

Clouse Hill, Grundy Co., Tennessee

By Jackie Layne Partin

Don't hang up yet! Please, take the earplugs out of your ears! Our little spot in the road, Clouse Hill, TN, does have a history, so tune in, turn up the sound and devour. Your next flying trip past Dennis Meeks' house atop that old hill may actually turn into a history lesson instead of one of many wrecks that happens there.

Many areas in Grundy County, Tennessee are still void of written history. Clouse Hill is one of those areas. Through this short story, I hope to fill that vacuum a little with the understanding that I am not an official historian, but only one who hopes to leave behind some tidbits of historical interest for descendants of our county's families. Once upon a time, silly ole I asked a fellow Grundy County Historical Society volunteer, "How hard can it be to survey the Clouse Hill Cemetery for a cemetery book since the only inhabitants of the area were **Meekses** and **Meltons**?" I believed at the time that what I had said was true, so I took on the project. Boy, how naïve and unlearned was I!

Without doubt the land situation here in pre-Clouse Hill fits in with the overall picture of distribution of land that was taken from the American Indians. In the beginning there were grants of large tracts of land given because of military services rendered and/or other reasons; some men enlarged their holdings by buying up the smaller grants handed out to others. It is beyond my little mental capacity to understand how they kept from killing each other when all the "poles" were laid down and counted, and the old "sweet gum" trees decayed with their "marks" swallowed up in the compost of said decay. I'm not an expert on real estate transactions except throughout the years I have become familiar with documents speaking of large tracts of land – Bostick, Summers, Barrell, Parmley, Staub, Pearson, and many others in our area. J. K. P. Pearson should posthumously receive an award for having his signature on a myriad of real estate documents signed in early Grundy County. And I wonder if Newton Cannon, eighth governor of Tennessee 1835-1839, even cared that Samuel Brown Barrell didn't really need that 5000 acres he was given on Apr. 25, 1837. I know he did not need it as badly as the Indians. Much land was handed out bringing about what I call "old money" families.

Suffice for us to know when the proof of ownership was well established, some speculators started dividing it into smaller plots and putting it on the market for sale. That is one way that the land at Clouse Hill got broken up into parcels small enough for a hardworking farmer to own a small piece of land, but big enough to farm, house and feed his family. With the passing of time and the discovery of coal in the area this

whole afore mentioned process reversed with the buy up of property in order to gain access to the mineral rights. When the coal was mined out, a timber company gained usage of large tracts of land, but the little man hung onto his little piece of God's country.

Clouse Hill – Where Did It Get Its Name?

No doubt for years folks have believed that the community of **Clouse Hill** was named after **Clouse L(eonard?) Meeks** (b. 1877-d. 1950), son of "Crip John" and Mary Polly (Cope) Meeks and a brother to my grandfather, George Mack Meeks. The **hill** that became known as Clouse/Clowes' hill had actually been part of the Indian lands of **1783**; then the large hill got pulled and tugged into the forming of Tennessee into counties. It stood in Franklin Co. between the years of **1817-1835**; then it found itself in Coffee Co. between the years of **1836-1844**. Then finally in **1844**, it snuggled into the newly formed county of Grundy. These are blurry, nightmarish facts for genealogists, but county lines moved from time to time while settling down into boundaries that could possibly have allowed centrally located county seats close enough for all its constituents to have easier access. Several decades passed before Clouse and his wife Minnie left their farm in the head of Payne's Cove and moved up to the plateau where close relatives already lived. Before Clouse Meeks was born, as early as **1872**, the surname Clous/Clowes was used in a Grundy County deed. Following is an excerpt from a deed where John and Irene Anderegg sold a piece of land in Grundy County to Frank Meeks and his wife. This little excerpt is full of historical excitement because of the names included:

*"Beginning on a white oak **S. P. Copes** Northwest corner of a hundred acre tract of land where **F. G. Meeks** resided in **1872** and Southwest corner to **B. H. Clous** Land; thence bearing North with said **Clous** west boundary line One hundred and sixty poles to a post oak in said line; thence West 80 poles to a small rock on a high ridge; thence South 133 poles to a stake in **William Copes** east boundary line of a 300 acre entry; thence South 40 deg. East 27 poles to a hickory said **Copes** South east corner; thence South 40 deg. East 8 poles to the north boundary line of a 5000 acre entry of the **Barrel** lands; thence east with said line to the beginning, containing 80 acres more or less, being the same land deeded to **Joseph B. Haynes** by **F. G. Meeks** on Jan. 30, **1872.**"*

What a wonderful research paragraph this deed excerpt is! Stephen Payne Cope and his wife Comfort Bolin/Bouldin; Felix Grundy Meeks and his wife, Nancy Tucker; Benjamin Hewlett Clowes/Clouse, founder of the "hill"; William Cope and his wife, Piney Angeline Sanders; Samuel Brown Barrell and his wife, Catherine Brown, (his

name and/or his wife's name, are on many, many Grundy documents); Joseph Bailey "Joe" Haynes, son of Ephraim Madison Haynes and Clarissa "Clercy" (Wooten) Haynes.



Clouse L(eonard?) Meeks

and wife,

Minnie (Stokes) Meeks

Three of Clouse and Minnie's children are buried in the head of Payne's Cove on the former family farm. When the move to Clowes' hill came about, they left part of their hearts in the valley below.

Graves of Ida Meeks, Clouse Leonard "Little Blue" Meeks and John Meeks



Four-year-old Ida Meeks died Dec. 5, 1919 of diphtheria.

Clouse Leonard Meeks' obit follows:

“Child Burned to Death; (Mrs. Grundy March 1, 1923) – “The little two year old son of Mr. and Mrs. Clouse Meeks of Paynes Cove was burned to death last Sunday Feb. 25th, how it caught fire is unknown. The little child was in the house about fifteen minutes before they found it dead, it came to its mother and put its arms around her neck and kissed her and its little baby sister, it then warmed and went back to play, in just a few minutes one of the other boys seeing a smoke in a small sink hole or basin a few steps from the house ask what it was, they all rushed to see what it could be and found their little boy burned to death, its clothes were all burned off except its shoes, the body was burned to a crisp some of the other children must have set the dry leaves on fire as they were still burning or the little child could have had a match and set them its self. This certainly was a sad accident, and we extend our heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved parents, but direct them to the One who doeth all things well.”

John Meeks, born Dec 19, 1905, went to Kentucky to visit relatives and work in the coalmines. He died on **Feb 6, 1930** in Harlan, Kentucky. According to family members, John was one of the Meeks men implicated in the murder of Mr. Joe Reid Oct. 6, 1928 in Payne’s Cove, TN.

“Mrs. Grundy, Oct. 11, 1928, we read the following: “Aged Man Slain in Paynes Cove – Two Meeks Bros, and McGuyrt Held in Connection of Ambushing of Joe Reid. The two sons of Clouse Meeks and a fellow by the name of McGuyrt are in jail here suspected of the murder of Joe S. Reid, 70, whose body was found a short distance from his home at Payne’s Cove Sunday morning riddled with squirrel shot. What evidence officers have on which to hold them has not been divulged. Mr. Reid was walking to Tracy City with some produce to sell and two shots were heard soon after he left the house, but a search was not started until late in the evening after he had failed to return home. Indications of where two men had been in ambush behind a stump were found near where Mr. Reid Fell. A coroner’s jury returned a verdict to the effect that the man had come to his death at the hands of unidentified parties. Mr. Reid is survived by his invalid wife, three sons and one daughter. Feeling is high regarding the murder, and every effort by Sheriff Cline is being made to apprehend and convict the guilty parties.”

This may have been the reason he left home and went to Harlan. A little over three months after Joe Reid’s murder in Grundy Co., TN, twenty-two-year old John Meeks was dead. His Kentucky death certificate listed the cause of death as: **“Gunshot**

wounds—homicide.” I was told several years back by Joe Lester Meeks that it was a difficult job to get John’s body back to Payne’s Cove for burial at home. Sometimes it is best to move on and leave sad things behind for the ages. Clouse and Minnie worked hard all their lives and shared unhappy and frightening times together. At older ages, they moved up on the plateau on Benj Clowes’ hill where they both lived out the remainder of their lives. They are buried in the Clouse Hill Cemetery.

**Felix Grundy Meeks,
Son of Isaac Meeks and Tobitha D.
(Moore) Meeks,
and wife,
Nancy (Tucker) Meeks
in Trenton, TX in 1915
Marriage license was issued Aug.
3, 1854 in Grundy Co., TN**



The best picture of Felix Grundy Meeks is hanging in the large entrance room of the Grundy County Historical Society and Heritage Center in Tracy City, TN. Sitting with him in the large, oval-framed photograph is his good friend James Silas “Jim” Sanders. Both radiated prominence as they waited for the click of the camera shutters. The photograph was handed down to Mae Pearl (King) Thomas Wilhelm, Jim Sanders’ great-granddaughter. Since Jim’s son-in-law, Daniel Cicero King, was a photographer, it may well have been taken by him. Both men lived in or near Clouse Hill at one time in their lives.



MEEKS

Father
Mr. F. G. Meeks
 Aug. 4, 1832
 Sep. 4, 1925

Mother
Mrs. Nancy Meeks
 July 14, 1834
 Aug. 1, 1917

Grove Hill Cemetery
Fannin Co., TX



Mount Auburn Cemetery,
Cambridge, Middlesex Co.,
Massachusetts

Last two names on stone:

Samuel Brown Barrell – died
Mar. 22, 1858

and his wife,

Catherine Maria (Ward)
Brown – died Mar. 7, 1877

Ok, we must go on with our Clouse Hill story. Let's twist the common thought about the **name** of the area around a little and mention that maybe **Clouse** L. Meeks got his name from Benjamin Hewlett **Clowes** of New York City, New York. As stated before, Benjamin owned land on and near that hill long before Clouse L. Meeks of Payne's Cove was born and many, many years before Clouse Meeks came to the plateau. Benj Clowes, as he was sometimes called, owned land there before **1872**. He was born Feb. 28, **1826**, in Maryland to Rev. Timothy Clowes and Mary Sands (Hewlett)

Clowes. However, he lived and operated out of New York, NY most of his life. His first marriage was to I. G. (*I only have her initials-jp*), a lady born in Scotland, and twenty years his junior. There seemed to have been no children from this marriage. The following is an excerpt from a **Grundy County**, TN document, and it gives me another supportive source of information about Benj: “...*This Indenture made the twenty ninth day of June in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and ninty one, Between Benjamin H. Clowes (Widower) of the city of New York in the county of New York and State of New York....*” As a widower at the age of seventy-one, in Manhattan, NY, on July 28, **1897**, he married twenty-seven-year-old Julia Teresa Wausineck, daughter of Francis and Eva (Hoffman) Wausineck. In **1910**, in the Bronx, three years after his second marriage, at the age of eighty-four, Benj and Julia were the parents of three children: two daughters, Emma G. (12) and Elizabeth E. (6); and Benjamin William Clowes (4). All were born in New York.

In **1855**, Benj was a twenty-five-year-old man working as a “broker” in Brooklyn, Kings, NY. In **1880**, he even tried his hand at being a “farmer” while living in **Grundy County**, TN with his first wife I. G. Clowes. Benj received the following citation: “*I, Benjamin H. Clowes, one of the persons to whom the annexed citation is directed do hereby admit that due personal service of the said citation to have been made upon me at Tracy City, Grundy County Tennessee on the 19th day of January in the year 1883. Signed Benjamin H. Clowes.*” (I quote this to strengthen support for the founder of Clouse Hill and to state that he lived in Grundy County for several years.) It appears that his first wife passed away during the 1880s, or at least before 1891, possibly even here in Grundy County. Her death may well have turned his heart back to his family, friends and work in New York.

While living in the Bronx in New York in **1900**, Benj was listed as a “coalmine operator.” Now we know why he readily connected himself to Grundy County, TN: **1)** brokering, i.e., negotiating in land, timber, coal, or anything that could make money; **2)** farming the good soil on the plateau; **3)** coalmines—the order of the day. In **1905** he was listed by the New York Census taker as a retired broker. In **1910** he, Julia and the three children were living in the Bronx, NY. He died June 2, **1914**, and according to one record, he was buried at St. Peter’s Cemetery in Westchester that is also known as the Old Van Cortlandtville Cemetery. I can find no document or stone to support this as Benj’s final resting place. His father and other relatives are buried at St. George Church Cemetery in Hempstead, Nassau Co., Queens, NY. To make Clouse Hill’s founder more real to those of us who from time to time drive through the area and have family ties to the old ones who lived there, I will include a couple of photos to help form a relationship with Benj’s family. Who knows when someone in the Clowes family may

wonder where Benj spent those years and in turn may also help me fill in some unknown information. I could find no photos of him, but the one below is his father.



