**BLACKSMITH SHOPS**

These were a. necessity in early days because the farmer had to make repairs on farm equipment, shoe horses, etc. Seems the first one was Uncle Jake Wells, but I am sure there were some earlier ones on people's farms where neighbors could have a plow sharpened. He moved here and his son Joe helped him. Later Joe ran the shop by himself.

1850 Joel Dyer 1889 Jake Wells

Lee Meadors ran a shop in about 1914. It was located on South Main just north of the Methodist Church. It was fun to stop on the way home from school (as the poem goes) and watch the forge and hammering out and see the sparks flying from the anvil. I was fascinated and also concerned when he would be putting shoes on a horse for I couldn't understand how they could nail it on without hurting the animal.

I also remember when Joe Wells had one north o£ railroad and behind what is now the City Hall. It faced the south and railroad. They also made coffins there,

Late in the 1920s, he sent his two boys, Doyle and Homer, to Kansas City to take a course in repairing cars and they built the large shop on Alma Street facing north. This was used later by the Pentecostal church for their services. There is no building there now.

Today I suppose nearly every man has a small shop where he repairs his lawn mower and etc. But as a blacksmith shop, no.

**SHOE SHOP**

And once John C. Jones had a little wagon located on west side of Washington Street, up above the depot where he. lived and also repaired shoes. This we would stop and see on the way home from school as he usually sat in front of his wagon to repair.

Between his shop and the Confectionary store out south of it was a bare spot and someone put up a croquet game. Another thing to stop and watch on the way home. Once a boy was playing and his sister came by and saw him and she ran home and told her mother, "that xxx was shooting dice." Well, this mother became very distressed and grabbed her bonnet and started out almost on a run but came back reported to the women who were quilting at her house what the boys were doing.

I also remember walking along the sidewalk, especially on Monday morning, and there would always be playing cards strung along and how I would turn my head so as not to see. them.

**GRIST MILL**

I do not have data on the first ones in town. I do remember Daddy saying that when he was a boy that he was put on a horse with a large sack of corn to go to mill and riding a long way, which this task took all day to get corn ground and back home before dark so there must not have been any here.

Then there was one in the little store where Tom Wells Confectionary was at one time on west Washington above the depot. Another "slow to get home" thing. Elmer was to see me this Christmas and he told how they made brooms, I remember this but can't describe the technique of doing this.

**SAW MILL**

It seemed saw mills and gins went hand in hand. Stephen Dyer had the first one as early as 1880 for Daddy said he worked for him then. Probably earlier than that date.

Mr. Hester always had a sawmill wherever he was located. I also remember a large one that was on the Lipscomb place across from gin, and by the spring there. For some time this was the wash place for people in Dyer and we children would play on the rafters of the sawmill which was not in use then.

**GINS**

Joe Chitwood said there was a cotton gin here in 1872. The first Gin owner was Stephen Dyer, located on North side of town and south of highway 64, the property as we remember belonging to Bill Renfroe. Stephen lived in the two rooms on the East side of the house and thought that he built these rooms. The gin was located on the pond on this property. John William Moss bought this gin from Stephen Dyer and located it on what today is the John Moore home. It was dismantled in 1910 after death of John Moss and sold.

Someone said there was a steam-powered gin here in 1889. Billy Fox also had a gin.

There was also two gins here at one time. One located where a gin has always been southeast of the Selby place and then one south of that one on the River Road.

Bill Flemings also owned the first gin located on Line street. There is a picture of men that worked there with Mr. Flemings. He rode around in a buggy because of rheumatism. Daddy ***[Thomas William Moss]*** worked in the office for Mr. Flemings and while there that Joe Lawrence lost his arm. When it was the peak of the season, the gin would work all night.

The gin yard would be full of wagons waiting for the cotton to be ginned and bales piled over the gin lot waiting for cotton to be sold to cotton buyers. Sometimes the bales would catch fire and a few times the bales could not be saved.

