

New Boston, Texas
May 13, 1910

Mr J. L. Hicks,
Abilene, Texas

Dear Brother:

I will begin this this morning, though I may not finish until some time later. I hardly know where to begin, but suppose I had as well begin with my entrance into Clarke County. It was 8 o'clock at night when my train reached Jackson. Marion Mathews met me with a surry and good mule team. On the same train with me from Mobile, (though I did not know it till we got off at Jackson), were Cole Summers, who lives in Cherokee County, and old man Bill Woods, who lives in Angelina County, and who married Uncle David McLeod's daughter, and whom you will remember as McLeod's miller and wood workman. They, like myself, were on a reunion visit to the old stamping ground, and went out with me in Marion's surry. And by the way, old man Woods is a Socialist.

Marion has made a large, fine looking man, and is said to be one of the best citizens of the county. He lives in the same old house, though he has improved it, and its age is not hurting it, for long-leaf pine lumber don't decay. Poor old Henry, the idiotic boy, is just the same, only he is almost entirely blind, and is quite deaf. He remembered me, however, and hugged me good. We got to Marion's at 12 o'clock in the night, after pulling through the sand beds and up and down the hills. You will remember Pole Branch and Lightwood Knot Branch along the road, though I had forgotten them by name. Celia McMullen had gone down to Marion's to meet us that night, thinking you would be with me, and, together with everybody else, was sorely disappointed to learn that you failed to get off. We got to bed about 2 o'clock. Next morning bright and early Uncle Lige Mathews came in. You would have no difficulty in recognizing him if you were to meet him. His hair and beard are about half gray. You know, I suppose, that Aunt Mary died several years ago (though I did not know it) and he has married again, his wife being the late widow of Bob Champion, and a mighty nice, good woman. They live one mile south of Grove Hill, on the Jackson Road going out by the Tompkins place. Uncle Lige was as glad to see me as if I had been his own boy, and had many questions to ask about all the folks.

Late in the evening I went over to spend the night with Jesse Mathews, Uncle Lige's son, who lives about one mile north of our old place on the St. Stephens Road. He has about 500 acres of land there, and is doing well. He married Rev. Wesley Calhoun's daughter. Jess is a fine fellow, and his wife is a fine woman, kinfolks anybody might well be proud of.

Leaving their house Friday morning, I went over to dine with Celia McMullen's folks. You know they live at the old Mathews place - that is her father's place, just east of our old place across Long Branch. She has a fine set of boys, and they are doing well. That old place didn't look very natural. From the house down to Long Branch, where there used to be a field, is now a dense thicket of pine trees from 4 to 8 inches in diameter. Where the fig trees used to be is a fine lot of water oak trees, making a dense shade. But the crossing on Edward's Creek going from there over to Uncle John's place is just the same, only you would not now suspect that there was ever any such thing as the old "Beaver Ruin." Instead of the open place, there is the most dense forest of pine, maple, poplar, beach, and every other kind of tree common to the country. Only the crossing on the creek looks like it used to.

For the present I omit the next two visits, made the same day, to the old Mathews Graveyard and out old home place. Saturday morning I went from Celia's down to Alice Payne's, Celia's sister, who lives at what we knew as the old "Seeny Place", between our lower field and Aunt Beckie's. They live in the same old house, added to, and made a good, commodious home. Alice's husband is in fine circumstances making money on that old place. She is in very critical

health, and I fear she will not live long. They have a fine family of girls and a grown-up son.

