PIONEERING IN QUITMAN, GA.

by

Annie Elizabeth Miller.

Well, the earliest pioneer of whom my aging brain cells hold a clear-cut picture is my own little self at the age of three years and one day! And it was Sherman's army that sent my family pioneering in the midst of South Georgia's tall pines. My mother had six children from seven years old down -- twins among them -- and after the northern army took possession of Savannah, "carpet-bag" activities and other detestable reconstruction influences made the city a poor place for children and mothers to find health and happiness.

So, believing in expansion for families as well as for nations, my father, probably through his friend, Capt. Kingsbury of Quitman, purchased the fourteen-hundred-acre tract of land which surrounded this little town. The price paid to the owner, Mrs. Culpepper, was said to be seventeen thousand dollars in gold.

It seems that all the babies were carried to the piney woods home for the summers, then were packed up and carried back to Savannah for the winter months. Whenever back in the city our home was with our friends and relatives, the family of Col. W. T. Thompson, for thirty years the able editor of the Savannah Morning News. Seaborn Wade, my uncle, had married Mary, the beautiful daughter of Col. and Mrs. Thompson, and she was not only beautiful but was brave, for she gladly assumed the care of a husband and his three small children by a former marriage, thus starting out with a good-sized ready-made family.

A few years later my mother's trips to see her sister in Atlanta and her numerous relatives in Savannah were made alone, with our grandmother and our young-lady aunt installed as keepers of the growing babies. My father's business kept him in Savannah and only weekends found him in the family home far out in the healthful woods.

The day after my third birthday had arrived my mother was necessarily at home, and my memory pictures the half-mile lane that ran from the front gate straight through the pines to the town courthouse; two tall ladies were walking towards town, and at their side was my tiny self, with the twins, Erwin and Maner, following in our wake. We children were showing our politness by walking a part of the way home with our visitors, Miss Mollie and Miss Myra Brooks--for hadn't these ladies come way out to our home in the woods to see our wonderful new baby brother? As we walked up the long lane, Miss Mollie asked a question about the new baby, and I said, "Dr. Jelks brought him to us in a bag last night." I can see Miss Mollie Brooks' smile now as she glanced at me, three years old the day before, then looked up at the towering trees. In those days the stork had not started pioneering among the south Georgia mothers, and the doctors had to earn their money by searching cabbage patches and hollow stumps!

Strange to say, I have no recollection of any members of my family during the next two or three years, and the one scene deeply impressed on my memory at the end of that time was the funeral of a baby in my uncle's home. I must have been about five years old when I entered the parlor of my aunt, Annie Wade, and saw lying on the center table a dainty, sweet, doll-baby, as it appeared, the long white dress

hanging down over the table's edge. A group of people stood around the weeping mother, saying words of comfort. We all walked the short distance to the cemetery, Minnie and I, only three days apart in age, hand in hand, feeling the sadness but not understanding.

Why these two events--a birth and a death--should have made a lasting impression on my mind while many other important happenings between my third and sixth years were unrecorded, so to speak, is a problem only a trained psychologist can explain.

That sixth birthday party, however, is still a bright memory. Long ahead of time our old negro nurse, Maum Rose, had me dressed and ready to receive the guests who seemed too slow in their approach, as I eagerly looked up the long lane. Ed and Ledlie Groover headed the group of children as they at last entered the house. After the usual games indoors and out, we gathered around the dining table, ready to enjoy the red-and-white stick candy, homemade cakes and other wholesome refreshments. Life was simple to us in those days, and grown people too, were satisfied with plain food and plain clothes, seeing no reason for extravagant living. Those of us who were accustomed to mahogany furniture and sterling silver, and whose ancestors had brought across the water coats-of-arms to show their blue blood and proud origin--their descendants now were nature's noblemen, enjoying the friendship of all worthy neighbors, whether high class or low class. We were truly a democratic community in those pioneering years.

Silks and satins were owned by some of the well-off ladies, but the popular and highly valued dress among us was the washable calico. Yes, a fresh calico dress, trimmed with pipings or ruffles or pleatings,

the overskirt looped up here there and yonder--these were the dresses suitable for most occasions, and we enjoyed our calicoes!

