

The Diary of the Golden Cord.

(The Diary this time is the History of Catawba)

Dear Folks:

One of the quaint interesting little villages near Rock Hill is that of Catawba or Catawba Junction, or "The Junction" as it is usually called. If you dared pause for a brief moment on the top of the high Southern Railroad crossing, you might see almost all of Catawba—and surely on such a high, conspicuous place, most of the people of Catawba would know you had arrived!

"What was Catawba like years ago?" I asked many people, but Mrs. Mary and Mr. Sep Massey could tell me more for many years keen memories enables them to look far back into the yesterdays of their beloved little village. "I've lived in Catawba since 1875," said Mrs. Massey, "I well remember when there were only four white families here and further down the road only colored people. Of course, there was really no 'Catawba Junction' for that name came years later. I was born just about four miles away at Pitts Place. My father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. W. B Daniel, had ten children and nearby in Catawba lived Mr. & Mrs. I. A. Allen and their children, Bud, Julia, Halcett (died in the Civil War). Then Mr. and Mrs. William Wylie and their six girls—Martha (Mrs. W.W. White), Nancy (Mrs. John Craig), Mary (Mrs. John Faris), Maggie (Mrs. Pressly Draffin of Lancaster), Sallie (Mrs. Henry Simpson) and Hattie (Mrs. Francis Simpson). Mr. and Mrs. John Faris lived where Mrs. Mattie Bell Faris lives now, and I remember three little boys Jim, Will and Joe playing in the front yard or going down the dusty road bare footed with fishing poles.

Then there was the Abernathy family—W.C (my first husband), Martha (Mrs. John Spencer), Alice (Mrs. Wiley Roddey) and Harriett (Mrs. Preston Leslie). This was just country then, with a winding dirt road down to Cureton's Ferry, which was out only way of reaching Lancaster. A trip to Rock Hill was an all day excursion hitching up a mule and buggy at day break and driving over muddy or dusty roads to do our shopping at Rock Hill's two leading stores run by J.M Ivey and W.L Roddey. These stores sold general merchandise or as we jokingly said everything from "Cambric needle up to an elephant." On our way home from town we would often stop at Conte's Tavern for our mail. Coates Tavern was just across the road from the old Roddy home. The Post Office its self was in the old Roddy home and I remember Miss Polly Roddey, grandmother of John A and Jean R Roddey, was postmistress there.

Then came the days of the Civil War and one by one our fathers and brother began to enlist and join the ranks of the men in grey. There were no posters, newspapers, radios, roll of the drums or tramp of marching soldiers---just the saddling of a horse and a hasty farewell, and the woman and slaves were left to run the farms. Of course I was just a little girl then, but I had 3 brothers in the war....I remember how we used to watch and wait long months and years for them to come home. The soldiers did not come at the same time. Some were prisoners, some wounded some had to walk long distances and some never did return. My mother kept looking for my brother who was somewhere in New York state—and finally he did come...Frank Patton (Uncle of Ernest Patton) was a young boy of 17 when he volunteered in the place of his father. After the war, old Mr. John Patton sat long hours by the window looking for his son who was 'Missing in Action" and never returned.

Billy Patton, another son, however did return. Thomas Sparks volunteered at the age of 60 and several months later a soldier rode up on horseback to tell his wife that he had been killed and the soldiers just behind were bringing the body home. The son, J.C. Sparks, (Father of Mr. J.T. Sparks) also volunteered and was wounded in action.

Tom and Daniel Allison were also in the Civil War and Daniel died on boat as he was returning home. As I remember that war it was as it is now; as time of anxiety, sorrow, and sacrifice. Our slaves were faithful to stay by and do all they could to help. We had enough to eat, such as it was and I learned to eat anything I got. We had no sugar, but plenty of molasses; no coffee, except rye coffee. As for clothes I put all I had on me, but I don't remember any pretty dresses!" Just then Mr. Sep Massey interrupted to say "Antionette, do show them that baby dress of mine. Do you know, when I was two weeks old I cried to wear it to Noelys Creek Church, but they wouldn't take me! I really wore it when I was about 5 years old. This dress was made by our faithful slave Mary Massey" Miss Antionette then brought out the quite long dress with tucks, embroidery and edging all made by hand with stitches even smaller than a sewing machine could make!