Courtesy of Find-A-Grave: Rev. Timothy Clowes (1787-1847) and St. George Church Cemetery where he is buried.

The Clowes' homestead was at the top of the hill named after him. Dennis Meeks pointed out to Janelle Taylor, Bolley Melton and me where the house once stood. There still remains an old hand-dug well on the site. In 1891, while in New York, Benjamin sold his home and three-hundred acres to Walter J. Knight and William Murray, men who lived in Newark, New Jersey. On September 4, 1900, William Murray sold the estate to Charles Heidenburg, a coal merchant. *(By the way, there is a street in Coalmont, Grundy County, TN, with the name Heidenburg St. that, no doubt, is called such because of Charles Heidenburg; he was listed as an 1891, Grundy Co. voter.)* On October 11, 1900, Mr. Heidenburg and his wife sold Benj Clowes' hill to the Sewanee Coal, Coke and Land Company. From this point on, once the company owned the land, it became confusing to follow a small tract after the giant swallowed it.

In 1900 and 1910 Census records, Alfred B. Meeks was still living in Payne's Cove among many other Meeks relatives including his parents. He was renting a house for his family, but I think I can safely say that around 1918, Alfred B. Meeks ended up buying the former Benj Clowes' log house and at least some of the former 300

acres of land. In January 1920, he was a timber contractor living on Clouse Hill Road with his wife Laura (Bean) Meeks and children, Della, John Cam, Marie and Dosie. Older brother Lawrence had married Lillie Bouldin, and they lived with her parents; he mined coal for a living for a short time. While still in Payne's Cove, Laura lost a child that was probably buried in Payne's Cove. Then on **August 16, 1920**, Laura presented her children with a baby sister, Clara Mabel. When Clara Mabel grew up and married Perry Houston Lawson in **1940**, the house was still there, and a room was added to the log house to accommodate the young couple. During one of the building sprees a long room was built all across the length of the house to be used as what one today might call a "great room".



**Benjamin Hewlett Clowes' Land (300 acres), aka Clowes' hill
Much of the main underground mining went on in the hills in the background and
other hills that rolled down toward the the right of the photo**



Benjamin Hewlett Clowes' hand-dug well



The Clowes' well with water level shown, approximately 20 ft. deep

Now that we have established the founder or namesake for Clouse Hill in Grundy County, let's talk about what life was like in the area. If one could visualize the first outing that John Moffat, founder of Moffat Station/Monteagle, TN, took before **1870**, when he first walked that part of the plateau, then anyone strolling through Clouse Hill could have seen a smaller version of Moffat's sight. In my opinion, the bluff views from the old Rieder land, or "Bud Top," as a portion came to be known, are surpassed by none on this plateau. As Dry Creek rushed along toward present day Highway 41 and Bell's Cove in the valley floor below, on its way it formed Deer Lick Falls below Summerfield Pointe. Its beauty could be enjoyed soon with a brisk walk from what became Benj Clowes' hill; if one knew how to follow a footpath, the flora and fauna along the way were just as inviting as Moffat's panoramic views. However, **what** did Moffat see that was missing at Clouse Hill pre-**1870**? Moffat stepped off a **train** right in the middle of a wilderness. Railroad tracks, nor a train, existed at Clouse Hill in **1870**. That didn't mean when Benj Clowes' horse ambled around with him astride that he was blind to the potential for a railroad, the coalmines, the coal, the slate dumps, the tram roads, the tipples, company houses, a little community or hub for his future "hill." It is for certain that his eyes were wide open to what happened in Tracy City in the late 1850s. Moffat and Clowes had a major interest—money! Please don't decry the last statement I made. Each had other interest, but money probably headed the list.

Another thing Benj saw was "trees." Trees made lumber; lumber brought money. Several years ago, a young female friend from a small island in the South Pacific walked out on my back deck to look out at the scene. Her quick response was, "Trees, so many trees!" Just maybe Benj, who was accustomed to life in New York in the 1800s, while plodding along upon his horse through the wilderness in Grundy County spoke the very same words as my young friend.

Clouse Hill Meets the Railroad and Coal Mining

When the Sewanee Coal, Coke and Land Company saw a future for itself in Clouse Hill, it began buying up choice land to begin its underground mining. Contrary to what one may think God did not create most of Grundy County's land and give it to the coal companies. There was life before coal mining on this beautiful plateau. People, real human beings, some of your ancestors and mine, some rich immigrants to this land, and others owned the land before the companies ever found the coal. Admittedly, the population was small, but the land still supplied human beings. To me, collecting the perfect land in Clouse Hill seemed more complicated than having one man like Benjamin Wooten, pen in hand, in the pre-Tracy City period, to sign over most of his land to the coal company. There appeared to have been a scramble in Clouse Hill to get

the land all tied up in a big bundle so that the mining could get underway. Land in and around Clouse Hill was owned by old families, some extremely wealthy, and some whose land was their only possession. The “little village to be” was like a web of bridges among Payne’s Cove, Layne’s Cove, Summerfield, Tracy City and Sanders Crossing.

In 1900, the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railway scouted for just the right route to get to the Clouse Hill coal. They found it on land owned in part by Samuel A. Henley and wife, Angeline, and William H. Hampton and wife, Bammie. Papers were signed on November 15, 1900, for the right of way to be available when crosscut saws, timber workers shaping out crossties, steel rail tracks, railroad hammers, and section hands came on the scene. It appears that the Clouse Hill branch of the railroad was laid quickly. The branch left the main Sewanee to Tracy City tracks east of the present Cumberland Bible Chapel and headed toward Benj’s hill. It is now known as the Summerfield Road. A good friend, Bob Douglas, believed that the tracks laid a little to the right of Summerfield Road that one now travels to Clouse Hill. Remembering the terrain of the land, I am supposing the train had at least two small trestles to cross. As a child, memories of the two small bridges and water slowly passing under them still excite me mainly because I knew it wasn’t too much further to my grandparents’ house. Now memories aren’t fact necessarily, but I have always wondered how the train crossed those little creeks. The tracks continued until it crossed the Clouse Hill Road, aka the Tracy City to Pelham Road, (*which for years was only a ruddy, muddy, rocky, wagon- width path down the mountain, impassable*—see next paragraph), and continued just a short distance up into what one might call a “heading.” It was here that the train cars could be loaded at a tipple and sent back on their way. One person spoke of this spot as being the hub of the coal and railroad business in Clouse Hill.

(An insert is needed here to acknowledge the hard work of Dr. Eugene Bryan who spent much valuable time calling senators and the governor at the time. Dr. Bryan was instrumental in getting the Clouse Hill Road formed into a real road – one that people could actually believe would get a vehicle to the foot of the mountain without getting stuck in mud, locked up in ruts, hit by falling rocks, into a slide off into a ditch or the cove below without warning. Then it could truly be called the Tracy City to Pelham Road or the Clouse Hill Road.)

Nov. 19, 1900, a right-of-way deed was drawn up by the Sewanee Coal, Coke and Land Company to the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railway. The railway would meander up and around the whole area of Clowes’ hill. Former lands or tracts involved in this right of way and sold out to the coal company included names such as Benjamin H. Clowes; Jesse H. Bell/Robert Adams; A. D. Rieder and others. It appears

to me that the railroad did not stop at the “heading” as we called it, but wandered all around the underground mines in two large tracts of land. **Nov. 23, 1900**, S. A. and Angeline Henley and W. H. & Bammie Hampton sold the company five acres. On **Oct. 30, 1902**, James “Jim” Sartain and S. A. Henley sold more land to the coal company for the right-of-way.

In one final tally of the **Coalmont Property of the Sewanee Fuel and Iron Company**, under the subtitle of **Miscellaneous**, Janelle Taylor found a mention of Clouse Hill as though it was an afterthought. However, it has informative information about just what might have wrapped around that whole undertaking at that heading. Thirteen houses, a store, a barn and a shop, pumps, pipe, and water cars were all listed in the company’s cost chart. The items seem reasonable for the Clouse Hill project. Today there is no evidence of any of these buildings, but locals remember all the talk from their elders and have handed down to us these exciting accounts.

Let’s Talk Tram Roads

Comments, comments, comments! I’m a big reader of internet comments on things that interest me—cooking, political correctness, God and tram roads. Once, I read an online comment about folks who live in coal mining areas who seem to know all about tram roads and where they were/are. The person doing the writing, if I remember correctly, was on an ego trip about his extensive travels and work in and near the forests and wildernesses. He stated that he had never seen a tram road in all his many years of travel, work and connection with areas that just might be tram road candidates. He just wished folks would stop talking about their tram roads. I remember that the comment caused me to “stick out my tongue” toward the computer monitor. If I want to say I live near a tram road, then something in my past has given me reason to believe that I live near some kind of a tramway, or on the other hand, there’s the possibility that I am just plain crazy and there are no tram roads.

We in Grundy County speak of tram roads in the area of the mining works just like we speak of biscuits and gravy. If the railroad came through, then somewhere there was a tram road. If a hot, deliciously brown, crusted biscuit was broken open and steam arose, one could bet it would soon have gravy on it, or some diabetics might carelessly spoon some homemade, muscadine jelly on the biscuit. In other words, railroads and tramways go together just like biscuits and gravy gravitate toward each other. A tramway needed to have rails of some kind; it need not be as strongly structured as a main railroad line. It was a way to move items in coal carts or dinkies like coal or logs or lumber, or it could be a place to park smaller carts or railcars when not in use, away from the main or branch lines.



A sweet little tramway at the former Werner's Mill in Tracy City – a great reminder!

My husband and son once built a small tramway system on our own land years ago. They used two-by-fours as rails and small, round poles as sleepers or cross-ties. Moving large rocks was their goal; the tramway worked, and the two men most certainly worked.



Grady Ward Partin and Curt Partin built a tramway to move rock for use in their landscaping business. The work began.



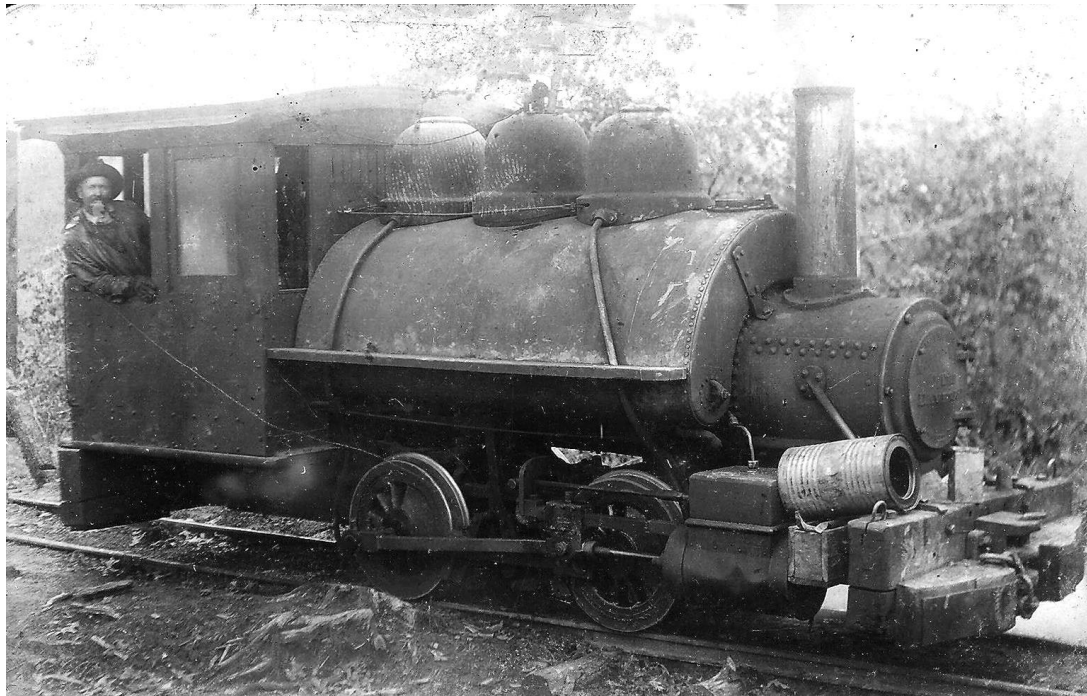
Standing: Roy Elbert Partin, the Consultant; seated: Curt Partin—all worked out!