On New Year's Eve night someone would get the key to open so they could blow the whistle which really let one know that the New Year had arrived. And who doesn't remember hearing the whistle at Mulberry calling the men to work

Others who ran the gin here were Jim Farmer, Tom Frank Alexander, and J. D. Brannon.

**HOOSEGOW**

In 1916 the Town Fathers felt that Dyer needed a jail so they passed an ordinance to have one built. This was a small one room built of concrete with a door in back and one in front and I believe one window. A door with iron grating in front. Located South of Railroad and East of Washington Street facing Kurkendall Street, just east of Charley Floyd's home. A few residents spent the night in the jail, but mostly it was used by the neighbors for a storm cellar. The last few years it was used as a pig sty.

Some of you will recall the saying that one child used when the children were playing Hide and Go Seek, "Hey, I see you behind the Jai-high-a." This was a favorite saying of my older brother, Thomas, and an uncle of ours, when ever they left one another in place of saying "Goodbye" they would use that expression. An aunt used the saying and the night before she died when Tom told her "Goodbye" she replied, "I'll see you behind the Jai-High-A".

One person told me about a man from another town driving down the town street, drunk, AND shooting off a pistol. Mr. James Thomas was the Marshall, and he managed to get the gun and placed the man in jail. Today it is standing there of a reminder of earlier days and some incidents as above to recall.

**FILLING STATION AND GARAGE**

Mack Dyer had the first filling station that we recall. It was located in the point of land west of town on Old Wire Road which was the road that was traveled from Dyer to Alma in 1920. One drove up a little hill and a sharp turn to reach the gas pump. Part of this station is at the back of the Dyer home place.

Virgil Davidson bought one in 1964 after he closed out his General Merchandise store which he ran for many years. This station was known far and nearby by the white horse that stood in front of it which Virgle bought from Tom House at Mulberry. One night some of the boys pulled the horse out on the highway and motorist would stop and then pull around it. This was one spot where a lot of Kodak pictures were made.

It was also in this station that Buck painted the stove belly red; he would grin when anyone would come in on a cold morning and back up to it thinking they would soon get warm.

Davidson sold out to a "Ward" and he sold to Dick Burrow and he rebuilt the station with a cafe added on to it and it was a truck Stop that was open 24 hours a day.

A Mr. Cole from Indiana with two daughters also ran the station and he sold it to Horace Shipley, a Baptist minister, and he sold to "Cannedy" and he sold to Claude Bert who removed the cafe and he sold to Bob Morrell.

**HOTEL AND BOARDING HOUSE**

In 1884 Floyd Loomis built a hotel for John William Moss where he moved his family from the 40 acres where he had settled in 1870 .This was on Main Street and he then built a store across the street on Washington Street. The hotel faced the North on South side of railroad. They furnished "room and board" for the teachers, depot agent, and "Drummers" who could not get out of town the same day; Dr Ayres also stayed there.

Daddy told this. Grandmother Sula would never turn anyone down who needed a bed for the night. Daddy had been out late and came in and went to his room and started to get in bed when he realized someone was in it. He didn't like the looks of the "bedmate" so he gathered up his clothes and went down to the parlor where there was a spare bed. As he got into bed he heard a scream and his sister Lucy and a friend was sleeping in there. But they left and Daddy kept the bed.

Thomas William Moss and Dora Belle Haydon were married there as were Lena and Elisha Dyer and Lucy Moss and Julius Faust.

Some of the men who worked at the farm also stayed there. Addie Davidson helped with house work and did sewing. She was a niece of John Moss. Stella Whittington, a niece of Sula Whittington Moss, lived there.

John Chitwood, Emzy Arbuckle and Virgil Davidson. ***[Editor's note: ????]***

Dora Belle Haydon boarded there while teaching in the two room school that was located by the Baptist Church in 1901.

Shelton Chastain boarded there while he built his house by the Moss store on Washington Street. Fannie Harroway, a teacher, and her father, depot agent, lived there.