I spent Saturday night with Marion, and Sunday morning went to fill my appointment at Hebron, a Methodist church built about 150 yards south of Aunt Betsy Calhoun's old place, there on Bee Branch. It would be impossible, and might also seem to smack of vanity, to describe the services of that day. Not only the house, but even the woods, could hardly hold the people. It was something to be dreaded, from my standpoint, not that a crowd embarrasses me, but faces that greeted me for the first time in more than 32 years, calling up countless memories too tender and sacred to be described with pen and ink, rendered it difficult for me to suppress my emotions and keep to any line of thought. But by sheer force of will, I threw off everything but my subject. Another source of embarrassment was that my kins-people, I knew, were somewhat in dread. They didn't know whether I had made a good preacher or a sorry one, and I knew they felt how awful it would be if I made a failure. None of them spoke of it, but I knew how they felt and would feel if I failed to "make good." So, as I said, I threw to the winds as far as possible every thought except those I had prepared to give them and plunged into my subject, which was "How to be Happy," based on John 13:17 - "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." I think I shall send you a synopsis of the sermon sometime soon. Well, for me, it was a success, and I had all reason to believe the congregation was not disappointed, even my relatives. I had more freedom than usual in handling my subject matter, and the service was a great uplift. They had dinner on the grounds, and the like of good things to eat you never saw. It was a great feast. But handshaking and renewal of acquaintances was more the order of the day than eating.

They had arranged for two services, so at 3 o'clock they all gathered again, apparently more hungry to hear preaching than at the other service, and again the good Lord helped me out while I discussed "Spiritual Discernment", text, I Cor. 2:9 - "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, but God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit." Perhaps I need not add more concerning the day's services than to say that I learned before leaving Clarke County that old Jim Wilson, son of old "Sat" Wilson, whom you will remember, was there, to everybody's surprise, for no one seems ever to have seen him at church before - one of the toughs of the country - and got under deep conviction, and two days afterwards (the last I heard from him) was not disposed to talk about anything but those services. And John Stewart, Uncle Lige's brother-in-law, you know, who now lives at Jackson, was up there, and told me when I visited him in his house, that the good effects of that day's services would be manifest in that community for 50 years to come. I hope he is correct.

From Hebron I went home with Uncle Lige and spent Sunday night, Monday morning I went up to Grove Hill and stayed till next morning with Achsa (Morgan) Wells, Aunt Mary's daughter, with whom the latter makes her home. Aunt Mary's hair is almost white as snow, but she looks well and seems to be in good health. Something about both her and Uncle Lige constantly reminds me of our mother. Achsa is living with her second husband, who is well to do for a man in that country. They keep a good hotel and get a good patronage. Achsa has a married daughter, wife of Bob Chamberlain, a merchant at Whatley. She is a beautiful and refined woman, and a good religious one. She and her husband are devout Methodists. The other daughter, Lula Kinman, is a fine looking young lady, teaching school, and I guess will come out here and teach, as I have secured her a school since I came home.

The old county seat looks much the same as when you saw it last. It has grown some, and the oaks are larger, and it presents a pleasing scene

as it nestles so quietly among the great oaks. They have a new \$14,000 courthouse, a new \$10,000 school building, a concrete block bank building, and one or two brick stores. Aside from these, the same old stores are there that always have been. The Democrat is in the same old residence-like building that it has been published in since "the time when the memory of man runneth not to the contrary". They are worshipping in the same old churches, but the Methodists are just ready to begin work on a \$5,000 building.

From Grove Hill I went on Tuesday down to Monroe Halford's where strange feelings crept over me as they said, "This is the same house your grandmother lived in." There it stands, the same old logs, tho' it has been torn down and moved up to where Uncle Jim used to live. But every log is placed back exactly as it was in the old building. The fine ~~was~~ old spring is still cold as ever down under the steep hill north of the house. But things don't look natural around the place at all. Those old fields are now great pine forests. Monroe and Ellen have reared a fine family of good-looking girls, and seem to be prospering. I preached at Tompkins school house, which takes the place of old Providence, and stands out on the big road right where the settlement road crossed going from Uncle Jim's to Providence. A bright young lady was converted in the service and joined the church on the spot.

Leaving Halford's Wednesday morning, I went by our old place, (to be mentioned later), and spent the night with Alice Payne's, where by previous appointment I preached to as many people as could get into the old Seeny House, preaching in the very room where I went to my first school - a little summer school taught by "Sis" Mathews, perhaps after you came to Texas. Jim Mathews came up to the service, spent the night, and carried me home with him next day. He lives close to Peniel, and owns the place where the mother of his first wife lived. You know Jim's present wife is "Kish" McLeod, and if you were to meet her on the streets of Abilene I believe you would know her - same old Kish. But I failed to recognize Jim. When I saw him last he wore a beard on his chin, but now he wears only a mustache. Of course he was the same old Jim after I learned it. His children are all married but two, a son and a daughter, the latter being one of Clarke County's best teachers, and the former being an agricultural college at Jackson, a branch of the State Agricultural and Mechanical College; and by the way a fine thing for Jackson and Clarke County.