No mule, no steam dinky, just an old Toyota truck to pull the cart up the tramway



Left: Curt Partin and his father, Grady Ward Partin with their first load of rock brought out on their tramway



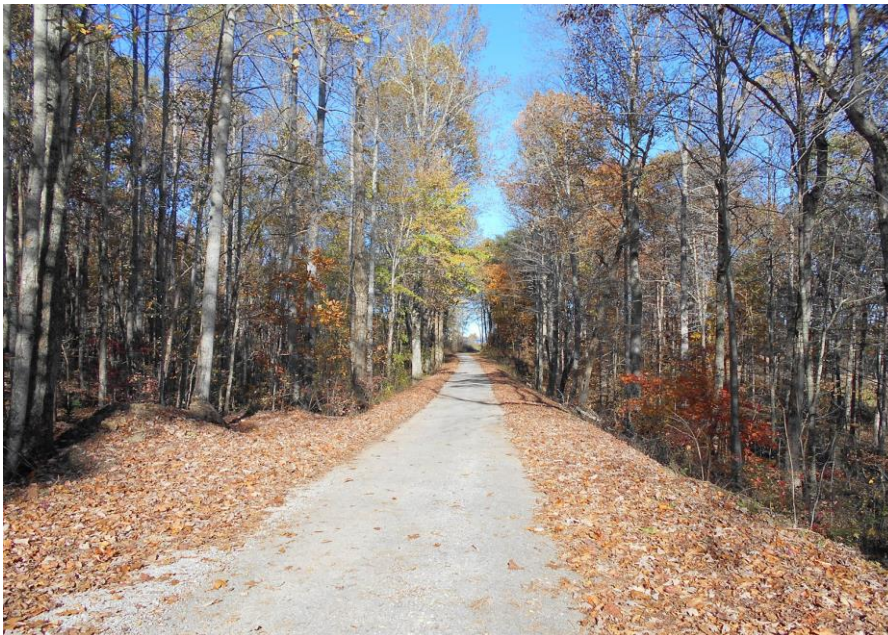
(1902) Daniel Cicero King engineering a dinky train that used a tramway to get the coal to the main railroad tracks in Clouse Hill.

The James Silas "Jim" & Catherine (Walker) Sanders and Daniel Cicero & Cenia Carnellia Pearl (Sanders) King families all were involved from time to time in Clouse Hill's history, but their story is for another writer later, and it certainly will be an interesting one.

Coal mining became the catalyst for change in the sparsely populated locale. A company store, a section-hand house, company housing, a post office, a schoolhouse/church, a cemetery—all the amenities of a coal town came together quickly, but something happened to that venture and the search for big money was short-lived. In **1902** we read: *"There was a meeting of the miners' union at Clouse Hill Monday."* This tells us that the mines were already operational in **1902**. It also tells me that the management and the union were sparring. The following is an excerpt from one of my former stories concerning four ridges in Marion County: in *"Nov. 1906, Mr. Walden went to **Clouse Hill** to pay the fifty or sixty men still working there for the company; they were possibly retreat mining, removing the pillars of coal that served as supports during the major operations. Work began on the Pryor Ridge branch in July 1907 just as the Clouse Hill mining efforts were waning. It was during this time that the Sewanee Coal Company moved the company houses from Clouse Hill to Coalmont..." Mrs. Grundy, Nov. 29, 1906: "The Sewanee Coal Company is moving the houses from Clouse Hill to Coalmont, which will be quite an addition to our town. The one on Spiegle St. is nearly completed and we learn that it is to be occupied by Rodgers of Meeks."* (Meeks, TN – jp) One must wonder what was going on in

the heads of the company mining engineers at the time. Someone made a mistake or rush to judgment on the Clouse Hill project. Here today; gone tomorrow!

Another important but forgotten situation with the mines was what to do with all the **grey** slate that was removed from the hilltops and the mines in preparation for mining. Near Hamp Thomas Road there was a huge slate dump, one about as tall as the ant hill that Hershel Curtis and Rod Messick encountered in Phoenix, Arizona after World War II on their way to California looking for sawyer work. Well, those ants just never give up! If one is as old as I am, then when we were children, the dirt road running in front of the houses was probably topped with **red** slate, a long forgotten scene. I cannot remember the spreading of red slate on King St. in Monteagle where I was reared, but I do remember when the road department opted for limestone coverings. I remember Mr. Ralph Lappin and his county road grader who probably worked right over the Clouse Hill Road in the slate and limestone days. Once the grey slate was burned, it became very hard and turned the color of red. It was wonderful for building up roads, covering the mud that annoyed everyone who marred up in it. Now admittedly, it was tough on children's bare feet because the edges could be sharp, but it soon settled with travel. The slate dumps could be seen all over the coalmining territories. Slate dumps are great for fossil collectors. Behind the mining hills that can only be seen from the present Clouse Hill Road, remnants of huge slate dumps could be seen for years, and may still be visible, but probably not for long. When I saw the iron gates, with their signs: "**Keep Out; Posted; Meth Watch; No Trespassing; Violators Will Be Prosecuted**, etc., I quickly remembered that Grundy County had a **new** sheriff who will soon oversee a **new** jail. Whatever is on the other side of those mining hills that piques my interest could just stay over there.



**Quite possibly the
tram road built by
E. L. Hampton
and
R. B. Roberts**

The above photo is definitely a tram road bed near Hamp Thomas Road. Oct. 30, 2015, I drove down it, stood almost in awe, and had no doubt that at one time it held a tramway system. The bottom of the photo is going southwestwardly, and although not as pretty because there are no houses, thus no upkeep, one can see where the old tram bed is. It moves right along until in a short distance it meets the Summerfield Road which originally was the Clouse Hill branch of the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railroad. If one could have followed it forward in olden days, it ran across the Tracy City to Pelham Road, aka Clouse Hill Road, somewhere between Thomas "Jeff" Meeks and William Wallace "Toot" Sanders, Jr.'s properties and went back to the mines toward the bluffs overlooking Payne's Cove. According to Isaac Franklin Parson, that land was called Rogersville, but he has no idea why. (*I will take a stab at the puzzle with the name Randall Rogers, land owner.*) The family of Elbert Patrick lived out there. The photo above is the tram road that was a portion of my long walk as a child with my aunts from Monteagle to my grandparents' house in Clouse Hill; well—sometimes they carried me on their shoulders, so I should say *their* long walk.

The Ramsey Mines were already in operation before the railroad was built to Clouse Hill—April 1898—"Miners at Ramsey come out on strike." April 1899—"Several miners transferred from Ramsey to East Fork." So it is possible that one or more of the tram roads went to that portion of Ramsey that I believe lay behind Sartain Springs, or we would know it as the *Johnnie Bone* place. The Ramsey Mines covered land above Apple Orchard Road, around to Littell Lake and Plainview, and then on over near Sartain Springs at Clouse Hill.

More Tidbits of Clouse History

In May of **1904**, Rufus Melton was hurt in the Clouse Hill Mines. (*Rufus Spencer Melton was probably the son of Henry and Bell Melton. He was twenty-two when he was hurt. He later lived in Roane County, TN where he married Lucy Reedman.*) In February **1905**, A. K. Starling's leg was cut off by a train at the same mines. {*He could have possibly been Alexander Starling, husband of Margaret (Turner) Starling.*} In **1907**, Andrew Holt was seriously hurt in these mines. In May of **1907**, the R. F. D., Rural Free Delivery, brought about the closure of the Clouse Hill Post Office. United States appointed postmasters for the Clouse Hill Post Office were **1901**—Gus M. Lasater; **1903**-- Harris S. Walden; **1904**—John W. Raulston; **1906**—Vance H. Lasater; **1907**—R.F.D. to Tracy City. June 4, **1920**, unmarried Tom Gibbs was killed in Flat Branch Mines and buried in **Clouse Hill** in an unmarked grave.

The following are notes given to me by my good friend, Isaac Franklin Parson, son of Robert and Flora (Foster) Parson.

The railroad came out the Summerfield Rd., crossed the Clouse Hill Rd. and went passed where the Robert Lee Parson house was later, about 3/8 mile into a heading. They backed the RR cars up in that place where they had brought the coal around the hill to be loaded by tipple onto waiting cars. The mines were called Clouse Hill Mines.

There was a hand-dug well up in the hollow that the Parson family used later. The Company Store was across the railroad bed from the future Robert Parson's house. Up the hill between Cam Meeks and the Parson house was a field called Red House Field. The intersection was the hub of Clouse Hill.

Robert and Flora Parson owned a log house just past the intersection of Summerfield Rd. and Clouse Hill Rd. When the coal company left, it tried to sell the company land to Alfred B. and Cam Meeks (1400 acres for \$1400). The Meekses did not think it was worth that much even though they had the money in their pockets. Then the coal company sold it to C. W. Hale, owner of the ice plant in Tracy City that stood near where the County Garage is now. (2015) (This section of Isaac's notes will be questioned throughout the story, but this is how he remembered the happening of that time as the stories came down to him. jp)

Mr. Hale hired Robert Lee Parson to be the overseer of sorts of the 1400 acres. If one wanted to dog hole a mine and get coal, he had to go through Robert. If one wanted to cut timber, he had to go through Robert. Robert supported his family through the overseer job and mining in the private coal company owned by William Perry "Bill" Church. This was after the company mining had moved on toward Coalmont. (One must remember that Isaac is drawing on memories from stories told to him when he was a child. Growing up at the foot of the actual main underground mining operations, both company and private, gave him memories that most do not have.)

For years Robert and Flora planted corn in the Red House Field. It was decided that a red house standing in the middle of the field in the company days was the reason for the field to retain the name to this day. It doesn't look much like a field today, but folks still speak of the Red House Field.

Another version of the company's effort to sell the mined area was told by Dennis Meeks. He believed that it was C. W. Hale, not the coal company, who offered

to sell the land to his father Cam Meeks for a dollar an acre. His memories were that there were 1200 acres for \$1200 dollars, and the offer was refused although his father had the money in his pocket. More will come on this later.

Company mining moved on out toward Coalmont early on—why? Was it because of the fact that during the years that the Clouse Hill mines were operating, there was constant strife between the coal company and the miners' union around Tracy City; this may have been a reason to move on. The company may have felt that Clouse Hill Mines had waned as the Coalmont area beckoned to be worked. From Ike Woodward's bulletin we read: August **1900**—*“work reported dull in mines”*; January **1902**—*“Miners in unsatisfactory condition – things not going right”*; October **1902**—*“Miners been out about four months, no prospect of settlement yet”*; February **1904**—*“Short work in mines”*; Mar. **1904**—*“Coalmont coal put on market”*; **1905**—*“September—“Reid Hill Mines operated under guard”*; there was trouble all around in the mining systems, a situation that only grew worse throughout the years. Maybe the coal gave out in Clouse Hill, but one wonders why private individuals later kept sending their employees underground if the coal had played out.