Of course food was a problem to the masses after the slaves had been freed, but thrifty families soon learned to supply their tables with home raised meats--pigs, chickens, turkeys--and vegetables from their own gardens. We had not then learned to live out of paper bags and tin cans from the grocery store, a practice started later on when automobiles began taking the housewife out for the morning and out again for the afternoon.

When the little Wade tribe arrived at Sunday School age, regardless of the long walk, Sundays found us and other children loitering on the Baptist Church porch, waiting for the door to open and the bell to ring. My twin brothers and I were in the class taught by Mrs. Clayton Groover, a lady beloved by the whole town. Years after those Sunday lessons, when circumstances had placed me in the home of my Atlanta aunt, I wrote Mrs. Groover that I couldn't forget what she had said about our being ashamed when we do wrong. My dear Teacher answered this: "I cried when I read your letter." Close to the Baptist pulpit at every service were those three dear saints, Mrs. John G. McCall, Mrs. Clayton Groover, and "Mother" Rountree.

All those good people in the Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches would be proud today to be called "Bible belt Christians." The world had not been taken into the church then as it has in modern times.

Then, other early events still pictured in my mind were the dances enjoyed by the young people in many of the homes--dances that were health-giving, clean, pleasing in the sight of the Lord. My

grandmother, Mrs. Julia Robert Erwin, from South Carolina, spent several winters with us after our removal to Quitman, and with her came my young aunt, Ida Erwin, and her brother, Marion--the latter was about fifteen years old and attended the town school. Serenades and dances were given in honor of aunt Ida, and our long hall was a favorite place for many of the gatherings. One in particular of these dances I had cause to remember, for it brought to me the first great disappointment of my young life.

When that special evening arrived, our old nurse dressed me early and got the babies out of the way by putting them to bed. I kept running to the front porch, listening for the approach of horses and buggies and carriages and gay voices, but time passed and it seemed as if the guests never would come! Then, actuated by a bright idea, I turned into a room that opened from the hall, climbed into the middle of the bed and lay down, eyes tightly closed. I would sleep a little while and shorten the time of waiting. When my eyes opened again fiddles were scraping out gay tunes, feet were skipping and shuffling and hopping over the hall floor, while a loud voice called out,

"Sas-shay all!"

"Sw-ing corners!"

"Ladies to the right!"

"Gents to the left!"

"Hands all around!"

"S'lute your partner!"

"Promenade all!"

I could have bawled aloud at the cruelty of lost opportunity!

But six years was too old to show your bitterness of soul to the world! So, climbing down, I smoothed the wrinkles from my cherished blue merino dress and stepped into the hall's lively scene, seating myself on a small footstool that happened to be close to the wall. Various couples greeted me as they "sasshayed" and bowed and turned in all directions, while I looked on, satisfied with the present, feeling, "this is the life." Children, as we know, feel but do not reason.

Four couples composed each "set," and the numerous sets filled the long hall. A tall young man named Charlie Files came kicking and prancing near my lowly seat, and some unknown impulse made me speak out,

"Charlie, how old are you?"

A roar of laughter came from all the nearby dancers, as he answered with a smile, "I am twenty-four." Mortified that he would joke at my expense before all those people, I wanted to sink out of sight! Twenty-four indeed! The idea of his pretending old age just to tease me! He was grown, of course, but twenty-four was most a hundred.

Alice Files, Charlie's pretty sister, was one of the dancers that night, and two years later she was to spend daily hours in the companionship of my eldest brother, Eddie. During the troublous times which followed the Civil War, this brother, at the age of twelve years, had been sent to a fine old school on the coast of England. He returned when a grown young man, English in appearance and accent, a stranger to his own family. Before starting his law course in

Washington, we had him with us in Quitman awhile, and in those leisure months he and Miss Alice Files had happy hours entertaining each other with guitar and song and young people's joyous nothings. When the time came for him to leave he presented his guitar and other articles to Miss Alice, and as young as I was, I had the feeling that he should not like a strange girl better than his own sister! They never saw each other again.

Here memory recalls that "Pat" Griffin grew up in Quitman, and was to become the popular editor of Bainbridge's newspaper. And another of Quitman's early dancers was Henry McIntosh, now editor of south Georgia's best paper, the Albany Herald. The McIntoshes were from good old Scotch-Presbyterian stock.

