

The Heritage of Calhoun County, Alabama

Calhoun County Heritage Book Committee

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Mervis Broadwell

Mervis Brooks Broadwell was born 1873 at Pickett's Mill Civil War Battle site. His father, Mitchell Broadwell, purchased ½ interest in Pickett's Mill in 1872. Mervis lived there until age 17 when his family moved to Sand Mountain. Mervis wrote of uncovering relics from the War when farming this land.

These Broadwells moved to Sand Mountain in 1892 where Phillip Broadwell was teaching school. Mervis married Annie Bowen and had children, Leslie Ray and Annie Ruth. At some time he moved his family to Calhoun County where he owned and operated Broadwell's Mill, popularized by its covered bridge. Mervis

was uncle to Ernest Glenn Turner, being close in age they were more like brothers and good friends.

First known ancestors of this Broadwell line, William and Christian of Wake County, NC, were charter members of the historic Hephzibah Baptist Church, Raleigh, NC 1809-1817. Their children were: William, born ca 1770, married



Broadwells, Turners and Friends at Sorghum Mill

Delilah Holloway; John, born 1789 married Achsah Gulley; Jesse, born ca 1770, married Nancy Privette; Freeman, born 1791, married Amelia Nichols; Frances married John Fort, Rev Sol. William Broadwell died ca 1820 and some of the family moved southward.

Jesse, born ca 1770 NC, died ca 1859 GA, came to GA via Pendleton, SC, helped remove Indians from GA, and settled in Crabapple. Jesse and Nancy's children were Susannah, born ca 1803, married Robert Miller; Needham, born 1808 NC, married Hettie Hembree; Green; Macinda, born 1809, married Jacob McDonald; Nancy, born 1822, married Abner Phillips; and Elizabeth. Jesse married 2nd Saphronia Jackson and had Jesse Jr., born ca 1839, who died in the Civil War and Perry, born 1844, who married Sarah Andrews/Martha Austin.

Needham Broadwell married Hettie Ladissia Hembree in 1827 in Jackson Co. GA, where he lived along with grandmother, Christian Broadwell, listed as widow of Rev. Sol. in the GA land lottery. Hettie brought quite a heritage to this family, being the daughter of Amariah Hembree, son of Rev. James Hembree, of SC. Needham farmed in Crabapple. Their children were: James W., born 1828, married Nancy Jane Gentry; John, born 1840, married Jane Moore; Mitchell M., born 1832 GA, married Malissia Gentry; George, born 1842, married Emily Moore; Joe, born 1834, died Civil War, married a Briddle; Euel, born 1830, married Levina Naylor/Jenkins/Parker; Mary, born 1838, married Wm. Norton; Hamilton, born 1836, died Civil War; twins Nancy, born 1846, married Wm. Gillespie and Sarah, born 1846, married James Richards. Needham married 2nd Margaret Brown. The Broadwell homeplace is now the Mr. John B. restaurant in Crabapple.

Mitchell M. Broadwell, born 1832 GA, married in 1854 Mahalia Malissia Gentry born 1837 GA, daughter of Denny and Lavinia Rainwater Gentry, descendant of Azariah Denny, Rev. Sol. Their children were Martha Jane, 1855-57; Theodoria, 1856-83, married John Smith; Missouri, 1858-89, married Frank Storey; William G., 1860-60; Frances, 1862-1946, married Jim Turner; James David, 1864-71; Vienna Zuela, 1867-71; Phillip Graham, born 1869, married Martha Williams/Ronnie Gilbreath; Mervis, 1873-1960, married Annie Bowen; Denny, 1878-1973, married Hattie Moon. Two children died in infancy, one fell in well. *Submitted by: Dana Brady Till, 1515 Murdock Road, Marietta, GA 30062*

Sources: *Pickett's Mill Bloody*, 1960 *Anniston Star*, family members, census.

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married James Campbell July 24, 1982. They had one son, Hunter. Jeanne died February 1, 1979. Bill later married Virginia Ann Morris.

2. Betty Marion born March 30, 1934 - married Michael Rodgers Collier April 15, 1956. They had 4 children. (1) Michael Rodgers Collier, Jr. born April 15, 1957 in Manchester, Tennessee; (2)



Ida and son Bill

Stephen Robert born March 18, 1959 in Manchester, TN; (3) Rebecca, born and died April 24, 1960 in Fort Walton, Florida; (4) Carole Lynn, born April 1, 1963 in Santa Maria, CA Married - Sharp and has one son, Peter Collier Sharp, who was born in June of 1998.

Ida and Albert were members of the First Methodist

Church in Anniston. Their daughter, Betty, played the chimes at the church for several years before she went away to college.

Quenelle died August 21, 1983 at R.M.C. Hospital in Anniston. He fell, broke his hip, and while in the hospital for that, he had a heart attack that claimed his life.

Ida died October 23, 1986 at the Springfellow Hospital. She had fallen twice and broken her hip. She lived at the Colonial Pines Nursing home in Oxford about four (4) years before her death.