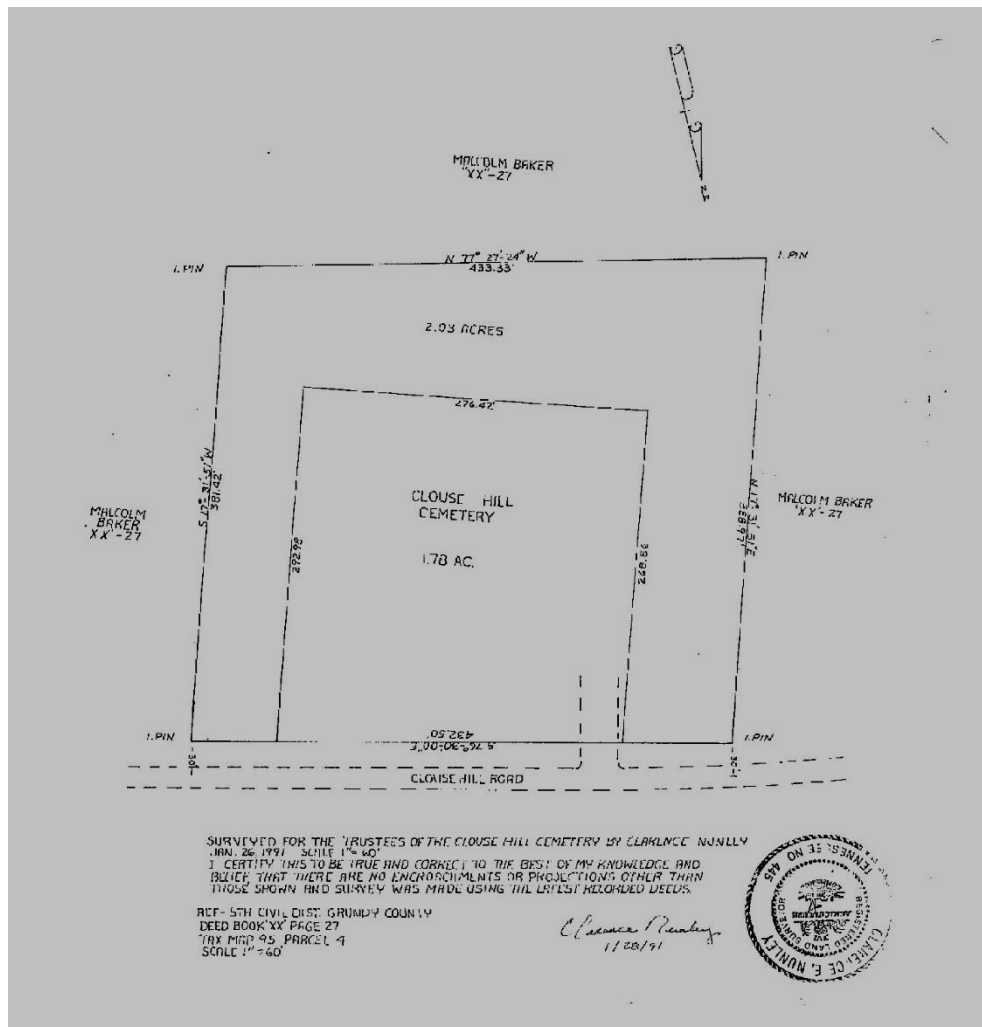
However, the railroad tracks were moving right on toward Nunley Ridge, **1903**—*“Talk of railroad to Nunley Ridge”*; Coalmont, March **1904**—*“rails laid to Coalmont”*; Flat Branch—June **1904**, *“Flat Branch Railroad nearing completion”*, and other places. Several privately owned underground mines continued to operate in Clouse Hill and did find coal. We know that for years strip mining the tops of the hills at Clouse Hill opened up miners to remnants of coal left behind by the **company** and private underground mine works. Dog hole mines were dug mainly by less fortunate people in desperation for warmth for their families. My grandfathers on both sides had access to dog hole mines in their areas. One of our sons has an old dog hole mine on his land, and under the bluff where I live, there are remnants of the same type of mines. According to the origin of a dog hole mine, it got its name from the fact that it was only dug deeply enough or high enough for a dog to stand safely inside. I know that some were larger, and a family may have been blessed enough to get coal for a winter from one of those. However, they were dangerous also.

It was told that Alfred B. Meeks and his son Cam Meeks took up the railroad tracks when the company made the move to Coalmont—a whole new story for another author.

Some Residents Listed As Living on Clouse Hill Road in 1920 Census

John A. Harris, John Sloan, Lonzo Woods, Julia Manders, Steven Smartt, Bailey Haynes, Moses Shrum, Alfred B. Meeks, Isaac M. Sartain, Henry O. Church and Will Levan. Some of these lived closer to Sanders Crossing, but were listed as living on Clouse Hill Road.

Clouse Hill Cemetery



Clouse Hill Cemetery with New Addition in 1991

The original Clouse Hill Cemetery encompassed 1.78 acres believed to have been donated by Samuel and Angeline (Sartain) Henley. This donation of land may also account for the first **marked** burial in the cemetery being Angeline Sartain's sister-in-law, "Levina" (Hargis) Sartain. In 1991 Malcolm Baker sold 2.03 more acres to the

Cemetery Association for a \$1000.00 an acre being more than \$2000.00 total. He had bought the land in **1959** from J. B. and Bonnie May McFadin. According to Ruth Meeks, there was a Cemetery Association at the time with Jenny (Melton) Hughes as its president and Helen Ruth (Parson) Meeks as its secretary-treasurer. The money for Mr. Baker was collected through bake sales, shooting matches, and other means of solicitation. As years passed, and Jenny found it harder to get home as often as she felt she was needed in the cemetery work and care, the association's input waned. Some interested and helpful people died off, and the upkeep was left to volunteers. And did they ever work? Several years back while I was doing one of my several big walks over the cemetery while working on a survey for the Grundy County Cemeteries Book, I met the volunteers. Some had been coming for years, and still do; they always do an excellent job. In the more recent years, an effort was started to breathe new life into the association. It is my understanding that Mike Melton and his daughter Tiffany have taken on the leadership of the work and have helped with some wonderful improvements. They still solicit volunteers who, as usual, will faithfully turn up to get the work done.

It is always a problem to buy or sell land with a cemetery on it. I surveyed a Marion County cemetery, which through the years of real estate deals, found its surroundings to be a very expensive gated community lot. The burial ground could be seen from the nice road as a prospective buyer drove through with hopes of finding just the right place to build a nice home. The old, rusty, web wire fence could be seen and by the time my husband and I carried the ladder, hammer and sign to put up a Grundy County Historical Society marker to insure that the graves were never destroyed, one couldn't help but notice the cemetery. The dead need our respect, and there needs to be access for any living descendants who may decide to be added to that burial ground of **one** acre. I just lately received the news that access has been denied twice by filling the old road with stumps and natural debris. The old road, the access road, was considered public just as Pigeon Springs Road is considered public on the way toward its cemetery. No individual owns it. Gates have been put up, taken down, and even blown up; then everyone began to play nice – gave all land owners a key to the gates, then the hunters were free of non-members crashing their hunts. Cemetery visitors asked a key carrying person to help them get to their ancestors.

The old road leading to the cemetery now in question has made its way up to the old rusty fence since probably in the late 1800s. There are approximately 43 graves to date (2015). At one time, I flagged every one of them making certain I had a head fieldstone and a foot fieldstone for each to keep my numbers right. Not many people visited that cemetery, but on occasions descendants felt a need to go back to the old graves. On my visits in the past I have never felt threatened or harassed by anyone,

but it sounds as if now I may be sent away. My understanding is that even land owners cannot get access now and are land locked. Respect and honesty are used always with the land owner, especially during troubling times. No one can close off a cemetery, no one. The county law should be sure that those who own land around a cemetery understand that access must be available at all times. Remember, **play nice** with the land owners, but take your copy of “cemetery access and restriction papers” with you, and one might just need the sheriff to say a few words over the situation. Ah, shucks! Just take a gospel preacher and have a not-so-politically correct prayer for both parties involved in the issue! Thankfully, Clouse Hill Cemetery’s driveway is easily entered from the main road. FYI follows:

<http://www.tngenweb.org/law/cemetery-law.html>

On Nov. 14, **1895**, in the *Tracy City News* we read, “*We come now to chronicle the death of Mrs. Aron Sartain. She died last Thursday (Nov. 7, 1895—jp) died in full faith of a better life above.*” The body of Melvina “Levina” Ann (Hargis) Sartain, first wife of Aaron Sartain, and daughter of John Wesley “Jack” & Elizabeth (Henley) Hargis, is surrounded with a wrought iron fence and may well have been the first burial in the cemetery. From the fine work of Sue Scott, we read that Levina had two daughters, Betty Isabelle and Mary Lee, by her husband Aaron, but died nine days after her last daughter’s birth. I think the death date of Nov. 14 on her stone is a mistake upon review of the newspaper article. There are so many unmarked graves that we may really never know who was actually the first person interred. John Hunter and Adherable “Loke” Sartain both were buried in June **1896** at Clouse Hill Cemetery. Loke Sartain, Aaron Sartain and Angeline Sartain were siblings.

Oldest Marked Grave

Melvina “Levina” Ann (Hargis) Sartain,

(1871-1895)

1st wife of Aaron Sartain

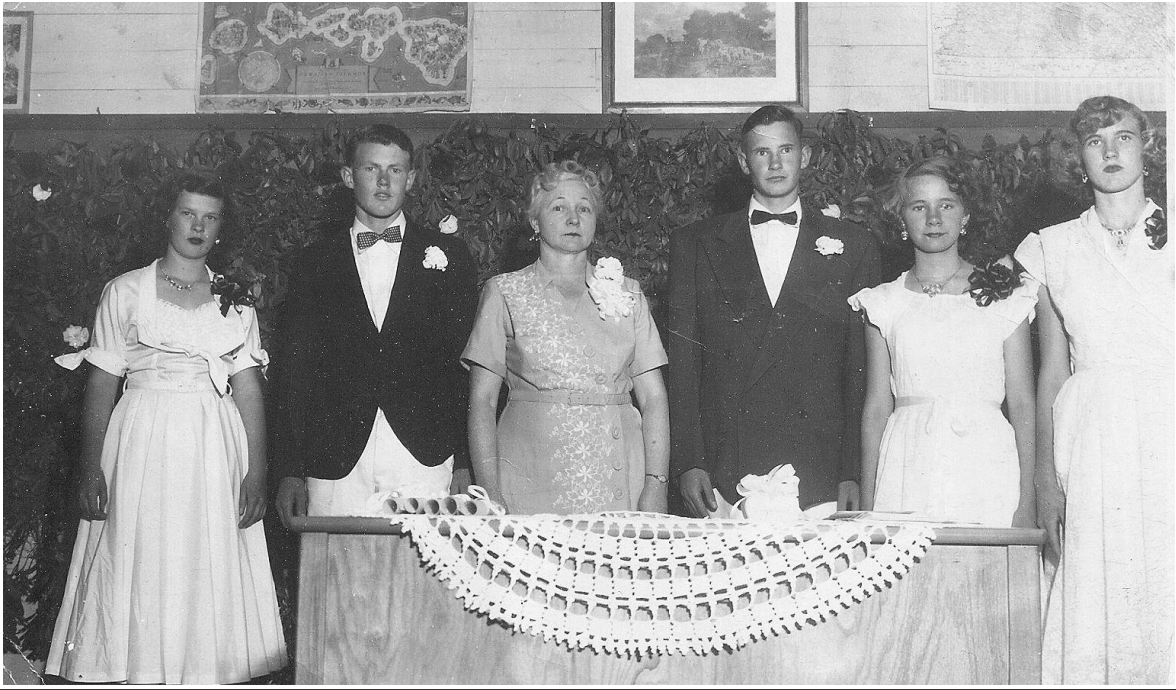


On my personal template of Clouse Hill Cemetery that I keep on my computer, there are nearly four hundred names and possibly many more that will come to light in the future.



Clouse Hill Cemetery

Clouse Hill School



Clouse Hill School 1954 Promotions: Left: Francis Meeks, daughter of Clarence & Katherine (McBee) Meeks; Robert Meeks, son of Frank & Emma Mae (Reed) Meeks; teacher, Francis Tate; Alfred D. Meeks, son of George Mack & Maggie Myrtle (Smartt) Meeks; Gabriel "Gabe" Meeks/Speegle, daughter of Clara Mae (Meeks) Layne & James Alfred Speegle, Jr. aka Jimmy Goodman; and Edwene Lockhart, daughter of Earl and Minnie (Nunley) Lockhart

The mountain laurel behind the students was gathered and arranged by them.

