DYER'S JULY 4TH CELEBRATION BIGGEST EVER

By Joe Kincy

The flag-lined streets leading from Highway 64 to Dyer's Community Building set a festive and patriotic atmosphere for more than 500 people as they arrived at Dyer's third annual Old Fashioned Fourth of July Celebration and Reunion. The crowd, including former residents from New Mexico, Missouri, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, California, Arizona, Florida, Michigan, Ohio, and Louisiana; thoroughly enjoyed the day's activities that began at noon and concluded with a thrilling fireworks display at 9:30 p.m.

The program started with posting of the colors by an honor guard led by Carl Manuel of Fort Smith's American Legion Post No. 31. The audience displayed their patriotism when they enthusiastically joined Cindy Kelly Jones singing the National Anthem. Cindy, accompanied by Bonnie Rhea Wright—a local teacher for 44 years— also sang "God Bless the USA." Ronnie Hatley gave the invocation and Joe Kincy, emcee for the event, introduced the keynote speaker, Charles Moss, former Alma School District Superintendent and retired educator now residing in Little Rock. Moss traced his family history back to the original settlement of Dyer and told of several humorous incidents that happened while he grew up here.

***[Editor's note: Charles Moss is the brother of Alma Lorena Moss Lancaster, the compiler of this book.]***

A sumptuous covered dish luncheon followed, complete with an almost inexhaustible supply of delicious home-made ice cream that was served throughout the entire afternoon. Following the luncheon, Yvonne Nelson Darling spoke of her childhood years and what growing up in Dyer meant to her. Stewart Porter, WWII Silver Star recipient, gave a patriotic address and presented Alma Lorena Moss Lancaster, the city librarian, with a recently completed photo history of Dyer's WWII veterans.

Uncle Sam, played by Frank McCullough, was splendidly dressed in stars and stripes, complete with a top hat. His snow white hair and goatee lent such authenticity to the role that he received numerous requests for lower taxes and advice on how to improve, the government.

The video cassette recorder was won by Shirley Ingram of Lavaca. Lucy Thomas, 88, won the prize for the oldest attendee; Isaiah Costener, two years old, for the youngest; and James Spears of North Highland, California, received a gift for traveling the most distance.

Bingo, traditional horseshoe pitching, and all sorts of organized games and contests rounded out the afternoon. At dusk the crowd moved outside where Earl Swaim and his Catcher Country Band entertained until the firework display began.

There were no serious injuries; however, a grass fire, started by fire-works, in a field adjacent to the old school playground, was promptly extinguished by members of the volunteer fire department who were standing by at the event.

A tired but happy crowd departed with a renewed sense of appreciation for our freedom and promises to return next year for the fourth annual event that co-chairpersons Laura Belle Stephens and Mack Dyer guarantees to be even larger. They want to thank everyone, especially the ladies of the Dyer Women's Club, for all the efforts expended to make this year's celebration a success.



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