "Speck" Stephenson, and Orel Rhodes did most of the melon shipping. I was born in 1908 and as for back as I can remember the shed was there the first time I remember going to town. Then later years they put a building up and a pair of scales to load out cane and broom corn. The building and scales were just South of the gate where the city keeps the town mower and equipment. The cane was sent to a feed mill in Fort Smith which they made horse and mule feed along with other feeds. I won't mention any LAWS name but I have left several ½ gallons of

"Home Brew" there for him.

**Another Of Dick's Hunting Stories**

It was against the law to shoot ducks after the sun went down. The Warden parked his car near the Lake where Dick was shooting ducks. The Warden tried to slip up on Dick but Dick was an old hand at the game and gave the Warden the slip. Got around him and beat him back to the Warden's car. By the time the Warden gave up the chase and made it back to his car, it was dark. The Warden was driving a model "A" with the spare mounted on the back, and when he started the car, Dick was close enough to catch the spare tire and when the Warden slow down for the Railroad tracks in Dyer, Dick got off and bid the Warden "Adieu" and took his ducks home.

**Merry Christmas**

Sometime after the saloons were closed down in Fort Smith, some of the old timers would pool their monies and send to Joplin for a keg of whiskey. So along about Christmas time the "fellows" would order their whiskey for Christmas. I am sure there some few living today who remember the little "Dinky Train" that made the run West each morning and back East in the afternoon. Bill McNeely was the Agent at Dyer. The whiskey came, and Bill put it in the freight room. That night Dick Wells, Joe Hurd, Willie Kennedy, and Charley Floyd thought up a way to relieve the boys of their Christmas spirits. They crawled underneath the building, located the keg, and, using a brace and bit, bore up through the floor and through the bottom of the Keg, putting a #3 tub underneath and caught all the whiskey. So some of the boys had a Merry Christmas.

**Dick And His Goose Hunt**

Dick had many a fishing and hunting tales to tell, some true and some false. I remember an old Army Sergeant, think his name was Roden, at any rate Dick got around to talking to Mr. Roden. Dick told him about the flock of geese that no one could get in shooting range of them. They were in an open field so Dick gets an idea how to catch them. He makes a trotline out of heavy nylon cord, puts 50 hooks on the line and puts a grain of corn on each hook. He goes back the next morning, and the line is loaded with a goose on each hook. The next question was how he would get them home. He got the idea of driving them up to town, thinking what a show would be to show off his catch. He got a hold of each end of the line and started them toward the road, said he had a little trouble until he got them on the road. Once on the road everything was going just fine until a dog ran out in front of them chasing a rabbit The geese got excited and started running and soon they were off the ground and flying straight North with Dick still hanging on to them. He told Mr. Roden that he was about 100 feet high when they went over town. But when they went over the mountain, North of Dyer, one of his feet touched the ground so he let go of his catch. I don't think Mr. Roden thought to much of the goose hunt and sure never asked for any more of his hunting and fishing tales.

**The Trial**

Don't suppose many of the readers will remember the names of any of these "fellows" that I will mention. Back in Uncle Joe Wright's time as Marshall of Dyer, we had a few "fellows" who would play rough especially when they had a few "snorts." One Saturday night they had "COURT." Fred Hurd was the High Sheriff, Bayliss Black was his Deputy. Dick Wells was the Judge so they went out to patrol the streets, caught Buck Rogers and had his "trial" and sentenced him 30 days in a well and a 10 pound rock around his neck, and I guess the Marshall was all that saved Buck's neck. There was an old well and it is still there that they were going to put him in; in fact he was hanging on to the curb with both hands, and they were trying to pry his fingers loose when Marshall Wright stopped them. I am thinking that the well is on John Moore's place just South of the old jail house.

**The Case Of "No Hunting License"**

Jewel Chastain, living in California in the 1920 came back to Dyer in the fall for a visit. Many of you know that Dick Wells was a great fisherman and hunter. Jewel was only here for a few days and did not want to spend money for a hunting license. Dick said to him, "Oh, come on, and we will keep away from the Game Warden." Well, they go down to the Old Dyer Lake, got all fixed in their blind and here comes the Warden. Dick says to Jewel, "Sit still and don't move until I get the Warden out of sight." So Dick takes off through the high grass and bushes with the Warden not far behind him until he thought that Jewel had made his get-away.