Very vivid in Mr. Sep's memory is the coming of Sherman and his Army to the South. The Catawba river had always been a barrier between friends on the other side but on this occasion everyone was thankful for the bridgeless Catawba. Would it be wide and deep enough to keep away the Northern soldiers who were just across the river at Monroe? "A strange thing happened", said Mr. Massey "Heavy rains came, the river rose and over spread her banks. In fact it was the biggest river ever seen here, and Sherman came to Cureton Ferry and had to turn back to Lancaster. This flood was over afterward called "Sherman's Froshot". The incident I especially remember was that we had 26 fine mules across the river right in the path of Sherman. My father tried to get the mules to swim across the swollen stream..A big sorroll mule, blind in both eyes, plunged into the river and led all 25 mules across the river to safety." Also, very vivid in the mind of the older ones was the coming of Wheeler's Cavalry-a division of the Confederate Army. According to Mr. Will Cowan this group of soldiers camped at his father's place just out of Rock Hill. This was the spring of '65 and the war was fast coming to a close. The officers of Wheeler's Cavalry took for their own use the best horses and mules leaving only the old and broken down animals to be used in working the farms. Mr. Tom Boyd remembers that during this time the horses were kept hidden in the woods in order to save them. From the farm of Mr. Preston Lesslie's father all the live stock was taken except one old mule but the crop was worked anyhow. Mr. Gilliam Gettys was a boy of 9 at the beginning of the Civil War and he remembers many incidents of that period. His father Mr. Ebenezer Gettys was with the 12<sup>th</sup> South Carolina Volunteers, was wounded near Spotsylvania and at his death buried near Richmond in 1864. Mr. Gilliam's baby brother David was only ten days old when his father died and so never saw his father.

When Wheeler's Cavalry came to the home of Mr Gilliam's mother they left her stock because they said "the old mule was too slow, the little mule too small and the filly too light." Mr. Gilliam's uncle, William Boyd Gettys lost an arm in the war but returned home and many of his kindred now live in the Neely's Creek Community. Mr. Gilliam also remembers that Mark Allen of Catawba was killed in the Civil War. John J. Faris also severed and possibly Fait Cherry.

Now the scene changes and as in the Reconstruction Days of the South so there were also many changes in the village of Catawba. The little girl, Mary Daniel had now grown into woman hood and married W.C.

Abernathy. They moved to her present home in 1880 and Mr. Abernathy ran a store in the corner of the yard where a big business was carried on.

In the year of 1884 a great change took place in the building of both Southern and Seaboard railroads through the village. The Seaboard builders were eager to be the first to start work here and so on the day when both companies were to start excavating the Seaboard officials hired a negro man to get up way before day and shovel out a few feet of the right of way and thus they lay claim to being the first to build. Mr. Abernathy walked to the river in order to ride through the Catawba on the first train. On that day the tracks were lined with curious people, tired workmen, and jubilant engineers as the small wood burning engine pulled up the grade and puffed into the station. It was the completion of the railroads in 1886 that gave the village its name "Catawba Junction".

Then the stores began to do a thriving business. Mrs. Sallie Simpson had a little store in the corner of her yard and very soon taught her son William to be a good storekeeper. Mr. Abernathy died and his store was then run by Mr. Sep Massey who married Mrs. Abernathy in 1894. The Lancaster bridge was built in 1888 and many people stopped at "The Junction" to shop or spend the night. Mr. Jim Faris opened a store then Mr. Sparks in 1908 and Mr. Ford in 1937.

Catawba Junction reached its highest peak in the year 1906 when the Catawba Valley Railroad was built. This line ran two round trips a day and often averaged 150 passengers a day. During this time the great dam at Great Falls was being constructed and hundreds of workers were employed.

About this time or a little later the automobile came to Catawba, the first Model T being owned by Henry Simpson and even to this day the story of his first ride is told. He had been instructed in the mysteries of all the gadgets by young Ernest Patton and all went well until Mr Henry tried to bring his four wheeled steed to a stand still. Some people say he had been taught how to start but not instructed to the break. Saying "Whoa" wouldn't do any good so a convienant bale of cotton had to be used to bring the machine to a stop. However as experience did not discourage Mr. Will Simpson, Mr. Bud Ferguson, and Mr. James Faris, who were soon driving through the town at the reckless speed of 15 and 20 miles an hour.

Mr. John Faris had used a horse and buggy transfer but now Mr. Jim Faris, Mr. Bud Ferguson, Mr. John Sparks, and Mr. Martin Leslie began to run auto transfers taking traveling men to Rock Hill and to near by towns.

The great flood of 1916 is well remembered by Catawba. Both the Southern and Seaboard railroad bridges were washed away. For a time the trains had to stop at the river and the passengers were ferried across to continue their journey to the other side.

In 1917 the sons of Catawba began answering the call to the colors. Many of these boys saw experience overseas but not one was lost in the first world war.

These are the men from Catawba who served their country during 1917-18 are the following:

F.F Ford, E.B. Patton, John (Unreadable), W.B Crosby, Harris Tho-(Unreadable), Bard Thomas, R.D. Stevenson, J.H Thomas, John Anderson, Shiver Anderson, and there were also three Negro soldiers from Catawba: Otis Mackie, John Sanders and George Dunlap.

