

The Genial Acuffs

In his old age Sam Houston remarked that American authors had no need to return to "European castles and their crazy knights and lady loves". They should rather set themselves to work to glean the unwritten legends of heroism and adventure that old men would tell them who were smoking their pipes around the rooftrees of Kentucky and Tennessee. His remarks are applicable today to those of us who love to read history. However, we don't have to travel to Kentucky or Tennessee to talk with men who have LIVED unwritten history. Oft' times they are our very own neighbors. This I found to be true when I visited the lovable Acuffs.

Judge Acuff was born on September 12, 1868, near Piksville, Tennessee. The birth took place in a small, pleasant log house. He was the second son of J.S. and Nancy Billingsley Acuff. There was no wealth in his family. They were farmers who loved and tilled the soil. While J. S. and his two sons worked in the fields, Nancy Jane and her two daughters never wasted a moment inside the house. They were cooking, preserving, knitting, cleaning, the work of each day meeting the following day's incoming tasks at dark. Only for a few brief hours late at night was there a complete stop of the endless activities. Then the fires were banked, the house yawned, stretched and fell asleep.....with one eye open. From this home Judge Acuff trudged to the log

stone County 1878 and attended the public school in the county and later attended Athens College in Athens, Alabama. She taught for several years before her marriage. To hear the Acuffs talk of their teaching days is like reading history from a scroll. The judge taught all grades, all subjects, including latin and says that he studied harder than the students so that he could keep one day ahead of them in latin. For all of this work he was paid the fantastic sum of twenty dollars a month-four of which went for board, room, and laundry. For four dollars a month he says he was served the best food that he has ever had, fried chickens, juicy pork, home baked bread, vegetables galore, fruits of all kinds, rich purple grapes, mellow apples and all of the delicious yellow peaches that he desired. (Why not, after all he was paying about four and a half cents for each meal if you don't include charges for room and laundry) Mrs. Acuff told about one place where she bearded with a farmer who had only one candle to serve as light for the entire family. When she got ready to retire for the night she took the candle and went into her "lean to" room and when she was undressed and ready for bed she cracked the door slightly and passed the candle to the

next person to be used for similar purpose.

The Acuffs have lived in Jasper, Columbiana and Leeds before coming to Ashville in January 1933. Judge Acuff retired from court practice eighteen years ago because of his hearing but continued to do office practice. They have two children, a daughter, Mrs. Grover B. Wood lives in Fairfield and is the librarian in the Fairfield High School. A son, E. B. Acuff, holds a responsible position in Moultrie, Georgia. They have four grand-children.

I thoroughly enjoyed every minute of my visit with the Acuffs and was as pleased as punch when I started to leave and Mrs. Acuff said, "You may Kiss him good - by if you want to." (This I did pronto!)

The Acuffs have reached the ultimate goal that all of us striving for-prestige, the esteem of our fellow man. They are GOOD PEOPLE to all who know them. To me, they are not only GOOD PEOPLE but just PLAIN CUTE. About the cutest couple that I know!

school some distance away. Here dressed in his new hickory shirt, cotton trousers cloth, copper teed shoes he studied latin, greek, and history along with the three R's. When not at work or in school the four little Acuffs played with their homemade toys or rode in their homemade wagon hitched to a young calf. These were the happy days in the Acuff household. A household that represented the best in the south--hard working, warm hearted people of impeccable integrity.

After attending the school near Piksville the Judge attended Buritt College at Spencer, Tennessee. He studied and read law at night in the law offices of the Garden-Hire-Anderson firm while teaching during the day. In 1897 he came to Meridian, Alabama (near Huntsville) to teach in a three teacher school. It was here he met Miss Lee Blackburn, the music teacher in the school. They were married three years later on December 5, 1901. (With some reluctance he shyly admitted that he had been dancing to her tunes ever since)

It is impossible to write about (or even think of) one of the Acuffs without the other, for they, as not too many other couples are, as one. Mrs. Acuff, daughter of Edward and Elizabeth Crenshaw Blackburn, was born in Lime-