Dick stopped and rolled a cigarette when the Warden came up to him and told Dick that he would like to see his hunting license. After showing them to the Warden, he asked Dick why he ran, and Dick replied, "Well, the other fellow did not have a hunting license."

In June 1982 Reggie Chitwood came down to see us and brought some old pictures to put in the Library Album. He seemed to enjoy his visit and told a lot of things that had happened here in the past. This was not too long before he died.

#1: When Carl Reavis had a little too much "under his belt" to drink, he would ride a stick horse up and down Main street, so the boys arrested him and held "Kangaroo Court." His sentence was death so they shot him with a BB gun, and Carl fell over thinking he had really been shot by them.

#2: The boys of Dyer loafed in town at night and told tall tales and held "Kangaroo Court" if they could find someone to arrest. Someone had a guitar playing and Reggie was singing "Aggravating Papa" which was one of the popular song of the day, and they asked him "Sing it again, Reggie." He did and Mr. Fines who lived in the back of his store had him arrested so, whenever Reggie appeared in town, he was greeted with, "Sing it again, Reggie." This occurred about 1920.

#3: Lin Kline had a poker game at his house, he lived where George Weese lives today although the house has been remodeled since then. Lin got a summons from the "Kangaroo Court" and they hung Lin in a well.

**Here are two more that Leslie told me:**

Charley Harris, Dave Cottrell, and some other men from the Flatwoods were walking to a meeting of the Farmers Union in the Dyer's Lodge Hall. It had been raining and the Hurd Branch was a little high and they pondered how they would get across. Dave said, "I believe that I can jump across the water and I will jump if you others will." So the others said, "Yes, if you jump over we will too." So someone held his lantern while he tried to jump but he landed in the middle of the Branch and when he got out he said, "Come on and jump, you said you would if I would." The others told him, "Yes, but you didn't jump over."

**An Election Letter**

During Election time letters would come to local voters. One day all were receiving these letters and a bunch of men were in Buck Davidson's store. Buck took his letter and crammed it into the stove without looking at it. Sam Morse opened his letter carefully and slipped a five dollar bill in the letter and sealed it again.

Then when Buck came back to the stove, Sam opened his letter and pulled out the five dollar bill and when Buck saw the five dollars he yelled, "Good —, I threw my five dollars in the fire!"

**Alton Creekmore's Memories**

Alton Creekmore lived in Dyer when he was a teenager. His father had a store and Post office for a year or two in the old store that had been John William Moss's on South Washington Street. I believe he told me that he married a girl from Chastain when he came down to see me. He recalled many events that occurred in Dyer. One was about the boys "Hopping Trains" and riding up to the grade by Uncle Thurman Hurd and jumping off and walking back to Dyer.

He also remembered when he and George Weese had been out to a party at night, he would go home with George for Mrs. Weese would leave a pitcher of milk and a big plate of cornbread on the table for them to have a snack. "My," he said, "that was good milk and bread."

**Mayor Cottrell's Boner**

Ernest had bought 5 gallons of weed poison and put it in the garage. Later he wanted to put anti-freeze in his truck, so out he goes to the garage and picks up the "Anti-Freeze" and merrily pours it in his truck. Just as the last drop went into the truck he realized that he had picked up the wrong can and had poured the weed poison in his truck so after a half a day and $30 he had the weed poison out of the truck.

**Oiling The Radio**

**Dean Kincy Related This One:**

A neighbor that Dean once had came over to Dean's home and was fussing about the radio not working. Then another day she came back and was still complaining that she couldn't listen to the radio because it still wouldn't work and "not even after her husband had given it a good oiling."

**A Lard Sandwich**

Bob Moss and Tom Mason had left Dyer to seek their fortune, and they were working in a "Quick Food" diner. A man came in and wanted a sandwich but didn't know what kind he wanted. Tom asked him, "How about a Lard sandwich?" The man said "O.K., I will try it." Our boys had told this so many times and we would all laugh. At one of the family gatherings, Bob told the story again and all at once Bob's son started to laugh and laugh. Finally he said, "A lard sandwich! All the times I heard that story I wondered why you laughed for I thought Daddy was saying 'A large sandwich' and couldn't understand why everyone laughed."

**A Pillar Of Salt**

One day Ola Moss was spending the day with Lizzie Nelson, and they did not want Lizzie's little sister, Lucy, tagging after them. My, she was four years younger than they were. So they told her to stand still and not to look back over her shoulder or she would turn into a pillar of salt and Lucy was scared to look back for she didn't want to be a pillar of salt.