The following paragraph was borrowed from Janelle (Layne) Taylor's 1988, historical writings on Grundy County schools. *"The first school at Clouse Hill was a log building which was used until 1935 when a new frame building was constructed. It, like the log building, was only one room until 1947 or 1948 when another room was added. The old school site was at the present day Clouse Hill Cemetery. Those teachers who taught at the school were W. J. Jossi, principal of the log school, E. J. Cunningham, Etta Stepp, Lucille Henley, Lou Brawley, Frances Tate, Hazel Hindeman, Mary Elizabeth Bonholzer, Elizabeth Rieder, and Lou Woodlee. In 1960, Clouse Hill was consolidated to Plainview School. Church services were held in the building for several years afterward until it burned. Cam Meeks, interview with author, 25 July 1988. In 1960, Clouse Hill School was consolidated to Plainview School at Sanders Crossing. Church services were held in the building for several years afterwards until it*

burned." Bob Douglas, a great-grandson of Angeline Henley, told me that his great-grandfather Samuel A. Henley also taught school there before his wife Angeline Ermine did.



Clouse Hill School and Church ca. 1963

As a child in the late forties and early fifties, I never remembered a two-room schoolhouse. Lee Annie Parson and her brother-in-law, Isaac Parson born 1942, told me that the back wall of the school was torn out and an extension of the one room was made. The chalkboard was moved on back and placed on the new back wall of the one room. There has never been but one room. With the exception of a block foundation, the extension took on the same frame look as the rest of the school. They both also stated that while that work went on, just inside the front door, with the extra space made possible by the extension, a closet was boxed in where coats and other bad weather items could be placed. Isaac remembers a small shelf on the right of the front door to store books, and it also could be locked. At the end of the day, all books and school items small enough were locked inside the closet for safe keeping. Toilets still remained outside.



Clouse Hill Student Group: 6 girls in front L to R: Loulene Thomas, Christine Meeks (peeking from behind), Edwene Lockhart, poss. Mary Helen Meeks, Opal Thomas, Ida "Idie" Meeks

Back row: L to R: Dennis Clark Meeks, George Edward Parson, Mary Magdalene Meeks, Mary Christine Melton (twin), Helen Melton, Gabriel Meeks Speegle, Frances Meeks, Lorene Melton (twin)

Jewell (Meeks) Wiggins, who attended the old school until it consolidated with the Sanders Crossing School, (*the beginning of busing for Clouse Hill children*), related that the school building never changed from the frame one that existed from the beginning; there were no extensions, no rooms added and no closet added. Folks, one may throw up the hands like a former U. S. Secretary of State once did, and ask, "What difference does it make?" Well, I have awakened a wonderful group of people who haven't thought about their old school, church and homes in Clouse Hill in many years. They are actually having fun and enjoy remembering. Somewhere out there is the truth, and I am hoping it will bounce right back to me.



Daniel Cicero King holding a chisel and a small sledge-like hammer; and Matthew “Matt” Sanders, his brother-in-law, with a hammer head on his knee and his arm resting on the end of the hammer handle. The men are obviously hewing tombstones. The picture is labeled to possibly be in front of the Old Clouse Hill School, but knowing a little history of both men and where they lived and have loved ones buried, it could be in front of the old Methodist Episcopal Church-South in the Summerfield Cemetery.

Mrs. Lou Brawley’s husband George Norman drove her to work until he died in 1923; her son Elmer then took over the job. He drove her to school when the weather permitted safe use of the old road. However, when heavy rains, snow, sleet or hail came, she rented a small room from Cam Meeks knowing one of her students, Dennis Meeks, would help her down the hill to the schoolhouse. Lou Ermine Brawley was the daughter of Samuel and Angeline Ermine (Sartain) Henley. And speaking of Dennis Meeks, he seriously and with a burdensome look told my husband that his father Cam gave him chores on school mornings on the farm, even helping with the clearing of fields, before school started, leaving him just enough time to run by the door, grab a lunch packed by his mother Kathleen, run down the hill and up to the front door of the schoolhouse before the bell rang.

Left: Lou Ermine Henley

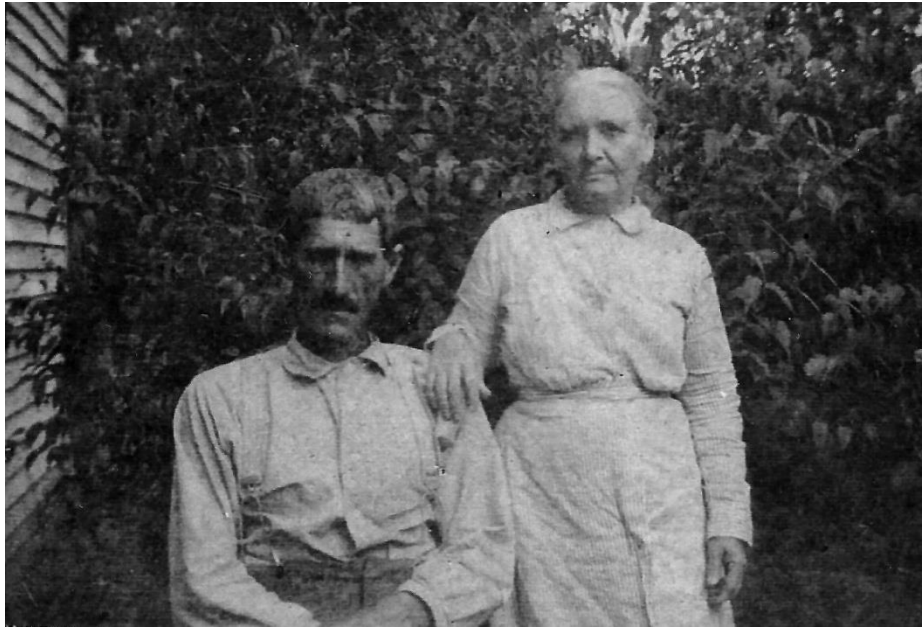
She graduated from Shook School in 1902. She was the valedictorian of a class of three. Her father bought her a \$25.00 hat because he was so proud of her.



Lou Ermine (Henley) Brawley (1882-1975)



George Norman Brawley (1884-1923); m. Lou on Dec. 7, 1903



John Henry & wife Sarah Elizabeth (Lusk) Brawley, parents of George Norman Brawley

I took time and space to insert the Brawley photos because when I asked about the teachers at the Clouse Hill School, for some reason Lou *Brawley's* name was always on the tip of every tongue.

Clouse Hill Church Meeting House

The Clouse Hill School building was used by the Methodist on Sunday afternoon. As far back as **1905**, Sunday School was active in Clouse Hill. However, since we have minutes for the **1940s**, let's write about that period of time. In **1943**, Mr. C. H. Kilby, with the help of the young people started a Mission at Clouse Hill. Song books and literature were taken from the Tracy City church and used at the Mission. Mr. Kilby had a portable organ that he and Miss Dorothy Foster used. Miss Lucille Murphy also volunteered to work with the children. Miss Foster did not always attend at Clouse Hill, but Mr. Kilby never missed. In **1948**, the Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF) sponsored the mission work at Clouse Hill. Since most preachers were busy serving larger congregations on Sunday morning, a minister was sent out to Clouse Hill on Sunday afternoon. Following is an excerpt from another story I wrote about Clouse Hill. It pertains to the church services:

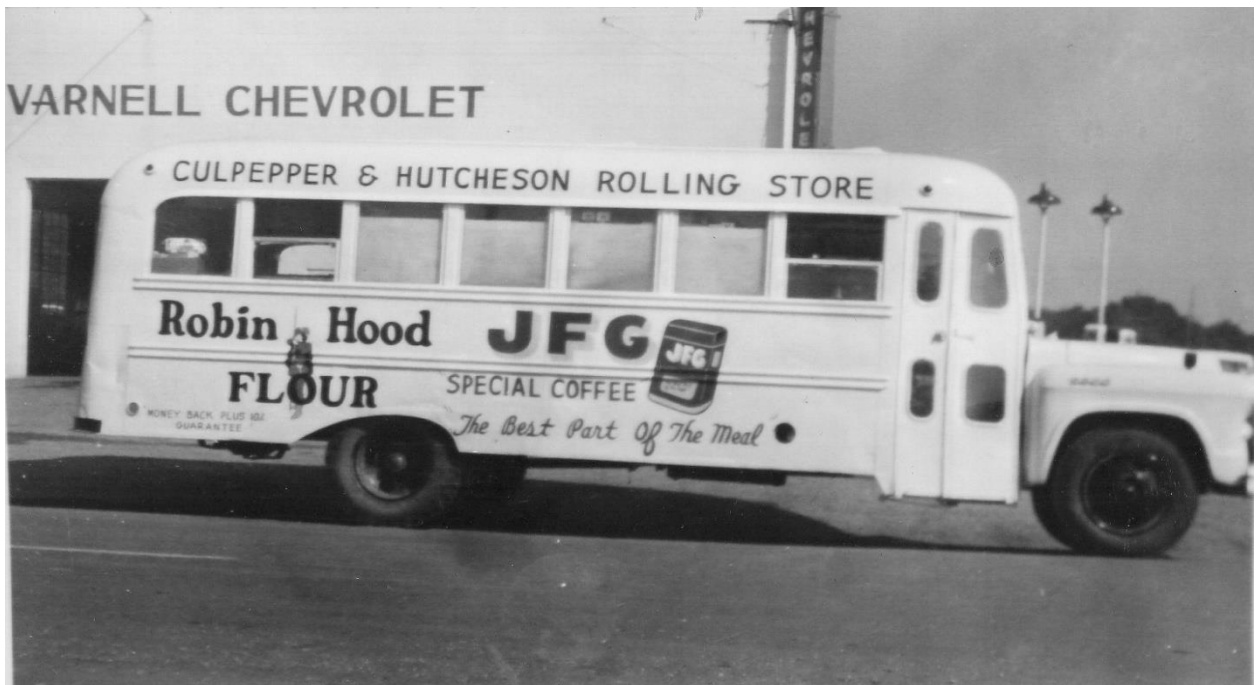
"What I remember the most about the school building was Mr. Harvey Kilby's Sunday afternoon Bible stories. He made it possible for the local children to have their Sunday School like the children in town. I was privileged on several

occasions to be a part of the gang of children who showed up for religious enlightenment. Sometimes he handed out fruit, and the children were so happy."

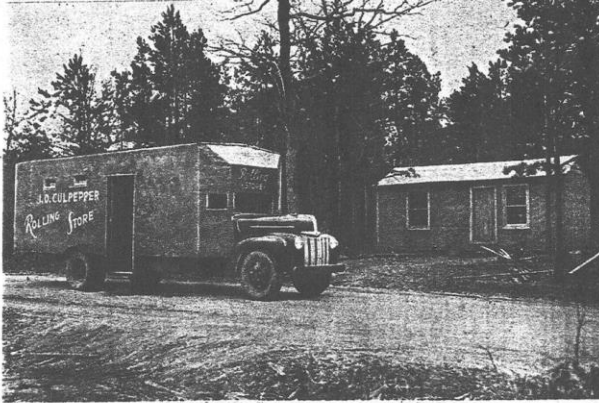
Read the whole story on the following site:

<http://www.grundycountyhistory.org/03_Ind/Jackie/Clouse%20Hill.pdf>

My sister Gabe walked over as a child, (a good walk if weather was cooperative), every Sunday afternoon and built a fire in the stove so that it would be warm for the 2:00 arrival of Mr. Harvey Kilby. Gabe received a dime every Sunday for building the fires; she saved her money until she got four dimes. On the day that the Culpepper and Hutcheson Rolling Store came through, she was able to buy a candy bar and soda drink for her young aunt, Mary Magdalene Meeks, and herself. Even today she speaks of the thoughtfulness and the determined tenacity of Mr. Kilby. As usual he always bought some small delicacy for the delight of the children. In the summertime, the treat was often slices of watermelon.



The much-looked-for Culpepper & Hutcheson Rolling Store



Chassis is that of a new eight-cylinder truck and the body is tin-covered



Driver K. F. Culpepper is a veteran peddler, Chalmer Willborn his helper

MAHOMET GOES TO THE MOUNTAIN

An eye to utility, not aerodynamics or beauty, distinguishes a traveling store which carries wares of the world over the Cumberland Plateau

MOUNTAIN folk are frequently unable to go to the store, so the trick is to bring the store to the mountain folk. It was on a recent excursion to the remote stretches of Grundy County that we found ourselves being down on Culpepper's Rolling Store, laden with staples and merchandise for the mountain family, halted to one side of the road. The two-man crew of this establishment was in process of consummat-

ing a sale, and we elected to stop and see what we could see.