Well, the dance that memorable night soon came to an end, the guests departed, and I finished out my night's sleep.

The old yellow brick schoolhouse was a plain, rectangular, two story building, located on a bare hill at the western edge of the town. How and when it came into existence I never have known, and it was accepted by us youthful pupils as rivaling Topsy's miracle of having "just growed." Children from the town and county families started their education within those shabby walls, seated at the wide, wooden desks which became more and more hacked and scratched and defaced by pocket knives cutting out initials and names. Three of my brothers and our cousin, Clark Howell, had been pupils there before it came my turn at poring over the little green primer and the old blue-backed speller. Aunt Julia Howell brought her children and came to our home in the winters to escape Atlanta's colder climate,

and while with us, Clark trudged along with our boys to the town's school. No doubt it is still remembered by some of those pioneer pupils that for several days riot was barely averted after the teacher saw fit to use the switch on Clark's back. The boys carried rocks in their pockets and were ready to get even with the man who dared touch little Clark, but the excitement passed and all the boys probably were on better behavior for a while, at least.

In the fall of my eighth year the school opened with Miss Hattie Stevens as teacher. Miss Hattie was a refined, sweet lady, with dark eyes and a bunch of lovely brown curls draped over the knot of hair coiled at the back of her head--this was the Miss Hattie whose influence helped us toward the straight and narrow path that would lead to spiritual as well as material things. We all loved her and appreciated her patience in our slow efforts at absorbing those terrible a-b-c's and hard words like "cat" and "rat", For our writing lesson Miss Hattie wrote sentences on the blackboard, and learning from those words was the most difficult copying any small girls ever had. In later years a teacher at my boarding school very justly complained of my "hieroglyphics."

The first day of my school life I was one of the little Wade tribe arriving at the school-house before Miss Hattie had come with the key, and seated dumbly on the narrow steps near me was another timid, eight-year-old girl, both of us half-scared at the great and unknown world we were about to enter--a strange world of education that all too soon might end our precious childhood. This other new pupil was Hattie Bennett whose family lived a mile up the country

road. Hattie shared my ups and downs throughout the irregular periods of my schooling in the old academy on the bare hill, and was my one and only classmate the year of Miss Hattie Stevens' reign.

Hattie was the daughter of Judge and Mrs. Bennett, and good home training had made her gentle and sweet, so nice was she that I was actually allowed to accept Hattie's invitation to spend a night in her mother's home, though it was my mother's firm rule to keep her children at home when night came. Of course my first night under a strange roof made a lasting impression, and in my mind is the picture of Hattie and me playing around a fallen pine tree near the house, then supper at the table with Mrs. Bennett presiding, the judge seated at the other end, and boys of various sizes along the side opposite Hattie and me. The little sister, Lee, must have been the baby in the home at that time. After supper the judge read his paper, and on the floor nearby were Hattie, Stanley, and myself, having the time of our lives with a twelve-inch snake--but it was a jointed, wooden snake! Stanley, then at what is now called "pre-school" age, was to become Quitman's leading lawyer, mayor for several terms, member of state legislature, and bearer of many other honors.

The next morning when we were ready to start to school, Mrs. Bennett said to me, "Tell your mother you have been a good little girl, and she must let you come again."

A few weeks later, Hattie spent the night in my home, and when she was leaving my mother said to her, "Tell your mother you have been a good little girl and she must let you come again." If we children had been a little further along that stony pathway of knowledge we might have cited the prophets who were not without honor save in their

own country!

Among the sweet little girls who were our companions at the old academy, was nine-year-old Rosa Lena McCall, older sister of Rachie, Nonnie, John, and Eddie Floride. I remember well the day Rosa Lena was walking back and forth before the school-house at the recess hour, eyes turned on a small book in her hands, when asked whatshe was reading, her answer was, "I am reading my Bible. I was so busy this morning I did not have time to read it at home."

When summer came, my grandmother and aunt Ida packed up to return to Atlanta, for aunt Ida was going to be married! They carried me back with them, and for one whole year I was away from Quitman and my school friends. Then, in the next few years I was in aunt Julia's home several months of each twelve, attending school in Atlanta a part of that time.