One fall it had been a rainy, muddy time and Dick Wells had been fishing in the bottoms. He came into town and into "Buck" Davidson's store. Dick had mud up to his knees, and he told Buck that he would bet him that he could step into the box of eggs that was sitting on the counter and not break an egg. Buck took the bet and Dick stepped into the box of eggs and made scrambled eggs of the whole box, and of course he did not step on just one egg.

Another time he had a bunch of men invited down to the Club House to eat duck. Fred Hurd cooked the birds, but they were CROW and not duck and the men liked to have killed Dick.

**The Bundling Board**

In early days the houses were small and perhaps only one fire in the house to keep warm. So when a young man's fancy turned to love and he came courting in the winter time, there wasn't any place for privacy where the young couple could do their "sparking," so the couple would get in the bed where the family was sitting and cover themselves up to stay warm and do their talking. To keep the Beau on his side of the bed, a board the length of the bed was placed in the center of the bed between the couple. This was called "A Bundling Board." The young man was required to remove his boots and spurs.

**Benches**

There were many uses for a bench in the home and elsewhere. They were placed in the Grocery Store for the "Loafers" to sit on while they gossiped and "solved the problems of the world."

The Recitation Bench in the school where the students march up to from their seats to recite for their class.

At the Campgrounds where the audience sat while listening to the Gospel from the preacher.

The "Mourners Bench" used during revivals for the sinners to kneel by while they sought the Lord.

Courthouse: Where old men sat and reminisced over days passed and gone.

In Church, but today they are called Pews and have cushions upon them.

Dining rooms or the kitchen: Children sat upon the benches while they ate their meals.

Depots: For passengers while they waited for the train to come whistling into the station.

Loafers bench which sat outside the stores for loafers to sit upon.

So benches have played a very important place in our lives.

And if you can remember all the olden things from the past, then it is later than you think and you aren't as young as you would like to be.

**These next two Tales Olin Selby gave to me:**

During the Holidays, Millard Powell stuck a lighted Roman candle through the key hole in Buck Davidson's store. Buck had hung crepe paper up to decorate his store for Christmas, this caught on fire, and Buck jumped out of bed and told Cora to be calm and then yelled "Good \_\_\_, Cora, where are my pants?"

At this time there was a curfew hour for the young people to be off the streets. Olin and someone was getting into town late when the Constable caught them, and he finally told them if they would help him catch Jess Chastain's mules and put them in the "Lock Up," he would let the boys go free. So they helped to put the mules in the pen and waited until lights were out and slipped back to the pen and let the mules out again.

**Bertha Stephens Told This One On Daddy:**

Bertha was in the store one morning and Mrs. Tate who lived down in the bottoms came in and Daddy was listening to one of her tall tales she was telling. Little Robert Selby was standing there on one foot then the other, and he finally said, "Uncle Tom, I am going to be late for school, and I want a stick of candy that has a sucker on both ends."

**Lois Chitwood Williams Tells This One:**

Men working on the farm for John William Moss were batching at the Headquarter House down in the bottoms. John Chitwood was doing the cooking, and the rule was: The first person to complain about the cooking then they would take over cooking for the gang. John was becoming tried of cooking, so one morning he put salt in the coffee. At breakfast Sebe Tomlinson spoke up and said, "My, you put salt in the coffee but it sure is good."

**One Of T. J. James:**

Two men fell off a bridge into a lake. Another man started out after them when the fourth man said to him, "Get the red headed man first." After both men had been rescued, the man who saved the two asked the fourth man, "Was the red-headed man a relative of yours?" The other replied, "No, he owed me a quarter"

**Hit's For A Corpse**

A man went into a dry goods store and the only clerk present was a lady. He asked where the manager was, and the clerk told him that he was out. The lady finally told him that she could get whatever he wanted if he would tell her what it was. So he said, "I need a pair of underwear." Then the clerk asked, "Do you need shorts, drawers, or…" and the man quickly said, "Don't matter, hit's for a corpse."

A dog came into Hays Hurd's store and Hays wrapped a Roman candle around the dog's tail, and when the dog ran, the Roman candle would start shooting off and the dog would run faster until the Roman candle played out, and I expect the dog was played out too.