Culpepper's Rolling Store (J. D. Culpepper, prop.; K. F. Culpepper, driver) was mounted on the chassis of a new eight-cylinder truck. The store proper was of frame construction covered with tin, and built with more of an eye to utility than beauty or aerodynamics. It was also brand new: the yellow lettering shone brightly on the new paint, and the

chicken coops aft had that un-lived-in look about them.

Just inside the door there was a narrow counter, hinged to the floor at one end so that it could be raised, like a drawbridge, to permit ingress and egress. Along the sides were rows of shelves, slanting toward the walls and railed to prevent the merchandise from spilling to the floor in rough going.

And the store had the goods. There were bananas, apples, oranges, and cakes. Print cloth, brown domestic, canned goods, and Dixie kite cord. Underwear, lard, flour, coffee, soap, and hair tonic. There was tobacco and matches, beans and salad dressing, peanut butter, butter and cheese. Canned milk, brooms, and blue jeans. Insect powder, milk of magnesia, pans, pots, Epsom salts. There was scalp treatment and borax, thread and kerosene, cow prescription and Undies for Active Girls. There was just about everything a mountain family would need.

The day (a Thursday) we browsed around in the rolling store it had been in operation only two days and the shakedown cruise had just begun. The crew was by no means unfamiliar with the parts—Driver K. F. Culpepper is a veteran of four years of peddling on Cumberland Mountain—but daily routes had not yet been established. The mountain families had had neither time nor opportunity to learn that the store would roll up to their house or such-and-such a day. Culpepper and his helper, Chalmer Willborn, were feeling their way.

Culpepper is no novice at mobile merchandising. He had peddled peaches in the summertime and candy and sorghum in the Coalmont-Tracy City-Aitamont section for four or five years out of Sand Mountain, Ala. The rolling store is based at J. D. Culpepper's stationary establishment between Tracy City and Coalmont. It is one of two such vehicles, the other being in operation on Sand Mountain. ***

Meet the Melton Families of Clouse Hill



Charlie David Melton burial at Clouse Hill Cemetery

L to R: Iva Lee (Melton) Seagroves; Thelma Louise (Meeks) Melton, wife of Carl David Melton; Nancy (Anderson) Melton with scarf on her head and wife of the deceased; Carl David Melton, son of deceased; Henry Melton, son of deceased, holding his daughter Lois "Pootie" Melton; Lucille (Hancock) Melton, wife of Henry and mother of "Pootie"; and Charlie David "C. D." Melton with hat

Melton Road was the safe haven, beloved homestead, farm and wooded spread of the Melton family who came to **Clouse Hill** around **1916**. They became a big part of the Clouse Hill community. The head of this family was Thomas Charles who was born **Sept. 15, 1892**, in Whitwell, TN. His tombstone gives his birth date as Sept. 2, 1892, but his WWI Draft Registration gives Sept. 15th as the date. His wife, Maud (Shrum) Melton, probably was already living in Clouse Hill with her parents when they married. Her father Moses Shrum worked in the coal mines of the area. Maud may well have been the reason Tom chose Clouse Hill to become his home for life. In **1910** he was a

farm laborer in Alabama and still living at home with his mother and siblings. On Jan. 5, **1916**, Tom and Maud married in Grundy County. They lost their first baby in **1917**, but their next baby was a son Charles "Charlie" David born in **1918**.

Interestingly, on Tom's WWI Draft registration in **1917**, I found that he listed himself as a coal miner for the Sewanee Fuel & Iron Co. at **Clouse Hill**. Obviously, some of Sewanee Fuel's branches were still working out the mines even after their move to Coalmont, TN. Thomas worked as a teamster in logging in **1920** in the Gruetli Laager area and stayed in timber works except for a period around **1940** when the family moved to the valley to operate a farm. Besides their son, Charlie David, Thomas Charles and Maud, had three daughters, Sarah Lorene, Mary Christine and Helen; Lorene and Christine were twins. Tom and Maud had lost one infant, but sadly lost another in **1922**; both are buried in the Clouse Hill Cemetery.

Tom was the son of Thomas David "Dave" and Martha (Rutherford) Melton. Thomas Dave was born in Whitwell, TN, and Martha (1870-1943) was born in Bradley Co., TN. Her parents were Joseph and Susan (Wright) Rutherford. In **1910**, Turkey Town Road, Hollis, Etowah, Alabama, Martha was a widow with Annie, **Tommie**, **Charlie**, Minnie, Icy, Mamie and William Oscar Mack still at home. Little William was two, so this tells us that Thomas probably died around 1906/7. William was accidentally run over and killed by a train near Jasper, TN in 1939. Martha died in 1943 and was buried at Mt. Olive Cemetery in Whitwell, Marion Co., TN. Just for the record, let's insert the fact that Thomas David "Dave" Melton's son Charlie had a son named Carl D. Melton who died in the Grundy mines on Oct. 36, 1968. He and his wife Thelma Lucille (Meeks) Melton had no children together, but Thelma had a son named Delbert Carlton "Bolley" Melton. They also reared a nephew of Lucille's whose name was Ernest Meeks. One has to read carefully to keep up with the names, Tom, David, Charlie, etc. in this family. Even I may confuse the reader, but hopefully, all can follow me.



Delbert Carlton "Bolley" Melton

"Bolley" married Mildred "Mickey" Lowe. They have two children, Steven Wayne & Kimberly.

"Clouse Hill is still home to him even though he now lives in Hillsboro."

Charlie David "C. D." Melton married Jessie Pauline Parson (1928-1997), a daughter of Thomas Franklin and Lula (Patrick) Parson. They had several children: Bill, Dave, Tom, Henry, Virginia "Jennie" and Wayne. Like my Meekses, the Meltons are still attached today (2015) to the Clouse Hill community. Just as I said in the beginning, these two families were all I knew when I was a child, and with the exception of a few scattered surnames, they still reign as the families who stayed the longest.



Thomas "Tom" Charles and wife Maud (Shrum) Melton with son Charlie David



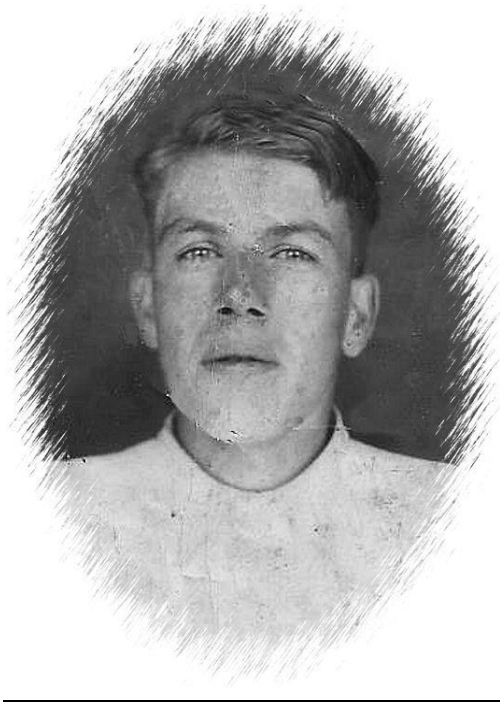
Thomas "Tom" Charles and Maud (Shrum) Melton; Maud is the daughter of Moses & Serilda Jane Simpson.



Tom & Maud with Charlie David Melton



Charlie David Melton



Charlie David Melton



Mary Christine, Helen & Sarah Lorene Melton



**Sarah Lorene & Mary Christine (Melton)
Parson**



**Jessie Pauline (Parson) Melton with son
Tom Melton**

Photos of Other Families Who Live or Lived at Clouse Hill



This photo is labeled as Clouse Hill. The man at the arrow must have been identified at one time. So please send me any identities you may have. Also see if the house is familiar as being one at Clouse Hill or Summerfield.



Henry Alexander Higgins

Henry and his family below operated the McFadin sawmill that once was in use on land now owned by the Malcolm Baker family.



Henry A. Higgins Family:

**L to R, back: James Henry, Johnny Jackson, Vallie Elizabeth, and mom, Katie;
Front: Gerald Cecil, Lonnie Rabon, Alice Francis and Carolyn Faye**



**More often than not, residents of Clouse
Hill married neighbors.**

**Vallie Elizabeth Higgins from the photo
above married my uncle, John Benton
Meeks,**

**He lived within sight of the house where
the Higgins lived.**



The Hamp and Tressie (Meeks) Thomas Children (photo taken 1974)

Front Row: Debra Myers, Nicko Byers, Opal Thomas, Janis Parsons, Jozell Anderson, Pall Mall Marlowe;

Row 2: R to L: Delores Thomas, Carrie Sue Sanders, Lee Annie Parsons, Darlene Thomas, Lou Leen Anderson

Row 3: R to L: William Ray Thomas, A. P. Thomas, Jeff D. Thomas, Jack Thomas

Does anyone remember when I stated that all of the people who lived at Clouse Hill were Meekses or Meltons? Well, the names on the school promotion photo in our story above make one understand why I made that statement. Those Meekses filled the area from Sartain Springs on over the hill at Benj Clowes' home and further. They came up from the valley below and the head of Payne's Cove. This particular lineage came from Britain Meeks and Emeline (Rhea) Meeks. One of their sons, "Crip John" W. Meeks (1839-ca. 1910) and wife, Mary Polly (Cope) Meeks (1841-1913) presented Clouse Hill with its Meeks residents. The couple had a son name George Mack Meeks whose descendants stayed in the area the longest time, and some of them are still in the area.



Left: George Mack and Maggie Myrtle (Smartt) Meeks

Mack's 1st wife was Mary Elizabeth "Lizzie" Bean with whom he had four children: Pearl, Beulah Addie, William B. and Marvin Vester. Lizzie died in 1908. In 1914, he married Maggie Smartt and together they had Tressie, Clara, Jeff, Dora, Lillie, John, Josie, Thursa, Ruth Hazel, Alfred D. and Mary Magdalene. They also reared my mother's daughter Gabriel "Gabe" Meeks Speegle.



**Children of George Mack Meeks by 2nd wife center Maggie Myrtle (Smartt) Meeks
Back standing L to R: partially unseen Thursa, Clara Mae, John Benton, Lillie Sire
Sitting in center: Josie, Mary Magdalene with her hands on mother Maggie
Kneeling: Ruth Hazel, Gabriel (grandchild), and Jeff Thomas Meeks; not shown
Tressie, Alfred D., and Dora (burned to death at age 6)**



James Frank Meeks

(1903-1959)

Son of Clouse & Minnie

(Stokes) Meeks

&

Granddaughter Kathy Morrison

Frank & Emma's family lived on Benj Clowes' hill on Chevy Rd. The children were born at home and reared on the hill.

Little two-year-old Della May Meeks' burial at Clouse Hill Cemetery in 1941;

Identified is her mother Emma (Reid) Meeks standing at the foot of her grave.

If you can help identify any of the other mourners, let me know.





Burial at Clouse Hill Cemetery of James Frank Meeks (1903-1959)

L to R: Dorothy, Gene, Ida (partially hidden), Joyce holding Marie, Robert, Melvin with the handkerchief, Danny, James (tall man in back); Emma, with unborn child, Brenda, and Jo. A son was stillborn and 2-yr-old Della May had passed away in 1941. Oma and Alene were at home. Frank and Emma had fifteen children in all.



Emma (Reid) Meeks & Some of Her Extended Family

Standing in back L. to R.: Oma (dau); Robert (son) & wife Helen (Adams) Meeks; Gene (son); Joyce Meeks (dau)

Middle row: L. to R. Pat (g-dau); Jo (dau); Nelson (g-son); Carol (g-dau); Robert, Jr. (g-son); Emma; Melvin (son)

Front row: Wayne (g-son); Brenda (dau); Marie (dau) and Janie (g-dau)

If you have an **old** photo or **group** family photo as a Clouse Hill family, please send it to me, and if possible, it will be added at the bottom of this story. We need to save all the old photos we can for our descendants, and sharing makes the hearts grow fonder.