The fall after my first year's absence I was back in the piney woods, ready to take up life with my pioneering schoolmates. Professor Forrester and his wife, I think, were to be our teachers, but the succession of new teachers in those years is not clear in my memory. Mr. White, Prof. Wright, Prof. Forrester, and Prof. Johnson--all these were our instructors for short or long periods.

The day that school started its new term, as usual the little Wades came out of the wooded paths and stood around the still closed door. From all directions children came, some grown in size, others, tiny; and they came from farms miles away, or from homes not so far. They came out of the woods, down the country roads, fromthe right

and from the left, and everyone who was not from a nearby home carried books in one hand, a little tin bucket in the other. Truly a "bucket brigade," for our mid-day dinner was eaten on the school grounds during the two-hour recess. Down the country road came the tall Powers boys, Tom and Charlie, with Miss Sarah and Mattie not far behind; further down the road appeared Judge Bennett's two fine boys, nearly grown, both of whom contracted a fatal disease that cut short their careers; back of them came Joe and Hattie Bennett. It was Hattie Bennett who was again to share my experiences, good and not so good. Prof. Forrester was the teacher at the time we received the most enduring impression of our tender years--and here is how it happened: for several days in succession Hattie and I had "missed" our spelling lesson, and the third day, teacher said, "Come up and get your whipping!" We meekly walked up, and onto our small backs that strong arm laid the switch!

Of course we cried and sobbed like two brokenhearted infants; but that long switch put the power of concentration into our minds as well as bodies, and the next day we knew our spelling!

Billy and Mattie Young came from the road at the north, and along with them were the Renfroes, Buck Bozeman, Willie Medlock, John and Annie Hunter, Joe Elder. From another direction came the children of Judge Bentley, Annie Kate and Ada; then Lily and Mary Jones, (the latter became the wife of "Jim Daws" Wade and was the mother of ten fine girls); Minnie and Pliny Sheffield, Ben Brooks, Emma and John Sinclair, Sally Baker, and others from homes not far off. From the other side of town came the Youngs, Averas and Turners, and it was little Jimmie Turner, the son of Congressman Henry Turner, whose early death saddened us all.

Others who were my companions for years or parts of years between the old academy walls, were young people from the town homes--the Rountrees--Miss Mattie, Sam, Bartow, Walter, Eddie; and I can see little Ed Rountree now, his bare feet hopping from desk to desk, a stalk of sugar cane in left hand and his pocket knife in the other, while one cheek bulged with a cane "round." Then, Bartow's "learning" left an impression on my mind which is as clear today as then. We were discussing predestination, and Bartow being a good Baptist could settle all doubts! Pointing to a tall pine tree back of the school he exclaimed, "You see that big tree? Well, if it is going to fall, it will fall!"

Then that hard word, Mississippi! In the long spelling class that was lined up daily across the room, this word came to Bartow, and he spelled out,

"M-i-ss, i-ss, i-pp, i." That was a helpful lesson to me.

Other old timers were: Lewis Harden, Charlie Jones, Oscar Harris, Josephine Carroll, William and Sam Gaulden; -this was the young Doctor Sam who married Tillie McCall, the belle of the town, and was the beloved physician of Quitman; John Harris; Ed and Ledlie Groover; Jimmie and Frank Finch; Lula, Marcus, Leonora and Letitia Harrell; Minnie and Sallie Thomas; Sallie, Ida and Tom Hester, Virgil Hunter, Maurice Stapler--later a popular eye and ear specialist in Macon; Cora McMullen, the pretty girl who was being "trained" by Ed Groover in case he should decide after reaching manhood to make her his happy wife! Still others were: two tiny boys, Tom and Russell Davis; John and Jessie Buchanan, Ida and Ola Thrasher, Frances and "Bubber"

Gazan, Hester, Bartola and Mike Baum, Braxton Moody, Charlie, Lewis and Mollie Creech; Jesse, Seaborn, Capers and Freddie Wade; John and Kittie McKinnon, Beaufort and Hannah Mabbett, Ida and Waller Raysor, the last three being grown young ladies. It was Mike Baum who had the hard struggle with "John's arm", and whose ready tears rivaled in quantity those shed by my little brother Erwin, twin to Maner. The long spelling line sent each of us to the bottom at times, and the day "John's arm" went up and down, well, teacher said Mike needed a bucket to catch his tears. I was appointed to hear Mike's spelling after school that day, but the lesson was not a success for either of us. "John's arm" the word remained, and to this day I avoid that French trap--Gens-D'armes!