In 1905 John Moss moved to Mulberry and his son Thomas moved to hotel to run the General Merchandise store. I ***[Alma Lorena Moss Lancaster]*** was born there in 1906. In 1907 John Moss moved back to Dyer and later sold the Hotel to Harve Chastain.

Joe and Florence Wells had a boarding house on the North side of railroad. Dock Brasher, Bill McNeely, Charley Jean, and Vesta Furlow stayed there.

Sula and Ruth Moss also kept boarders after Grandpa John died, and they moved to the two story house that Bill James lived in when it burned. Bill McNeely, Emma Matthews, and Vesta Furlow stayed there.

Terrell and Juresha Rhodes kept two of the teachers here: Miss Stevenson and Pearl Myers.

Thad and Fila Johnson also kept three of the teachers: Bertha Houser, Pearl Myers, and Marie Brown.

**SORGHUM MILL**

by Ruth Hurd

The mill was usually in a shed enclosed on West and North sides. The stone furnace was long enough to hold 3 large boiling vats at the back end, a tall chimney poured forth sparks and smoke.

On a little knoll nearby, the grinder was set up. The elevation had to be right to pipe the sap down to the first pan of the furnace. The long sweep was high at one end and low enough at the other to hitch the team of horses to. The horses would go in a circle and turn the sweep.

For about 6 or 8 weeks the mill would be a busy place. Farmers would come with cane to ground into sorghum. This would give the farmers a chance to visit. When they returned to pick up the sorghum, the women would come along for a visit.



A great sport was to get to ride on the grinder sweep. It was like a merry-go-round. The pressed cane stalks coming from the grinder made a stack called the "pomice pile" We would climb on this and hop the sweep as it came around.

As the cane juice boiled in the first vat, a green scum formed on the surface. This was poured off and poured in a pail. Drippings fell down the wall of the furnace keeping this spot wet with the sticky mess.

Once a man came to buy molasses and he backed up to this wall and his pants stuck to the wall. It must have torn the seat out of his pants as when he started to the buggy he backed out to the buggy.

For a taffy party, burning coals were drawn out in front of the furnace on which the taffy was boiled in a heavy iron skillet. While someone watched the taffy cooking, the others played games. One time as a game was being played, one girl came running by the taffy which had been set aside to cool, and she stepped into the skillet. I was the only one who saw the accident and we kept this secret while the taffy was being eaten.

The glow from the furnace and lanterns hanging around furnished the light for us to see by as we played.

We also enjoyed putting apples in the sorghum and cooking them. We always had sorghum on the table to eat with fresh butter and hot biscuits. It was also used to cook with. Yum, yum made good gingerbread,

Sorghum was also called "Long Sweetening" and remember how good was the gingerbread with a cool glass of buttermilk.

**FLORENCE BENNETT**

One of the first sorghum mills in Dyer was set up on Floyd Loomis place north of our house. Sometime in late 1890s I remember sopping foam out of the pan and can recall the mules going round and round grinding the juice out of the cane. We had barrels of sorghum molasses the year

The molasses when kept for a year would turn into brown sugar which was very good to make preserves and cakes and cookies.

Probably the one most of you remember is the one down on South side of town that was run by Greene Stephens. Children would go down after school and eat the "skimmings."

I recall on incident connected with sorghum that I haven't forgotten. Daddy had gone to the mill and purchased several buckets of sorghum which was still warm and set it down on back porch. I had my nose in a book and not watching baby Charlie. After awhile I heard Daddy and hid my book and made a dash to back porch and there sat Charlie in the midst of buckets of syrup with syrup dripping from all over him. What a mess to clean up and guess Daddy thought that was punishment enough.

**CAFE**

In about 1914 there was a cafe or soup kitchen in building where Leonard Davis lived later. I think it was a Mr. Hines. Someone said that Mr. Casey had a hamburger place there. In ca 1947 Hays Hurd ran a cafe in the old barber shop. Today there is one on Hwy 64 with fish as a special,

**CANNING KITCHEN**

Back in 1930, "DEPRESSION YEARS," a kitchen was set up in Old Bank building. Florence Bennett was in charge of Kitchen and Martha Chitwood helped her. Martha was heard to say that she never knew how they ran that thing without any conveniences. Water had to be carried some distance and fires built. People would bring in their vegetables and fruit to can and they helped with the canning. In 1934 there were 6,208 cans of meat, fruit, and vegetables canned at the Center.