Sartain Springs, the Other End of Clouse Hill



Sartain Springs (2015)

In October (2015), my shoes got wet, my legs got scratched, and my bad ankle hurt each time I stepped into a hole at **Sartain Springs**. No one made me go there, but when I read some of the Sartain Springs news and social events from old newspapers, I had to go. The Spring/s are basically to the right of the now burned-out home of Charlie and Jewel (Burnette) Myers. The beautiful, inviting springs from yesteryear have faded just like White Springs, Pigeon Springs, and Beersheba Springs in our county have. When my **seventy-five-year-old** sister, my **seventy-three-year-old** husband and *my* **seventy-three-year-old** body fought with the tall briars and grasses as we straddled the small settlings of water to get out and back to our car that we had left parked just off the main road, we were surprised to see a police vehicle parked at the back of our car. "What are you doing?" he asked. My husband, being the gentle, kind, sincere soul that he is, gave him a proper answer while under my breath, I muttered, "Making moonshine!" Of course, my mind wonders around in outer space. Had we been sixteen or eighteen years of age, stringy headed, wobbly, half-dressed, bottles of liquor or pills in both hands, would we have even been noticed or asked anything? Did my old car look dangerous? Well, it does look a lot like the horse drawn black hearse that E. C. Norvell loaded the corpses into for delivery at the cemeteries, maybe a

hundred years ago. Oh! But my hair was such a stringy mess. However, I just contented myself with the fact that the three of us were close enough in age and poor health to become corpses, and my sister and I did wobble a bit. We honestly thanked the young policeman for being so vigilant and protective of us and other people's property. On April 30, 1903 and June 25, 1903, we could have read from the spot where we were standing in 2015, the following from the *Mrs. Grundy* newspaper in two separate sections of **Sartain Springs** news:

"Mr. Tom Sanders and Miss Pearl Stockwell were quietly in marriage at the residence of Mr. John Powell last Sunday evening. Esq., J. K. Summers, officiated.

Mr. J. L. Oliver the genial and popular store-keeper for Hampton and Roberts, spent Sunday morning with friends in Tracy City.

Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Burns of Monteagle were on our streets Tuesday.

Mr. and Mrs. A. P. Dyer of Tracy City were here Monday, shopping.

(Edward Lee) Hampton and (Riley Bradford) Roberts have completed a tram-road from their mines to the rail-road and are now in a position to greatly increase the output of coal."

"Mr. J. L (Joseph Lytten) Oliver and Miss Elizabeth (Mildred) Roberts spent Sunday in Tracy City. (Joseph and Lizzie married later. jp)

The Clouse Hill Sunday School will have their annual picnic at Sartain Springs next Saturday.

Mr. Barney Henderson of Tracy was among us Wednesday.

We chronicle with sorrow the death of Mr. L. Stockwell (Lewis Calvin Stockwell--jp) who departed this life June 17, after a long and painful illness. He was laid to rest in the Clouse Hill cemetery on Wednesday of last week. A wife and seven children survive him.

Mr. Lem Stockwell, of Manchester, was here last week."

The Clouse Hill Sunday School picnic was met with morning rains, but the weather soon allowed all to have their dinner amidst a cloudy sky. Sheriff Samuel J. Meeks visited the area, so all was well. Hampton and Roberts closed their store one day the previous week for inventory, so let's hope those who had brought no food were able to shop in the store adjacent to Sartain Springs.

On Dec. 5, 1902, James Sartain and his wife (*Rebecca T. Sartain*) had sold to E. L. Hampton and R. B. Roberts the land "*Beginning on a Black Oak in line of James Sartains and Sewanee Coal Coke and Land Company about one hundred feet from Sartains' Springs Southwest running South East fifty feet thence North 115 feet to Stake on Pelham and Tracy City Road, Thence with said road to stake fifty feet, Thence with line of Jas. Sartain's and,*

Sewanee Coal Coke and Land Co. to the Beginning, and is a lot on which a store house is now located." The **1902** date connected to this certain purchase by men who should have been "in the know" makes me wonder if they believed there was "big coal" in Clouse Hill. I actually believed everyone was surprised that the company moved on so quickly to a bigger find.

"Hampton and Roberts have completed a tram-road from their mines to the railroad and are now in a position to greatly increase the output of coal." This made me wonder if the tram road that Lee Annie (Thomas) Parson spoke of was the one that Hampton and Roberts completed for themselves. In **1900** Edward Lee Hampton was the Superintendent for the RR; in **1910** he was an agent for the RR. In **1900** Riley Bradford Roberts was a foreman for the coal mine company, and in **1910**, he was the Vice President of the coal company. The key words here are **Railroad** and **Coal Company**. Both men were wealthy, but each worked for a different company.

I add these little following tidbits to remind us all that Clouse Hill was full of well-established families, but their stay again was short. On April 30, **1903**, Mr. A. N. Kelley of **Clouse Hill** visited Coal Dale on business. One wonders if he may have been looking for a new home. Also in **1903** James Smith of **Clouse Hill** came down Saturday to see his Uncle Johnnie. In **1906** I. S. Brown of **Clouse Hill** spent Saturday here (*Coalmont*). In **1907**, Vance Hobart and wife, *Lucille (McKimsey) Lasater*, of **Clouse Hill** spent Sunday evening with friends here (*Coalmont*). Many of the families again followed the coal and moved on to Coalmont, TN.

Samuel Alexander and Angeline Ermine (Sartain) Henley

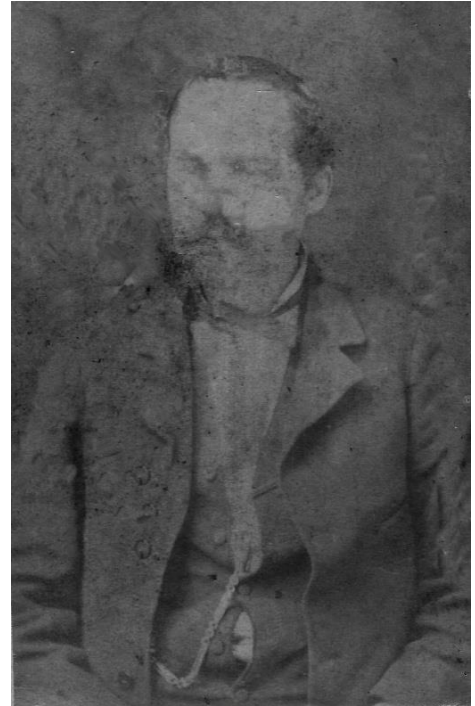
The people in our sub-title were big land owners around Clouse Hill even before the railroad came to it. Samuel Alexander Henley was a son of James Campbell and Melinda Abigail (Thompson) Henley. Angeline Ermine (Sartain) Henley was the daughter of James and Rebecca (Brown) Sartain. We learn some heritage of Angeline from the title on Sartain Springs. A living descendant remembers that his great-grandparents, Sam and Angeline, owned several thousand acres of land, in and around the main mining area of Clouse Hill.

Feb. 23, **1929**, the heirs of Samuel A. Henley, (widow, Angeline, Lou Brawley, J. C. Henley, Blanche Henley, Nannie Francis, R. A. Francis, Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Morel), sold forty acres of the family holdings to Cam and Alfred Meeks. The land was bordered by Rieder, Sewanee Fuel & Iron Co., and more Henley Heirs land.

Sam taught school at Clouse Hill until he got into the business of harvesting chestnut wood that was shipped by rail to Chattanooga. He harvested chestnut logs wherever he found a supply. Perhaps the following article in the September 20, 1928, issue of *Mrs. Grundy* may be the reason that Angeline started teaching:

“Sam A. Henley Instantly Killed— Sam A. Henley, a prominent citizen of this place was instantly killed Tuesday morning by the Bus Line of the NC & St. L Mountain Transportation Co., at a crossing near Tip Top. Mr. Arms, the driver of the bus saw Mr. Henley as he emerged from the side of the road and sounded his horn but it seemed that Mr. Henley who was on horseback failed to hear him and Mr. Arms, seeing that he had to do something tried to get around him, but was too late and the car struck both rider and horse throwing Mr. Henley from the horse killing him instantly. The horse was drug some fifteen feet, before the bus was stopped but it did not kill the horse...”

Left: A badly water damaged photo of Samuel Alexander Henley



The rest of the obituary is illegible because of a large tear in the newspaper. Sam was seventy-seven years of age. Tip Top is thought to be somewhere near Sanders Crossing. In the Tracy City Cemetery there are six concrete slab graves for this Henley family. There are bodies in four of them leaving two empty. Angeline followed Sam to her waiting grave in 1941. Two of the couple’s children are also buried there – Samuel Henry Clay Henley (1890-1909), and his sister Allie Lee (Henley) Morel (1888-1973). A family issue caused the other two graves to remain empty even to this day in 2015. Young Samuel Henry Clay Henley died in 1909 in Memphis, TN while working as a lineman he came in contact with a live wire.



The daughters of Samuel
A. Henley and Angeline
(Sartain) Henley

L to R:

Nannie (Henley) Francis

Allie (Henley) Morel

And

Lou (Henley) Brawley

Bowater and Hiwassee Land Company

When the coal company pulled out of Clouse Hill, over time it needed to rid itself of several hundred acres of land that was basically split in half by the Clouse Hill Road. Coming up the mountain from Big Spring, the land lay on the right of the Clouse Hill road; huge oak trees were replaced with pines. On top of the plateau at Clouse Hill, the rest of the pine tree plantings grew on the left.

An attempt by me will be made to put this puzzle together, piece by piece, where some sense can be made on how the coal company land got from underground mines to pine trees to complete removal of even natural debris. According to whom one asked, the total number of acres that the coal company eventually owned and mined at Clouse Hill ranged between 1,115 acres to 1,400 acres. So we won't get excited over discrepancies in acres here and there. I'm a brave old soul, but after weeks of studying the deeds to land on Benj's hill and around the mining area, I became discombobulated in that effort. So I decided to put out feelers by phone calls and emails. Everyone was kind and helpful with the exception of one phone "hang up" on me. Go figure!!! There is no earthly idea why my query was not answered. However, there was one major hurdle—I received **different** but well-meaning answers.

- 1) The Sewanee Coal, Coke and Land Company bought up all the land it needed for its coalmining operation.
- 2) After only a few years of mining by said **Company**, it moved on toward Coalmont, TN.
- 3) Not needing the land anymore for underground mining, the company began to try to rid itself of the land. Remember that private underground mining, dog hole mining and strip mining went on for years at Clouse Hill.
- 4) **July 1, 1944** – **Warranty Deed** with Commando Coal Company conveyed land to **William “Bill” Perry Church**.
- 5) **July 24, 1944** – **Warranty Deed** with two tracts of land was drawn up between Will Perry Church (wife Cecil) and **C. W. Hale** containing 1, 340 acres. Names included in the 1st tract were E. L. Hampton, Sewanee Coal, Coke and Land Co., A. D. Rieder, S. P. Cope, Clowes, Jess Bell, Charles Heidenburg, Payne (*Cove – jp*) and Mary M. Hill; in the 2nd tract: Barrel, Richardson, Hollingsworth Cove, Goodman, and Cope. These names could have been former owners or people whose property lines were bordered by the tracts. (NN-586)
- 6) Clinton Washington Hale (**1895-1969**) made the first offer to sell the land to **Cam Meeks**, a man who knew every inch of the mining territory, but he felt the price of one dollar an acre was too much. He had the money in his pockets but didn’t let go of it.
- 7) C. W. Hale then leased his land to the Bowater Paper Company for 20 years; it is my understanding that Hiwassee (stateside name) was a subsidiary of Bowater (England parent company), so it appears in old deeds they were synonymous as land lessees or owners. Bowater immediately hired a load of local, energetic men to come in and plant their pines.
- 8) When the lease was up, the Hale family, (C. W. Hale had died in **1969**.), offered to sell to Bowater for so much per acre, and the idea that fingers were crossed all that night because it was felt the asking price was too low, made several nervous about the price per acre. Bowater quickly accepted the deal. They did not have mineral rights, only surface rights. They bought the land in the **1970s**, but because of the lease privilege, they already had planted pines in **1966**. No longer did Mr. Hale have anything to do with that piece of land. The pines were cut when ready, replanted, and the hunters leased the land for years. Now the hunters’ **Posted** signs have soaked away basically.

9) **Jan. 17, 1975**—**Warranty Deed** with two tracts of land was drawn up between Heirs of Maud Brown Pilgrim and **Hiwassee Land Company (Bowater)**, a Delaware corporation with offices in Calhoun, TN. The 1st tract contained **645** acres and the 2nd tract contained **470** acres more or less making the total land to be conveyed add up to **1,115** acres.