About that time our cousin Nettie became known to the people of pioneering Quitman. Cousin Nettie was the eldest of the three step-children to whom that dear aunt Mollie gave as much care and devotion as she lavished on her own little daughter, Carrie. Josie and Peyton were the two younger children, and their home was in Savannah.

At the age of fourteen years cousin Nettie was grown and sophisticated - or thought she was - for wasn't she tall and beautiful, and engaged to marry a big, grown man, even if she did give him the mitten later on! She must have been about sixteen years old when, after finishing at the Savannah schools she came into my mother's home for a year's visit, and at once the young men of the town fell under her hypnotic spell. But I must say it was no fault of hers that the beaux succumbed so easily--she was a sweet, modest girl-she just could not help it! Aunt Mollie clothed cousin Nettie in the latest

fashion, which meant for "best" a long "polonaise" with four rows of buttons close together down the whole front of the dress, from neck to ankle.

And that year, too, was the reign of the marvelous tilter! Being a grown, sixteen-year-old lady, with a record of fifteen marriage proposals from grown-up young men, of course, cousin Nettie wore a tilter just as other ladies wore them with best dresses to hold out the polonaise at the back. The tilter was a long, thinly covered wire frame, like a bustle that reached from the waist line at the back clear to the bottom of the dress, rounding out more and more as the wired semicircle neared the ground. Cousin Nettie tied on her tilter at the waist with the string attached to each side of the half-belt, but below there I do not know how the long, rounded, half-hoop was kept in place, or how she managed to sit down, but she did sit down when it was necessary. By a kindly act of Providence, (or of that underworld where fashions are made) the tilter was banished before I arrived at young ladyhood, and I am still puzzling over the mystery of how a lady could sit down encased at the back from waist to heels in a stiff, rounded wire frame!

Cousin Nettie did not tell a small child like me about the fifteen young men she was keeping on the "anxious bench", but regardless of the fact that children are often told, "Now run out and play a little while", family secrets will leak out! Somehow, mothers and grandmothers learned for back in the past about those "little pitchers" that have "big ears" (and big mouths, too), and the habit was acquired of sending us out in the yard to play while family affairs were being discussed. In those days I must have had big eyes as well as big ears

and a mouth ever ready to repeat things of interest, for I could count cousin Nettie's long list of lovers with very little help from the family!

Children not only learn by absorption, but their individuality develops by self-expression, just as little Effie's cultivation of her expanding mentality proved in advance long ago that it can "happen here" and in any good house. Seated in the parlor one day, listening and staring, the tiny girl was deeply interested as her mother diplomatically explained to the guests the falsity of rumors concerning a certain family happening which must be kept from the prying neighbors. Effie, as I said, being at the "little pitcher and big mouth" stage, suddendly cried out, "Yes she did, mama; don't you remember you told me not to tell?" Aunt Julia saw that the fat was in the fire! It had happened here.

At the usual time for the annual fair to be held at Thomasville, about twenty miles away, one of the "anxious" beaux secured cousin Nettie's consent for him to escort her to the fair, but cousin Nettie was always loyal to the family, and she told him boldly that she had promised to take her small cousin along, and take me she did, knowing that I would be a heart-broken child if not allowed to go. Of course he put up with the "third party" the best he could, for, being a preacher, he was bound to remain sweet-tempered outwardly even if he raged within. We three walked around and saw all the exhibits, I for one, enjoying the crowds and all things strange and new to me. Then, in the afternoon the young preacher guided us to the deserted race track where nothing was happening and nobody was in sight. I couldn't

imagine why he wanted us to climb the high tier of seats that surrounded the track, where there was nothing to do and nothing to see away from the crowds and the other attractions. But at this distance it occurs to me that her minister, knowing all about the "harmless dove" and the "wise serpent" did have a first class motive in taking us away from the crowds, high up on the narrow board seats. It certainly was an unpleasant situation with the "third party's" staring eyes and open ears right there in front of him while he was so desperately anxious to convince his pretty companion that he was ready to die for her if she would only accept his devotion.