In the afternoon Jim took me in his buggy up to the old Union Church and camp grounds - one of the sacred spots of this earth! And to my great surprise I found everything there more like it was when I left it than any place I visited. There is the old church, built about 75 years ago, still in a good state of preservation, and the old camp shed, looking just exactly like it did when we left there except the roof is needing some repairs. And the same tall pine trees still stand like giant sentinels, as if guarding the sacred memories that cluster about the place. And just down the steep hill is the same dear old spring, though largely filled up, not being used now, for they don't worship there any more. The Union Church stands now about midway between the old church and Waite's old store. That move was made because the old place so badly hemmed up by fencing the land roundabout as to become almost inaccessible. So they went further down and built on the public road, and the upper community built at Hebron. But the old camp ground still belongs to the church, and is used every summer for a Confederate Reunion. I had strange feelings as I walked about that dear old place.

Going from Jim Mathews' to Union carried me by the old store of Henry Waite's, which is still standing - same old house - though not now used. It was one of the most familiar objects I saw. Waite's old residence is still standing and has much the same appearance. McVay is a country store and post office, kept by Dock McVay, about 1/2 mile south of Waite's old store. ~~Newton~~

Nealton was a store and post-office just north of Waite's, but Neal Calhoun quit business and the post-office was moved and name changed to McVay. Jim Mathews thinks a whole lot of you. He got your paper while I was at his house and we devoured it eagerly, laughing heartily over your article on "increasing the acreage" of the Journal. But Jim doesn't agree with you on politics. He thinks Tom Watson is the greatest living man. I promptly told him that I have no respect for him. Jim keeps a little chest in which he files away Watson's articles. He is our cousin and a good man, but I don't think he is overburdened with what a man needs to be a first class legislator. He was against the prohibition amendment but is highly in favor of the present state-wide law on the subject. I felt of him pretty closely, and concluded that he is not very clear and definite in his views on any of the questions of the day. But I am getting off. I was simply speaking of my visit to his home, and must say that I enjoyed it very much, and he complimented me so highly that I feel like I am perhaps wanting in charity to have expressed any criticism of him at all. He is one of those cold, phlegmatic, and critical listeners, hanging his head to one side and looking at a preacher through the corner of his eye, as much as to say, "I am here to see if you know anything of what you are talking about." But I seemed to strike him in the right place, and he said, "Cubbie, I am prouder of you than any of the boys who have gone out from Clarke County." But he says you are the finest writer - can express yourself the best with a pen - of any man he ever saw. He told me to tell you he was going to write you soon.

Well, at his house I turned my face from the old settlement and began to finish my stay. I went on Friday from his house down to Cousin Amanda Pritchett's, 4 miles north of Jackson on the Grove Hill road, one mile ~~from~~ south of the old Everett McVay place. She and her boys have about 800 acres of that good level red land, much of it worth \$40 per acre on the market. They are doing well. "Sis" is the very image of Uncle Bob. Tom has been dead several years.