The folks at Catawba remember well November 11 1918 for early in the morning a Southern train stopped there and a man on the train held up a Charlotte Observer with the big headline "Peace." Sometime later a railroad care of war souvenirs came to Catawba and all day long interested boys and girls and adults streamed through to see the display.

The Junction would not be complete without a history of church and school. In the Civil War period and before a few landowners would employ a lady teacher to instruct the children. Later a one room school house was built on the road leading to the river just below the present home of Mrs. Feris. Some of the older citizens remember with affection their first teachers Miss Minnie Craig, Miss Lelia Lesslie, Miss Bess Patton , Miss Mary B Lesslie. Then a bit later came Miss Julia Titman, Miss Helen Abernathy, Mr. John Spencer, Miss Nelie Brice, Mrs. Dunlap, and Miss Sallie Roddey. As the years went by the parents began to see the need for a new school house and under the leadership of Dr. Hill a new building was constructed in 1914. Dr. Hill was also instrumental in building the Methodist Church which was complicated about the same time. The whole village was proud of these nice new buildings. Miss Lucile Fulmer was the first teacher in the new building to be followed by: Miss Louise Nesbet, Miss Myrtle Jones, Mr MacAuley, Miss Lillian Cook, Miss Myrtle Jones, Mr J E Merchant, Miss Ora Jordan, Miss Marie Acock, Miss DeEtte Boyd, Miss Willie Mae Childress, Mr. Refoe, Miss Hazie Betts, Miss Annie Hall Byers, Miss Allison, Miss Daisy Bowers, Miss Macie Bowers, Miss Williams, Mr. Brice Gettys, Miss Cleo Lineberger, Miss Viven Martin, Mr T F Reid, Miss Helen Reid, Mr And Mrs Jim Green, Miss Gulledge, Miss Halliday, Miss. Kaylor, Mrs. McFadden, Mrs. J. F. Faris, Mrs. Allen, Mrs. Lowe and Mrs. Johnson Lesslie, and perhaps others.

Beside the Methodist church in Catawba there was also the A.R.P Church in the early '90's. Before this church building was erected services were held in the new railroad station. Mr. David Lesslie was a prime mover in the urging that a church be built and he lived to see the completed church before his death in 1893.

The ministers from Neely's creek Dr. D. G. Caldwell, Dr. Oliver Johnson, Rev. W.H. Stevenson, and Dr. O. W. Carmichael supplied this church services being held on Sabbath afternoon. Dr. Johnson baptized, in this church Baby William Simpson, Jr., in the spring of 1908 just before he moved to Winnsboro.

In the year 1933 it was thought wise to tear down the A.R.P Church and have all the Psalm Singers unite worship at Neely's Creek. Probably the Boyds, Lesslies and Williams and others needed the new voices from Catawba.. who knows? Anyhow there were many wet eyes as the old pews, organs, and the lumber of the old church was loaded on trucks and hauled away. Some of the pews were taken to Neely's creek, some of the pews and pulpit were sold to Rock Grove Colored Church, some of the lumber went into the educational building at Neely's Creek and some of the windows are now in Mr John Glasscocks store.

The account of the Junction would not be complete without mention of the faithful Post-Masters and Mail Carriers. The post office was first established at Catawba in 1904 with Mrs. John A Faris as Post-Mistress. Then followed Mr. Ed Simpson, Mr. S.W Ferguson, Mr. J.H. Caldwell and Mr. W.B Simpson who took office in 1929 and continues to the present. The rural mail for Lansford, Rowells and Riverview was first handled by a colored man. Mr. Oulp then organized Rural Route #1 and Mr. Stevenson was the mail carrier from 1905 to 1935 on this route. Mr. Dick Cornwell secured signatures to a petition for another route and in 1905 Route #2 was established with Mr. Cornwell as the carrier from 1905 to 1935. Mr Ernest Patton succeeded Mr. Cornwell and has now been carrying the mail for 40 years. On his first route he traveled 18.6 miles per day with his horse and buggy and handled 425 pieces of mail per month. Today he travels 54 miles per day and handles up to 12 thousand pieces of mail each month. With the coming of the three railroads to Catawba and the many passenger and freight trains passing through daily it is not strange to find many able railroad men who call Catawba "Home", and Neely's

Creek Church their "Home Church". Some of these are: Mr. J.R. Patton and Mr. Jim Patton (deceased), Mr. W.W. Faris, Mr. Joe Faris, Mr. E.C. Fudge, Mr. J.E. Bailey, Mr. White Faris, Mr. W.B. Crosby, Mr. Tom Anderson, Mr. Poag Anderson, Mr. W. E Walker, Mr. H. C. Walker, Mr. C.C. Linerberger, Mr. S.G Hill. And Mr. P.A Thomas. Many colored men also served on the railroads as porters and firemen, especially remembered are Tom Setgraves who was a porter on the Seaboard for 50 years and Alonso Moffatt who retired in 1944.