There were wide openings between the plank seats, and maybe, being as wily as preachers are taught to be, he may have had the thought that my small body could easily slip through and land on the ground far below, leaving him free from the undesired observer for at least a short period! But I did not fall through! While we sat there facing each other, he may have been quoting Scripture to cousin Nettie-the chapters on love-for all I knew. But the one thing I did hear plainly was, "Miss Nettie, I admire you more than any young lady I have ever met in my life". And all that time there sat cousin Nettie, looking as pleased as a cat experienced in playing with a mouse, and smiling as happily as if she might say "yes" or she might say "no".

If that preacher is alive today, I admit he still owes me a grudge-especially as cousin Nettie's "no," when it came at last was final.

This pretty cousin while still young married Robert C. McCall,

a close relative of Quitman's valued families of that name.

Two new pupils who joined us at the old schoolhouse in those days and were much loved by us all, were Sallie Archer and Hattie Denmark. Sallie was a tall, good looking girl, and was sensibly dressed in a long-sleeve gingham apron that covered her from neck to shoe tops. She and Clara Avera, cousins, became great friends and were deskmates throughout their years at the old school. Hattie Denmark, another "big" girl, also appeared in a long gingham apron. Our mothers did not send their children to school in fancy dress, as is the custom now. Hattie had a sweet face with brown eyes, and her dark hair was held back by a round roach-comb.

Susie Tillman came into our midst with her cheerful, happy disposition, and her little sister, Bessie, was the cutest child in school. "Buddy Ben" and Gene were with us too, and others of the two Tillman families started in later on. Susie, (later Mrs. Moore), was to become a state politician and organizer, so bright and resourceful that she is welcomed at our Governor's Mansion as well as at the nation's White House.

My little brother Charlie was a cheerful, happy child, and when his turn came to enter the old schoolhouse, he could not understand the restraint of smiles and laughter. In those first days he saw many things especially appealing, and when his loud laughter bubbled out, across the room came Mrs. Forrester, who was assisting her husband, and stopped before Charlie's bright face; from curved thumb and forefinger descended thump! thump! on his little forehead. Later on in the day, again some trifle started his chuckles, and more cruel thumps were deposited as a warning.

Several days of thumps and sore forehead taught little Charlie civilization's most important lesson--self control. But surely the aim should not be to destroy a child's sense of humor!

Our main amusements at the recess hour were baseball for the boys, steal-a-burr and stick-frog for the girls, and we needed no other physical training after racing back and forth, dodging and venturing, in an effort to steal from the pile of pine burrs on the enemy's side of the line. It was great fun! At the end of the slope back of the school-house was a low, grassy stretch of ground and here we enjoyed that knife-manipulating game called "stick-frog." We were constantly borrowing knives from the boys, though they were not always ready to lend. After discovering that Ed. Young and certain other boys were willing to lend when the "right" girl asked, we had no more trouble getting knives.

At the two-hour noon recess out came the "bucket brigade!" We sat on the ground in groups, some of us at the shady side of the building, others, on grassy plots further away. Buckets were opened, and from each pail we ate our cold dinner--biscuits (cornbread in some of the pails) sandwiched with small slices of ham or bacon, sometimes chicken or a link of sausage replaced the other meats; stiff hominy from the bottom of the bucket, gravy-flavored, eaten with a spoon brought for the purpose; a hard boiled egg, a slice of cake now and then; and always a little bottle of cane syrup for the two buttered biscuits. A "big" girl, Miss Key, had the most interesting of all the bottles--from the shoe-shaped glass the syrup poured out at the toe! There were no dieticians and nutrition experts and doctors' syndicated

columns to warn our mothers against neglecting the quart of milk and the hot midday meal, spinach and carrots, and vitamins A, B, C, D. We "fixed" our buckets to please ourselves! Later on baskets were often substituted for the tin buckets.

