

Journ. 10
April 24, 1951

Scott

(Home Town)

Having lived in the hill country of East Tennessee for the first ^{twenty} 20 years of my life, I naturally don't share the prejudiced viewpoint of most native Ohioans who regard Tennesseans as an ignorant, uncultured, shoeless, seedy lot, who don't know the "score."

More arguments have been won by agreement with your contender, they say, than by disagreement, so let me start by admitting a few shortcomings of my native State.

It is true that much of this part of the State is unproductive, being ill-fitted for either farming or industry. The picturesque hills, narrow, canyon-like valleys, and small rippling streams make nice scenery, but they hardly lend themselves to agriculture or the building of factories.

It is true that most of the timber stands have been exploited and that mining of coal is a relatively small business.

It is also true that a few people still live "way back" in the hills and seemingly have forgotten how to raise vegetables, neglecting ^{RE} their poor little farms to work spasmodically in lumber mills and on the railroad. Often they are on public relief. Sometimes they make a few crossties

4/24/51

to sell the railroad, or haul a few cords of stovewood for sale in the village. Their children live in poverty and ignorance, without proper clothes and with no apparent ambition for improvement.

But these conditions, considered average by the northerner, are no more true of the populace as a whole than the slums of Cincinnati are typical of that City.

Unlikely as it may seem, Tennesseans are proud of their home State. They have a right to be. We have a proud past, having won the title "Volunteer" state through bravery of our soldiers. Tennessee was really in the "middle" during the Civil War. Many homes were divided in loyalty between the north and the south. The State, though, survived, and

Great men have passed our way;—Andrew Jackson in past history and Cordell Hull more recently. The same environments which influenced these men exist today, but greatly augmented.

The University of Tennessee is located in Knoxville, and Chattanooga has a University of its own. Numerous church colleges nestle in the hills, some of them practically making up the population of the towns in which they are located. The schools emphasize farming and vocational training as well as giving full treatment to the liberal arts subjects.

The federal government chose East Tennessee as the site of one of its greatest atom bomb developments, and workers

4/24/51

commute to Oak Ridge for 30 miles around. TVA brought electricity to most rural homes years ago. Radio, with its broadening influence, has been common in practically every home even before electricity was available.

On the border, so to speak, between the extremely ignorant of the back hills and the more progressive of the cities and small towns, there is a little village known as Lancing. It happens to be my home town. The houses, mostly of white-painted frame construction, nestle in the cup formed by surrounding ridges of the southern part of the Cumberland Plateau. There are exactly three roads leading out of the village, all of them up steep hillsides, curving in variations of the letter S. The inhabitants, numbering less than 300, are served by two general stores, a post office, a depot, a ^{five} 5-room grade school, two churches, and a once-a-week movie.

The village is sleepily quiet when the school children are at "books." In a nearby field a new gray stone school house is going up, ^{and is} to be equipped with more modern conveniences than in the old one. Work on this project is as slow as the laborers can make it. After all, this sort of work isn't available all the time. They must try to make it last. The county government isn't free of corruption, you see.

A plainⁿ mill at one end of the village emphasizes with its droning machinery the sleepy quality of the atmosphere. However, this quietness is broken often by the thundering roar and swish of freight and passenger ~~trains~~ trains passing

4/24/51

through on a main line of the Southern Railway--the Cincinnati-owned C.N.O. & T.P. Railway to Chattanooga. Few of the trains stop. Before Diesels were installed, though, it was common for the steam locomotives to take on water at the big tank north of the village.

The natives of Lansing are contented for the most part to work for the railroad, raise potatoes on a small scale, or operate a private industry such as a general store. No one is trying hard to get rich. Not many of the sons and daughters settle in the hometown, ^{Ref} causing the population to be rather static. But Lansing is proud of its contribution to industrial life in many cities, and Christmas time finds the younger generation flocking back to renew old acquaintance and just say "hello" to one peaceful little spot on the globe.

Well done

Dorothy M. Scott

Journal 10.

April 24, 1951

BT