From there I went Saturday evening down to Jackson and spent the night with Howard McMullen, Celia's son, who recently married a young widow with a good home home there. She is a daughter of John A. Calhoun, and her mother was a Stewart, sister to Uncle Lige's first wife. She struck me as one of the finest characters I met on the whole round. While there I visited Albert Mathews, Jim's married son, who lives there and is a carpenter; John Stewart, mentioned above, and the leading merchant there; Erastus McLeod, who lives in a fine house and is a contractor, and who has two sons members of the Alabama Conference, and Dr. L. O. Hicks, who as you know, is our 2nd cousin, and is one of the leading physicians there. He has an elegant home, and seems to be doing well. He was exceedingly glad to see me, and told me much about our people on the paternal side that I never knew before. He says he is working on a family tree, trying to reach the origin of the Hicks tribe. He has found that the older ones, with their progeny, live in great numbers around Raleigh, N.C., - that is where our father was reared - and he is going there right away, as a side trip from Richmond, where he goes to attend the Railway Surgeon's Convention, and get all the data he can, and write me what he finds out. I await it with much interest, and will give it to you if he gets hold of anything worth knowing. I also saw Dr. Gross Chapman and had a good talk with him - in fact he gave me a treatment for an extreme case of hoarseness which I brought on by talking so much, especially in public and then going out in the cool north winds at night. Gross is regarded as the leading doctor of Jackson. His hair and mustache are iron gray, but aside from this, he looks just like he used to. Nothing would do but that I must preach at least once, hoarseness or no hoarseness, so I consented and preached for them on Sunday night.

Then on Monday morning at 8:15 I boarded the south bound on the Southern, and in a few minutes had passed over the dear old Tombigbee, and felt

that I was richer, far richer, both for time and eternity, for having gone, my only regret being that you had not been enriched along with me.

Before speaking in detail of the old homestead, I wish to speak a word of things in general back there. To begin with, you will be surprised to learn that Jackson is a little city of nearly 3,000 inhabitants, and one of the most beautiful places found in all my rather extensive travels. The town extends at least a mile up the Grove Hill road further than when we left there. You remember the road had a row of oak trees on either side for a mile or so; well those oaks are now two to three feet in diameter, their branches meet over the middle of the street, and you know how level the ground is, and it makes one of the most beautiful streets I ever saw. And everything is up to date. Automobiles "honking" around every corner, and it is like being in a bustling Texas city.

But the country doesn't look like it used to. I was not disappointed in this, for I did not expect to see it as it was 32 years ago. Really, it looked more like it did formerly than I expected to find it. The large pine timber is nearly all cut, and the tops are piled promiscuously everywhere, and the thick underbrush of oak bushes of every kind, together with those logs and tree tops, make it difficult to go through the woods. You can't see as we used to through the open piney woods. But in traveling the old public roads, you recognize the same old clay hills, sand beds, branches and creeks. Especially is this so going from Hebron up to Grove Hill along the St. Stephens Road. Lee Branch, Jackson's Creek, and Roaring Branch, with their impenetrable swamps have a very home-like appearance. The wonder is that any cow getting into these swamps ever did get out, for they look now like they would bog a shadow!

I am going to do what you asked me to and take all the time and paper necessary to make it as much like you had gone as possible. And to do this I must tell you about the people, at least some of them. To begin with, Jim Calhoun, who lives on the same old place but in a new house a little distance north, is exactly the same old Jim Calhoun. You would know him easily if you should meet him on your streets. He heard I was in the country and struck out to hunt me up and found me at Celia's, stayed all night, talking till 12 o'clock, went with me to Alice's next morning and stayed with me till after 5 in the afternoon. He is a good, solid man, level headed and a fine citizen. Doing well, too. And Andrew is the same. Know him anywhere. Likewise Martha, the deaf one. You know Jim married Cindy Tompkins. She favors herself but is not the fine-looking, mischievous girl of former days. She is pretty gray and stooped. They have raised a large family of children who reflect credit upon them. And there is Mandy Calhoun (married a McDonald) much the same as when she killed a wild-cat with a pine knot in a patch of gall berry bushes between our house and theirs. Amos McLeod is dead, but his widow looks just about as she did when I saw her last. Maurice McLeod lives N.E. of the old McLeod place about a quarter, and is a fine looking fellow and a good citizen - tall with a heavy mustache. Jno. A. Calhoun lives at the old McLeod place. I was in sight of it but did not get right to the house, much to my regret. Then there is Bill Tompkins, just the same only pretty gray. Frank is dead. Ira McLeod can't change his looks. He got fixed just like he is at the start, and will be that way as long as he is Ira McLeod. He lives on the Colgan place (you remember the old Colgan field, close to Uncle Steve Fugh's, where we used to have a wild hog claim). And Layard McLeod has changed very little. All the Chapman's, Uncle "Ballie", Dave, and Lige, just look a little older. Ed Calhoun, Uncle Natural's youngest boy, lives at the old Viny Chapman place, and is one of the most useful citizens of the county. Stewart Calhoun's widow (Kat Chapman) lives in Jackson. Amos McLeod's son owns nearly all of our old place, and lives between our old house and the West Spring. Also, the Highland Springs school house is right there by him, right on our old spring path. A negro cabin now occupies the spot where old Highland stood. It is a tenant house on the farm belonging to Tom Augtry, akin