They are both buried at the Forest Lawn Cemetery in Golden Springs. *Submitted by: Betty Quenelle Collier, Tullahoma, TN and Written by: Marie Snider*

Source: Oral Family History

Daniel Cornelius Rainwater

Pioneer Family

D. C. "Neil" Rainwater was born 6 February 1867 in Gunterville, Marshall County, Alabama to John and Mary Jane Rainwater. During the next few years, the family traveled between Georgia and Alabama. On 10 January 1887, he married Julia Lanora Caldwell in Rome, Floyd County, Georgia. She was the daughter of William and Mary Frances Caldwell.

D.C. and Julia had two children born in Floyd County. In 1889, the family moved to Anniston, Alabama. Seven more children were born.

When he arrived in Anniston, he went into the iron trade, becoming a moulder. Shortly after arriving he became connected with the volunteer fire department. He and others then organized Anniston Fire Hose Company No. 4. The company had three reel wagons pulled by horses. D.C. was the driver. There were three companies, one on West Fifteenth Street, one at the City Hall and one in Glen Addie.

Members of the company asked D.C. if he would be chief. He said he would and he held the position for more than 20 years.

The horses were abandoned in 1914. The records of 1898 show that Chief Rainwater was paid \$5.00 per month for his services, and sometimes, that was not paid for several months.

One of Chief Rainwater's proudest possessions was a small brass key, worn smooth over the years. This was the first key to Anniston's first fire station. It was presented to Chief Rainwater by Mayor O.Z. Henderson. The key and the white helmet Chief Rainwater wore are in the possession of the Anniston Fire Department, on display at the 17th Street and Leighton Avenue station.

West Anniston Hose Company No. 4 organized a band. One program of sacred music was presented at Oxford Lake Park on Sunday, 12 July 1930.

The following is from an article in the *Anniston Star*, Sunday, 15 May 1921:

"Fire Chief D.C. Rainwater, on Saturday, celebrated his 24th anniversary as an employee of the city of Anniston, having the record of having missed only two calls sent into fire headquarters during that time. This was due to illness."

"During his days as a driver, Chief Rainwater was known as a master hand at handling his horses, and there are many who remember the pretty animal named "Bill" who worked probably a longer time as a wagon horse than any other animal ever owned by the city."

"The Chief learned one valuable lesson in his early days as a firefighter. One day away back in the early days, a call came in from a box on the extreme side of town from the fire house. When he returned from extinguishing the fire and saving the property, he found that his own house had burned to the ground. After that, Chief Rainwater always bought an insurance policy on every piece of property that he acquired." On Thursday morning, November 2, 1922, Chief Rainwater, his son and Driver, Roscoe Rainwater and Firemen Charles B. Cook and Chris Cannon were painfully injured by a falling chimney at the home of J.W. King in Oxford. The four Anniston fire fighters were ascending an inside stairway when a high chimney crashed, the bulk of the bricks falling through the floor on the second story and injuring the local men as they carried a line of hose to the second floor in an effort to save the building. Chief Rainwater was struck on the back and limbs, Roscoe Rainwater sustained severe cuts about the head and shoulders. Mr. Cook was badly cut about the head and Fireman Cannon sustained painful injuries about the head and body.

During 1930, the local firemen responded to 266 alarms which included calls to Oxford, Jacksonville and other places outside the city limits. The Ajax Foundry Company was razed in February and the General Foundry Company was destroyed in May. These two losses totaled \$40,000 in damages.

Three downtown fires also occurred during this period. A blaze at Silver's Store was the greatest damaged. Others were at the Forbes Piano Company on April 28 and the Anniston National Bank Building.

Fires at the J.N. Huger home on Wilmer Avenue, the John Mallory residence on Highland Avenue and Dr. W.M. Salter's home were among the largest in the residential areas.

At the time of a canvass for funds, or soon thereafter, D.C. Rainwater was Anniston's first paid fire chief. The first hose company, manned completely by volunteers and using only a hand reel, had been organized in the 1880's. Horse-drawn wagons had replaced the old hand reels and there was a full-time paid driver at each station, although the other members of the force were still volunteer workers.

It is to Mr. Rainwater, who served as fire chief for above 25 years and remained in the department until his retirement in 1942, that Fire Department leaders attribute much of the success of the local force. He entered the fire service in its early days and served several years as a volunteer before he was given a position as paid driver in 1897. Later, he was promoted to the position of city fire chief. According to C.C. Cannon, who is himself a veteran member of the fire force and later served as fire inspector for the city: "Mr. Rainwater was not only one of the best fire-fighters in the state but also one of the most skilled horse-trainers in this part of the country. There were always crowds of people, young and old, standing around to watch. As he went by, people would yell 'Go it, Neil'. His two favorites were Mike and Bill who were trained to pose on tubs, nod and shake their heads in answer to questions."

D. C. Rainwater retired as Chief of the Fire Department in October 1932.

Chief Rainwater died 3 May 1945 in Birmingham, Alabama at the age of 78. He is buried in Edgemont Cemetery, Anniston. Submitted by: James L. Harkins, 3925 Morris Drive, Anniston, AL 36207

Sources: Accounts and Note Book of the West Anniston Hose Company



Daniel Cornelius Rainwater