(Isom Pilgrim, the husband of Maud (Brown) Pilgrim, was a sawyer for a bat factory in Athens, Georgia in 1940.)

The final note on this deed reads: *“The above-described lands contain, in aggregate, 1,115 acres more or less, and are part of the property conveyed to C.(Clinton W.(Washington) Hale by deed from Will Perry Church, et ux, dated July 24, 1944, recorded in deed book NN, page 586, in the records of Grundy County, Tennessee.”* Mr. Hale’s land soon became known as Hale’s Hiwassee Land.

10) **Jan. 1, 2016** tax year, according to Real Estate Assessment Data, **Sequatchie LLC** owns 881 acres of land near Clowes’ hill. When I searched Sequatchie LLC it was % of *Timberwood Invest Res LLC* in Atlanta, GA. This company has ongoing operations in several areas in our county, or close, such as Dykes’ Mtn., Clifty Road, Ross Creek and others. While researching for a story on Burkett’s Chapel Cemetery, I saw firsthand the work going on around Ross Creek. I was in awe.

What is **“not”** going on today on Benj Clowes’ hill? An interested TVA man assured me that he could find no reclamation project going on at Clouse Hill at this time. So I thanked him for all his help and ruled out that the mining land was being reclaimed.

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/local/story/2015/apr/22/groaims-find-cleabandoned-coal-mines/300046/>

Everyone wants to know what **is** presently going on at the old mining property at Clouse Hill. An extremely pleasant man from **Sequatchie LLC** was kind enough to listen to my query about the property. After testing conditions of the rugged, neglected land and examining all possibilities for future usages, the decision was made to replant pines in March of **2017**. **Bowater** had made its first harvest of pines in **1995**, and twenty years later, **2015**, the new owners Sequatchie LLC harvested again.

Other Land Features of Clouse Hill

- **Creeks** that cross the Clouse Hill Road are Sally Creek, Dry Creek, and Hurricane Creek. Hurricane Creek feeds the lake near the Dave Meeks' estate.
- **Roads** that enter or cross Clouse Hill Road are Desmer Church Road, aka Paul Bailey Road; Brawley Road; Johnny Bone Rd.; Sanders Spur; Sanders Lane; Hamp Thomas Road; Summerfield Road; Chevy Road; Baker Road with Reider Bluff Road merging into it; and Melton Road merges into the Clouse Hill Road. Clowes Coal Bank Road was in the past; research pending on that.

Bud Top

There is little in old local history that excites me more than standing in the center of an old road bed or well-worn path. My thoughts go wild; "Was it a stage road? Was it a logging road? Was it a main road across the plateau? Was it an Indian path? Where did it originate? Where did it go?" My eyes immediately notice the depth, width, height, direction and fauna on the edge of the road, especially huge old timber. Some years back I saw one of those old roadbeds on Dennis Meeks' property and asked him where it went. "**Bud Top**" was his answer. When I mentioned the area called "**Bud Top**" to the older ones at Clouse Hill, they immediately pointed in the direction of Rieder Bluff Road which leaves Baker Road and meanders with the bluffs overlooking Pelham Valley and points beyond. No one really knew what or who "Bud" represented, but they thought he might be a "Goodman." On **Dec. 1, 1914, F. P. Goodman** and wife conveyed **500 acres** of land on those bluffs to the heirs of **J. (John) F. (Franklin) (Jackson) Parks and wife (Abigail) Abbie (Cox)**. The heirs were **Maybell (Parks) Thomas, Horace Parks, Eylon Dyer, Myrtle (Parks) Sanders, and Irene (Parks) Parmley**.

My plan was to find out who sold the land to Mr. Goodman, but I ran into a break down on the deed Book and Page numbers. One may assume that **F. P. Goodman** was the **lucky** man who owned the land, and he may be the "**Goodman**" surname (or it could be Marion Goodman) seen on lands or corners throughout Clouse Hill's deeds. On **Jan. 29, 1938**, the Parks heirs conveyed the land to **Jesse and Laura Durham** for the sum of \$1,000.00. In **1947**, Jesse and Laura sold the land to **J. D. and Opal Sain** for \$5500.00. J. D. died and Opal, being a widow, became the owner. On **March 29, 1956**, Opal Sain sold her land to the **Rieders**: Ben F. Rieder, and wife, Pearl Rieder; and Lloyd H. Rieder and wife, Georgia Fay Rieder.

I must tell this story because I collect a lot of interesting historical facts while waiting my turn for hair beautification. Mrs. Georgia Fay Rieder, whom I did not know, was in the chair having her hair fixed when the hair dresser looked at me and commented, “Jackie, this is the lady you should ask about ‘**Bud Top**’.” Georgia was slightly hard of hearing, but when she became cognizant of the subject that interested me, she responded by slapping her leg and said, “**Bud Top**—I know where it is, but I don’t know anything about why it is called that.” The conversation continued as she told about the day her husband Lloyd came home and broke the news to her that he had bought so much land, for so much money, in Clouse Hill; the bluffs overlooked the valley. Georgia, a funny little lady, told that she had the equivalent of a “hissy fit.” She fussed and fussed until Lloyd took her up and let her look over the bluffs and see the beauty below. When I asked what happened next, she laughingly said, “I asked Lloyd, ‘Why in the world didn’t you buy more of this?’”



“Bud Top”

Francis Parker “Bud” Goodman (1878-1918) was a hard-working man. He worked as a mountain and valley farmer and also in the Freemont mines. His parents were Solomon Poindexter Goodman and Minerva (Burrows) Goodman. He married Nannie Lee Henley on Nov. 4, 1903. She was the daughter of James Campbell and Malinda Abigail (Thompson) Henley. What tied this couple to Clouse Hill? Nannie was a younger sister of Samuel Alexander Henley. And of course, when one looked off the bluffs of “Bud Top,” he or she was looking down into Goodman country. Bud and Nannie’s house was not on the bluffs, but more inland, probably for easier farming and certainly for easier access to Clouse Hill and points beyond. One can see that the home place was built on a well-traveled road thought to have ended up in Monteagle. It appears that his house had burned. The deed calls for the meandering with the bluffs. One interesting geographical item mentioned in the deed was the mouth of “Britton Meeks Branch.” That one name could put me back in the woods early next Spring—just a looking. Today his old home spot has a couple Osage Orange trees that are not often found on the plateau. The fruit is called hedge apples.

Above I said of “Bud” that he was “lucky,” but not true. Four years after he sold his beautiful bluff land, he was killed instantly by falling slate in the Freemont Mines in Grundy Co., TN. Bud is buried in the Warren Cemetery in Pelham Valley. Hopefully the mystery of “**Bud Top**” has been solved.



Bud’s tombstone in Warren Cemetery

Clouse Hill's Changes



Solar Panels on Clouse Hill Road (2015)

The solar panels at the corner of Clouse Hill Rd. and Hamp Thomas Rd. really do look out of place. Brothers, Alfred, George Mack, and Clouse Meeks and neighbors, Tom and Carl D. Melton would fear walking passed those “Creatures from Mars” should they still be alive to see them. They just don’t fit the history and easy mingling of souls in old Clouse Hill, but they are there! The land is now owned by a local resident who leased it to **Alicity Group LLC** (Limited Liability Corporation). Alicity is a sister corporation of Tennessee Valley **Solar**. There are 830 panels that produce 200 kilowatts of power per hour which is then sold to TVA. When I spoke with the owner of the business, (*a male who treated be with much respect*), he happily announced that quite possibly local people in the area are using some of the power produced by those very panels. They have been there for four years and could possibly operate another thirty to forty years.

“Thunder on the Rock”

We cannot overlook the annual “**Thunder on the Rock**” motorcycle rally that happens behind my sister’s house in the Sartain Springs area of Clouse Hill. It is held at the end of Brawley Road. Since I am a seventy-three-year old woman with old-fashioned ideas, please allow me to just furnish the reader with an URL address for that event. <http://www.thunderontherock.net/>

Former Businesses in Clouse Hill

Several sawmills operated over the years in the area, but Dave Melton’s sawmill is the one local folks use as a pointer in the area today; a portion of his obituary follows: *“He was the owner and operator of **Melton’s Lumber Company** for over 46 years. Dave was preceded in death by his parents C.D. Melton and Jessie Pauline Melton.”* I waited too long to get a photo of Dave’s saw mill; it’s gone (Nov. 2015). Mr. Dave Melton’s operation was synonymous with all that is “sawmill” territory: the saw, the sawyers, the logs, the chip piles, the slab piles, the stacks of finished lumber, the many pieces of broken machinery, and the huge scattered tire piles around the mill. Dave’s sawmill is now silent.

Herman Sanders, son of Melvin and Lillie Sire (Meeks) Sanders operated a mechanic shop next to his home for several years. Strangely enough, he sold his home and little shop at Clouse Hill and moved to Tracy City. When he was ready to sell that business, he did, and he turned right around and took a job with the owner. A good, hard-working man just can’t stop working to sit in a swing and read the newspaper.

Howard Land owned a piece of land with a garage on it on top of Benj Clowes’ hill. He needed a temporary place to start a small restaurant. Not being certain if the Clouse Hill area would bring in any customers since the families were so scattered, Howard took the chance and renovated the garage into an eatery. The doors opened to the public on **Sept. 6, 1990**. A restaurant was something one never expected to see in Clouse Hill. According to a family member, patrons from the valley, Clouse Hill and other small towns came, and for the most part the restaurant was packed. Then in March 1991, a great opportunity came to move close to I-24 in Monteagle. Howard and his wife, Mary (Cunningham) Land, moved their eatery to Monteagle. **“Pop’s Happy Land,”** as it was named, once again had a thriving business. Howard has since passed away, but his lovely wife Mary still lives quite close to Clowes’ hill, if not on it.

Chicken houses where baby chicks were scattered like tufts of cotton thrown out of brightly-colored trays into their new homes were seen occasionally in Clouse Hill. Wallace "Toot" Sanders, Dennis Meeks, Cam Meeks, Doolittle Baker and Dave and Ruth Meeks were big growers, but as all else becomes obsolete or outdated, so do chicken houses. The new requirements and designs for them were too much for the little growers to continue, so some fell back on their farmland for financial needs.

I've been wondering where I could quietly in a wee whisper mention the business of moonshining and bootlegging. Yes, my Meeks relatives made whiskey and sometimes survived a long winter on the profit of bootlegging it. Of course, it may have been harder to make the stuff after my grandfather's sister Lillie Meeks married a man people came to know as "Sheriff Jim Meeks." The Clouse Hill Meekses called him Uncle Jim, but from what I have heard about him, he could really make it tough on any one breaking the law. Now, just go ahead and own up to the fact that your Clouse Hill relatives cooked off many a gallon; it was just what one did!

And to end our list of businesses and to bring joy, peace, and love into Clouse Hill, Tom Melton still owns a Christmas Tree farm on the right as one begins his descent down the mountain.

A Traffic Light at Clouse Hill?

"Why do you sit there and rub your head? Why does this story matter so much to you? Is writing about Clouse Hill worth the extra burden put on your health while you make phone calls, read, search for hours online, visit people you haven't seen in fifty or more years, walk back and forth stopping occasionally to stare out the windows into the woods outside?" Why, why, why? These are questions my husband asks me from week to week. Sometimes I nearly fall for his concerns and decide to give up, but then I find a new bit of information on my subject, and I immediately forget any obstacles that may stand in my way. I could opt for this answer and say, "I do this research **because I can**, but that isn't the truth." My grandchildren will grow up into fine young souls one day, Lord willing. Because of my searches and those of others just like me, they will know there is something quite special about Benj's hill in Grundy County. When the new pines reach full growth for a third cutting, and Clouse Hill gets its first traffic light system, it may be too late to remember. So I am recording memories for my descendants and those of the readers while there is still something to remember.

Contributors

My memory fails me; my phone bill depresses me; my notes are scattered all over and are covered with popcorn husks, tea and peanut butter fudge; my husband has threatened to take me to the asylum. You know who you are; you are the best to put up with me when I get on one of these stories. Thanks to all of you for your help. I do not say that I am right on all points or that I got your notes right, but here's hoping that the story is at least partially correct. Find me at jackiepartin@blomand.net .