The people of Catawba have a right to be proud of the many sons and daughters and of others who have lived here for a time. A Methodist minister, Rev. A.B Ferguson of Columbia spent his boyhood here. Dr. W.E. Simpson of Rock Hill played up and down Catawba's roads with his cousin Will. Dr. J.N. Gaston came to Catawba and practiced over large parts of York, Chester, and Lancaster counties and was physician for Catawba Indians for 34 years. During the influenza epidemic of 1918 Dr. Hill often left home in the early morning and returned far after midnight. His death in 1918 left Catawba without a resident physician.

In a large farm house near Catawba Gregg Cherry was born and later attended school here while making his home with Mr. and Mrs. Henry M. Lineberger. Very few villagers can claim the distinction of giving a governor to the sister state, North Carolina and we are happy and proud that Governor Cherry still remembers his boyhood friends in Catawba as the following letter shows:

State of North Carolina  
Governor's Office  
Raleigh

February 24, 1945

R. Gregg Cherry  
Governor

Mrs. W. R. Echols  
Lesslie, S.C

Dear Mrs. Echols,

Acknowledgement is made of your kind letter of Feb. 18 requesting a brief message relating to my residence at Catawba Junction S.C.

Upon the death of my father, C.I. Cherry, in 1898, I went to the home of my uncle, Henry M. Lineburger at Catawba Junction. Among the families living in the Catawba Junction community at that time, I recall the following: Mr. Joe Caldwell employed on the Seaboard railroad, Mr. Killiam the blacksmith, Mr. Simpson, who operated a sawmill and apiary; Mr. Hoak who had a son by the name of Emmet; Sep Massey who was a farmer and a merchant; Dr. Hill the only physician; Mr. Williams a merchant and the Faris family.

During 1897 and part of 1898, I attended the one room school located near the Southern Railroad just east of the village. Miss Lela Leslie was my first teacher and later Miss Helen Abernathy taught the school.

While living at Catawba Junction, I attended the A.R.P Church and Sunday School. This was the only church located in the community. I have attended services at Neely's Creek A.R.P Church. My parents were Methodists and both are buried at El Bethel Church located near Roddy Town.

In 1899, Mr. Lineberger moved to his farm on the Catawba River and during that year the Lineberger and Ferguson families employed Mr. Elder of York, who taught the children of the two families. I was among the group.

In the fall of 1899, the Lineberger family moved to Gastonia, N.C., and such place has been my home continually since.

With kind personal regards, I am cordially yours,

R. Gregg Cherry.

Governor

In 1865, the boys from Catawba filled the ranks of those who fought under Lee and Jackson. In 1917 Catawba boys fought under Pershing and Foch and today on land, sea, and in the air they are fighting faithfully for home and country. Many of these are over there some have been wounded and have returned home but thus far no one from the village has paid the supreme price with the loss of any lives. However as this is being written, word has just been received that Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lee Edwards, who while not living in Catawba yet get their mail from there, have received word that their son Robert has been killed in action. Since the mail route out of Catawba covers so large a territory it may be that some boy we may have not heard about may be missing, or killed.

The Roll of Honor of those in service from Catawba (not counting all those who get their mail at Catawba via the rural route) is as follows:

Ovarena Jones

Carey Cannup

Mary Lou Lineberger

William A Thomas

Pat Ferguson

Wm Ferguson

Charles Ferguson

Harry Howard

Wm Howard

Charles Howard

Paul Howard

Harold Auten

Tom Auten

Wm Auten

Miles Lineberger

Baxter Crosby

Charles Crosby

Rufus Crosby

Oliver Faris

Joe S Faris

John Sparks

Robert Patton

Martin Leslie

Beech Cornwell

Martha Cannup

Arthur Reid

John Reid

John Reid

Rebecca Leslie

Billy Spencer

Henrietta Lineberger

Perhaps there are others who ought be included on this list but this as complete a roll as we were able to get after consulting with numerous Catawba citizens.

In checking over what has been written it is noticed that invariably the name of L. H. Spencer was left off the roll of those who served in the first World War-also the name of John Maffatt (colored). We also failed to mention that Dr. Gaston's bride was Miss Mary Patton and Dr. Hill's bride was Miss Harriette Virginia White.

The poet Tennyson wrote, "And I would that my tongue could utter the thoughts that arise in me." As I know these quiet, kindly Catawba people, I too, wish that "I could utter the thoughts that arise." Even more I wish I should tell all stories that have been told me for many exciting, interesting and amusing things have occurred in the village. For the mistakes we have made we are sorry; for the help you have given we are grateful. We have visited you, questioned you and listened to you and we remain

Affectionately, The Golden Cord