While we ate and chatted, boys sauntered around leisurely, bottle of syrup in one hand, biscuit or cornbread in the other, and whichever finger could be spared bored a hole in the side of the bread; syrup was poured into the hole, and the "bites" were gobbled down before the sticky liquid could run over and be wasted on the ground.

After putting away our empty buckets and getting a drink at the pump, some of us girls now and then deserted "steal-a-burr" and paid a visit to the old cemetery not many squares away. Back of the white people's burying ground was a large, neglected section used by the colored race, and we were drawn there by the mysterious hollows and sunken graves, fascinating to our inquiring minds. Curiosity always carried us to a certain corner of the lot, where, thrilled and scared, we looked into the deep, dark hole that led to a coffin somewhere far down out of sight. We were awed by the thought of rumor's claim that a tiny colored baby had been thrust alive into the darkness of that deep hole! Feeling as if a horrible dragon might rush out and seize us, we would turn and hurry back to the schoolhouse.

As to the joys and shamelessness of our barefoot years, it is best to keep mum!--Years when our feet were small and tender, and not even the prospect of stumped toes, splinters, stone bruises, could destroy our delight those first spring days when shoes and stockings were left on the closet shelf! Frances Perkins would say, "I told you so!" and down would come her army of New Dealers to "put shoes on the feet" of our youthful descendants!

Among other good people whom memory calls out of the distant past were the three gentle McIntosh sisters and their brother "Chilli"; the Mortons, Denmarks and Spains; the Seaman family and the Mongers and Lanes; Dr. and Mrs. Snow with their sweet little girls, Annie and Jamie; dear Old Dr. Jelks who brought so many pioneering babies through measles, mumps and teething spells; his wife and nice children, Bessie, Josie and Ed; the Dukes and Avretts, and all visiting girls had reason to remember George Avrett as leader of charming serenades. Dr. Wilkinson, too, was one of the early doctors, and left two bright boys to carry on his name; the three pretty Livingston girls, Frazier, Lula and Nannie; and there was sweet old Mrs. Mabbett, of Quaker stock--too loyal to her faith to attend service at any of the town churches, said they were "like theaters." The Pierponts, who were cousins of the Pierpont Morgans of banking fame, made Quitman their home for several years. Miss Lily, the eldest of the children, spent a long period in France studying art, then developed a severe case of rheumatism which rendered her unable to hold the brush. The three boys, Percy, Harry (now Pensacola's popular physician) and Maynard, were good friends of my twin brothers, and these five boys spent happy afternoons in vacations making picture frames in the "work shop" of the Pierpont brothers.

All these and many others were early settlers in that community, and the old yellow brick academy started many of their children and grandchildren on the road to success.

Not the least of our happy times in the old days were the summer months spent camping at Quitman's own resort, the nearby Blue Springs. "Going in" three times a day, with shrieks and squeals and shivers in

the cold, clear water, we learned to swim and to be at home in water of any depth.

During the last year of the little Wade tribe's attendance at the old school our mother was a victim of a long illness, and after her spirit passed, it was Susie Tillman who stepped into the trundle bed where I had taken refuge to weep my heart out, --Susie, close at my side, who with sympathetic pats, said, "Don't cry! Don't cry!"

The youngest of our number, Charlie, returned with our uncle to his home in South Carolina, the other boys were sent off to various schools, and I went back to aunt Julia's home in Atlanta.

Years later, a visit to the scenes of my childhood showed a new and stylish Quitman-- a town with city homes, city manners, fine schools; "luncheons" and dinners, elegant in their setting, and a remodeled court-house, plain, square, useful, but no longer with the classic beauty of earlier years! Pretty calico dresses had been discarded, and the ladies were as up-to-date in their modish clothes as if fashion had become most important in their lives; and school girls no longer wore protecting sun-bonnets, "quilted" or stiff with pasteboard slats.

Quitman's pioneering days were over!!

Many, many of our pioneering friends have played their parts in the country's affairs and passed on to the Heaven of more abundant happiness. Those of us who still linger in the sunset of life, though old and wrinkled and faded, find renewed youth in the lives of our children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. But each of us who thus lingers, silently joins the poet in his prayer:

"Backward, turn backward O Time in your flight,
Make me a child again just for tonight."