

Old newspapers provide glimpse of life in 1924

Clover suffered from a poor cotton crop; car crashes were big news

If one wishes to know what ordinary people were thinking about in the past two centuries, all one needs are copies of a local newspaper of that time. Look for correspondence from the communities within the circulation area of the newspaper. Typically, the local correspondent got a free copy of the paper in exchange for his letter recounting the community news.

An example is furnished by the Yorkville Enquirer's front page of Sept. 30, 1924. At the top in bold type was "The News about Clover." Below that was "Long Continued Rains Have Got the Better of Business," and below that "179 Bales Ginned up to Saturday." In still smaller type, "Ordinary Ginnings to Date Would Approximate a Thousand Bales - Oil Mill Continues Idle Because Seed Are Not Available - Common Labor Plentiful - The Going of Mr. Belk - About People."

It's very obvious that the major concern of Clover was the poor cotton crop that fall. A bad crop year affected everyone. The merchant in town was dependent upon farm prosperity. Most farmers had charge accounts dating back to the spring when they purchased fertilizer, plow points and other hardware. Banks generally had mortgages on their loans and were pretty safe if a small fraction

of farmers could redeem the paper. But if all farmers could not repay, it was a disaster for all.

Several weeks earlier, the Clover correspondent reported the first cotton bale of the season had been sold and that W.G. Jenkins collected a prize of a \$5 gold coin given by the Bank of Clover. The Clover Cotton Oil company had ginned the first bale free and furnished Jenkins the bagging and ties free. The bale weighed 500 pounds, the average weight of cotton bales. Jenkins got 24 cents a pound for the bale.

It was fox-hunting season and for about two months, every issue of the newspaper had reports of the "fox-runs." Some of the chases lasted as long as 10 days and might have as many as a dozen hunters. It was reported that a party of seven hunters "took only 35 dogs with it."

Automobile wrecks were reported in detail. This one was in the Sept. 5, 1924, issue: "Mr. W.E. Adams and Miss Annie Lee Adams of Clover, had a very unpleasant experience Monday afternoon, as the result of which their Chevrolet automobile was smashed by the engine of the southbound C.&N.W. train. It was an unusual accident, but one that might easily happen to almost any experienced car drivers, and such as has happened to some of this class in the past. Mr. Adams and Miss Adams had

been on a visit to Mr. Adams' farm, about two miles to the northeast of Clover. Returning toward town they approached the railroad track, and knowing that it was about train time, Miss Adams, who was driving, took the precaution to stop before crossing the track. Not hearing the approaching train she started ahead again, up an incline to cross the rails; but when the car reached the track the motor choked down." To make a very long story short, the car was hit and dragged 200 feet. Miraculously, neither father nor daughter were hurt.

In every accident report, the reporter tells the make of the auto - Ford, Chevrolet, Dodge and Buick appear most frequently. In 1924, there were still a number of wagons and buggies using the road and inevitably there were collisions of the various vehicles, all duly reported.

Drunk driving carried a \$50 fine and furnished the most items in the reports of who was sentenced in court that week. Bootleggers, if caught, paid fines of several hundred dollars but if repeatedly caught would "serve time." Sid Parrish was sentenced to six months on the chain gang despite his having one leg. Originally, he was sentenced to be sent to the penitentiary but he insisted on serving his time on the chain gang. The gang superintendent said he needed a cook and he'd take him. The judge agreed.

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