**THE BEGINNING**

In the beginning when God created the earth He must have selected a special spot which would become a home for so many of us. This special site was nestled down at the foothills of the Ozark mountains in Crawford County, Arkansas, which is its boundary on the North, the Arkansas River on the South, Alma located on the West and Mulberry on the East. Within the Community itself the boundary line on the West is the Heard Branch and the Morse Branch on the East. The Dyer Lake is in the South bottoms. The St. Louis Iron Mountain and Southern Railway divides Dyer into a North and a South side as it runs East and West from Little Rock to Fort Smith. Highway 64 was built about 1927 and misses our town running North of the City limits. And today Interstate 40 separates Dyer from 'the mountain foothills on the North. This is where we see ourselves, but on the map Dyer is located in the Northwest part of Arkansas, near the Oklahoma State line and about 20 miles East of Fort Smith.

Over 136 years have passed that we know in our history as we have found a land abstract: "UNITED STATES to J. S. Heard" Sl/2 of El/4 of Section 1-9-30 was entered by James Heard, 23rd of January 1836 and full amount of purchase money paid which amount was $1.25 per acre as shown in original entry book 93, page 170, 20th day of August 1838."

Over 138 years have come and gone and it would take several books to record all the events that have occurred here. So many people have died or moved to other parts of the Country and new faces are seen here more than old familiar ones. Just thinking of my own family, which is an illustration of many, once there were 41 people bearing the name of MOSS living here but today I am the only one here with the exception of those who are now resting in the cemetery. There are many memories of our childhood, school days, courting and marriages for many. And some few have lived their entire lives here, such a one was Fayette Morse and when he died I heard it said that he lived to be the oldest of anyone born here.

In the time before 1840, as far as we know, our town site was a wilderness nestled in the foothills and river valley with the two above mentioned branches lying on the East and West of it. These streams will bring back memories of fishing, probably more learned to swim in its waters, wading the swollen streams, cook-outs on its banks, and I recall one where my brothers prepared crawdads and green onions with the sandwiches we had carried from home. Also many were baptized in the waters becoming a member of one of the churches in town. Some of the more adventurous ones can recall trips into caves located in the mountains. And there are the pleasant memories of wiener roasts, chicken bristles, and a few opossum bakes.

The Heard Branch had its beginning away back in the hills, and I recall some of us climbing up the side of the stream to the source after picking strawberries all morning. I can still feel the cold rushing water upon my bare feet and slipping on the rocks as I held my shoes high to keep out of the water and often taking a tumble in the water. In some places the waters would be calm and warm where the sun shone on it and then one would come upon small rapids and waterfalls which all led to the large waterfall behind Uncle Mack Dyer's home.

This fall seemed so big and the water pouring over the rocks into basin below the falls where the boys spent hours swimming, A few years ago on a trip back to Dyer, my three boys wanted to go to the mountains and see the big waterfall that I had told them about. So I told them how to get there and when they returned they said, "What falls?" It is only a small ledge there now. Perhaps it just seemed bigger to me when I was small. But this was a favorite spot for picnics and sunrise breakfasts and an ideal place to hike on a Sunday afternoon to go "Kodaking".

This branch as well as the Morse Branch were named for early pioneers across whose land they flowed. On the Morse Branch were held many school picnics. I recall one when Miss Vesta Furlow was our teacher and the boys found some frog eggs which she allowed them to take back to schoolroom where we watched them develop. There were some caves on this Branch and some said, "There is gold in them thar hills" which the Indians had hidden there. Stories were told that someone had tried to find it, and they were shot at by the Indians and that there was always a watch there. I remember looking around to see if I could spy an Indian. There was a bluff that hung over enough to make a good place for a cookout, and the Epworth League and B.Y.P.U. used to hike up there for a picnic.

Another body of water that brings back many memories is the Dyer Lake. Back in the early 1900s, after the crops were laid by, probably the Fourth of July, I was rather small, the Community set aside a day for a big fish fry on its banks. The men and large boys went down the night before and caught and dressed the fish and next day women and children went down laden with baskets of food and we enjoyed the fellowship. Dick Wells seemed to be the official cook as he fried the fish in a large wash pot. There were boats and the boys were not satisfied until they got the girls out in them and somehow one would always capsize and the girls were ducked into the water. In the afternoon there were large tubs of lemonade and homemade ice cream. I am sure there were mosquitoes but who minded? And there were always a few stomach aches that night, but we were ready for the next fish fry and a day at the Lake.

In the early days one could find deer, panthers, turkeys, wolves, bears, and wild hogs in the mountain and in the canebrakes. My father as a small boy of 11 years plowed where we live now, and he saw bear and deer in the canebrake behind where Porters live. Floyd Loomis once went hunting in the River bottoms and he met a panther. He became so scared that he forgot that he was carrying a gun, so he and the panther just stood and stared at one another until the panther jumped into the canebrake and ran off, and I have an idea that is what Mr. Loomis did also.

I cannot leave out some memories of the Arkansas River which is located about two miles South of Dyer. Before the levee and dam were built, it would overflow about every two years on the crops. In 1898 it went on a wild spree and the people who resided at Riverside had to move out and some of them never moved back. Old timers told of hearing a loud sound in the night and they knew another piece of land had become a victim to the River, and in 1935 several farms slid into the River, up to the old red gate, those of you remember where the Red Gate stood. In about 1926 there was a overflow and the backwaters came up to the last house on river road where Mr. Oxford lived; the barnyard was under water for several weeks.

Some boys in a row boat went out into the waters and got into a current which was taking them to the Arkansas River but managed to guide the boat under some trees where they held on for dear life until rescued. The Arkansas River took its toll in our Community with land and houses going into the River. But we can remember it when it lay peacefully within its banks and the Ferry was owned and run by Dick Leakey, and the Ferry licenses are in the Dyer Scrapbook. The Ferry carried wagon and cars across from Dyer bottoms to Arbuckle Island and vice versa. Many people made a trip across the River in this manner.

At Riverside there was a building that was used for School and for Church services. I heard my father tell about the Lawson family who lived there would take a crowd home with them on Sunday after services. In afternoon the young people would travel by wagon to a baptizing somewhere. Once they drove upon a group of Negro boys swimming in the nude.

Then there is another waterhole that is familiar to many of the boys. The Daily Ditch located by the railroad near the Nelson place. This is where the more daring boys would take a swim on April Fool's Day after playing hooky from school and many a mother wondered why her son had a bad cold.

The Railroad has played an important part in our history. In 1876 the railroad was built through Dyer. Data given me says that Steven and George Dyer and J. W. Moss built the first depot on the crossing on Main Street, the street which runs in front of Little Mack Dyer's home. This depot burned and the railroad company built one which was later moved to Washington Street and was probably done when the stores burned and were rebuilt in 1909.

The Press Argus stated in their paper for the Centennial: "1870: Dyer Station is a station on the Little Rock and Fort Smith railroad and a shipping point of importance. The land was railroad land bought in 1870 by S. M. Dyer whose name the town bears. Cotton, cotton seed, timber, and fruit are the chief shipments. The station recently burned."

Most of us can recall during strawberry and peach season time that the fruit shed was open all night and freight cars were being loaded.

Land that was later to become Dyer was surveyed 08 December 1828 so it could be put up for sale. The map only shows the two branches on the East and West side of the town and most of land as a swamp. It was surveyed again 1831-1832.

The map for 1840 shows the West creek as being Sumac Creek and 122 acres belonging to James Heard.

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