**SHIPPING SHED**

Do you remember that long shed .that was built on North side of Railroad in the 1920s? That was a busy spot during strawberry and fruit season. Sometimes they worked all night, loading the cars so they would be ready for the train to move out in the morning. At that time, Dyer was noted for being a very important shipping point in the County.

**SEED HOUSE AND SCALES**

This was located North of Railroad on East side of street beside the Post office. Cotton seed were stored here and sold or shipped out. There is a story about some of the boys would hide in seed house and play cards. One of the fathers had been tipped off that his son was one of the players so he went over to check on things. This boy had just said "that he was holding a Club," and his father who was standing behind him said, "Yes, and I have a club for you, too". That broke up. the card game.

**DRUG STORE**

Once mentioned that we had a drug store in Dyer and they said, "I can't believe it". I replied, "Yes, we had a nice drug store back in the 1930s, and it was run by Guy Gray.

**WATER DEPARTMENT**

For some years Dyer had tried to have water piped into town so we could be modernized and put away the #3 tub for Saturday night baths. Water office started out in the old Barber shop, later moved to City Hall when it was built in 1971.

**CITY HALL**

City Hall was built in 1972 with a Council Room, Water Office, Mayor's Office, Fire Department, a room for a Library. Moved into building in January 1972.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT**

In September 1972 the interested people were called together to form a voluntary Fire Department. Day drivers were: Frank Rhodes, Irl Scott Lancaster, Neil Coleman, Bob Morrell. Night drivers: Morris Herring; Fayette Peevy, and Troy Gregory. Dockie Brashier is "Fire Chief," and the engine has been used several times in cases of fire. It was used the night the "Old Sexton House" burned.

**LIBRARY**

The Library was a dream of Dora Bell Haydon Moss. When she heard that a new City Hall had been built, she said, "Why can we have a small room for a library?" Later we mailed out letters to former residents and local people, and donations of books and monies began coming in. So on October 29, 1972, Open House was held in the Library with several visitors coming to see the Library that was started with just 500 books. The town fathers named the Library, "DORA MOSS LIBRARY," and she was able to see it the night before the Open House, and she was always interested in the number of books on the shelves and how many were read.

At "Open House" there were about 155 visitors registered. Some from out of state. 45 books were checked out on opening day.

The Library is owned by the Community. We receive no aid from the state or regional libraries. At the close of the year there were over 4,000 books on the shelves. 126 books have been placed on the Memorial shelf. The Library hours are Tuesday morning two hours, 9-11, and Saturday afternoons 1-4. There were 156 readers, and 5,312 books had been checked out this year.

Florescent lights were installed in ceiling. Two paintings by former residents: "The Home Place" by Fannie Lou Spelce and "Dyer Main Street" by Bill Williams. Several out of state visitors have called at the Library. Scrapbook, Albums of old pictures have been an interesting feature.

In two years 230 readers have been enrolled and 10,446 books' have been checked out for reading:

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| --- | --- |
| Books in Library  Readers enrolled  Families represented  Books on Memorial Shelf  Books lost  Non-fiction checked out  Adults fiction checked out  Youth  Children  Total check outs | 5,040  230  109  136  39  53  4,003  3,068  3,022  10,446 |

For the Bicentennial year we started an Arkansas Author shelf. Also I began writing a history of Dyer for the Bicentennial Day. Library Board is: Lorena Lancaster, Librarian; Virginia Rhodes; Wanda Aldridge; Irene Hurd; Martha Chitwood; Mary Lou Kelly; and Lois Williams. So far in 1976 are 171.

***Filename: LookingBackAtDyer 1838-1976 Book 01, 110-116 ~ assorted shops***