to Tompkin's folks.

I believe I have made mention of most of the ones I saw that you would be most anxious to hear from. I come now to the part of this letter that I don't know whether I can write or not. My sentimentalism at this point is hard to restrain. David Livingstone's biographer said of him that he was born at a certain time, "of poor and pious parents." And I told Cousin Celia as we walked away from that dear old spot where I was born that if it had been a palatial home, with every comfort and every childish want gratified, it would have been pleasant, no doubt, to visit it, but that no such tender depths could ever have been stirred as were aroused in ~~my~~ my nature as I approached it. Poverty, if consecrated by piety, may be transformed into a great blessing. But I begin with the visit to the graveyard. The route led through the old "Creek Flat". Nothing at all recognizable there, except the bed of the creek, in which we killed a black runner. Pine, poplar, bay, and beach trees, from 6 to 18 inches in diameter stand so thick and grow so tall that one cannot imagine corn or cotton ever to have grown there. Many trees would yield a beam 100 feet long without a knot or flaw. But as we climbed the hill, slipping and sliding about on the pine straw, the old graveyard came into view and looked much as in former days. Celia and some others were with me, and she asked me to find Father's and Andy's graves without help if I could, but I failed, thinking that they were further to the east. But when she carried me to those two mounds, resting in the shade of two beautiful little cedar trees some four inches in diameter, with Fride's wreath growing at the feet, and I saw the old lime rock which you placed at Andy's head, much of it crumbled off but the rest hardened as it does in chimneys, I was overcome. And when Celia pointed to a rock a proper distance from the head of our father's grave and said that our mother placed it there with her own hands to mark the head of her own grave, and I thought of her remains in that lonely little cemetery 800 miles away I could only retire from the company and give vent to my feelings. How different the realization from the expectation! But when my mind went forward to the day when the dead shall rise - a doctrine in which I believe with all my heart, and the only one that can satisfy at such a time - I was much relieved, for it will all be made right in that great day. I never experienced such a feeling before. It seemed like the very atmosphere was charged with the spirits of the dead. It is a lonely spot, though very well kept. A very good fence surrounds the graveyard, and they give it an annual cleaning, and our kindred are kind enough to keep the resting places of our dead in a fair condition, though I could not get a view with my Kodak that would show the mounds. (Will send pictures when they are developed in a few days).

Leaving this sacred spot, we went back to Celia's and ate dinner. Then we undertook to follow the old trail leading west, but found it impossible, owing to the undergrowth and tree tops. But here and there we could find it, though scarcely anything was visible to make it appear familiar. However, when I reached the old wash place I could identify it, though what was once an open, marshy place is now a thick forest of bay, pine, and other trees from 3 to 6 inches through. But I plucked a twig from a 'possum Haw bush which stands right where the wash pot used to set. Tarrying there but a few minutes, I pushed on, in the same old path, up toward the spring, which I found in pretty much the same condition as when I used to dip water from it with the old long-handled gourd. Only the timber here is different. I began to feel like I was where even a whisper would be sacrilegious. Taking a drink from the precious old spring, I began to ascend the little hill, through the same little scope of thick woods, and along the same old path. So it took only a few steps to bring me out into an open place, where all at once (for the emergence from the woods is quite sudden, so thick are the bushes, as of old) I realized that I was in the back yard of the only earthly home I ever had, and which still seems like home to me in a sense that no other place ever will. There was the old well, still not entirely filled up, where our mother once by an accident was struck in the

forehead with the handle of a windlass, as a result of which she carried a scar to her grave. Looking around, I saw that no land has been cleared since we left the place - the same little field, outlined exactly as then. Only the tall pines in the near distance, and the old buildings are wanting. What wonder it the words should come unbidden, "Take off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the ground whereon thou standest is holy ground". I didn't want anybody to talk to me, nor did I care to communicate with anyone. I simply wanted to be alone. Advancing slowly I came to a little mound, the base of the old chimney. Oh, the tender memories that sprang up as I looked around. There was a thick clump of Crepe Myrtle bushes, the old Catawba tree, the stump of the old cedar, and a weeping Lilac, still alive, and just to the south of the chimney, the old apple tree (dead now) that I have climbed hundreds of times. To the north, there stood the old double-log crib that we boys built, with such a familiar look as to call you and Bill to mind more vividly than anything on the shore trip. Of course there is considerable decay (the shed is gone) but I would have known the place if I had waked up there without previous anticipations. You will not expect me to describe my feelings, for that would require the impossible. I was simply a child again. Everything came back and it was hard to realize the present, so vivid was the past. Scattered all around are pieces of broken pottery and crockery with figures that I recognized as being on plates from which we ate when we were boys. The roots of the old Mimosa tree were found where they grew in the N.W. corner of the yard. Also the root of a Mulberry tree that grew just below the gate. The road does not run where it did, but just outside the patch to the west of the road as we had it. The low place in that patch, where we always planted sugar cane, looks very familiar. The exact spot where the house, yard, and lot were is not under fence now, but the fence runs perhaps 30 yards to the south. That under fence belongs, as I said, to Vidner McLeod, but all north of that belongs to the Zimmerman Lumber Co. When those turpentine and lumber industries came in there it became necessary to define land lines more clearly than had ever been done, and so on a correct survey it was found that our father had built on public land, just over the line north of that which he had entered. That old line separates between Vidner McLeod and the Lumber company, and causes our little field to be cut in two, the north end of it, and all that was west of the road, being now an old field, with the growth above described, the little mound, and the old crib to tell the story of a once happy home, notwithstanding the poverty and sadness that seemed to be its earthly lot. I could hear the cows lowing, the hogs squealing, the wind moaning in the pines, the spinning wheel, the loom, - but above all, the old songs sung by mother and sisters.

It is impossible to trace the path all the way down to the "west spring", though a part of it is yet visible. The old spring is still there, though the trees are so large, and the old causeway approach is all gone, so I was just a little mystified at to the exact spot, inspecting several right nearby places, but I finally located it. There is more change here than anywhere else I visited.

The old field down on the creek must be mentioned. As we approached it I saw and recognized the old bars that we boys put there, and I got a pretty good snap shot of them with my Kodak, as you will see. Do you remember the little cotton house just about the center of the field? It is still there, and in use. I will send you a splinter taken from the inside of one of the logs, with writing on it which you will recognize. There is a fence across the field running just north of the little cotton house, and all below it is in cultivation, and Vid. McLeod, who owns it, says the Florida pursely is as bad as ever on it, but that he makes fine crops with the use of commercial fertilizer (which everybody there uses now). The field has been extended south, though not far, so that it looks much as it did in our boyhood. I climbed over the fence and started for the bed of the creek, not far from the lower end of the field, and

just in the edge of the swamp I came upon two poplar trees about ten inches in diameter, on one of which I found "J.L.H. 1874" and on the other "R.C.H.," evidently cut at the same time. 36 years ago, and yet as plain as if recently done. The two trees are perhaps 8 or 10 feet apart. On a bay tree hard by I cut my name and the date, with "TEX" underneath. I felt like I could ramble along the dear old creek for a week without tiring. The water is as clear as crystal and still flows over one long bed of white pebbles. There is no trace of the place where the old beaver pond was, the timber has all grown up. I should have said that all north of the cross fence mentioned is lying out now, growing up in old field pines. The old well that used to be at the old house place is still there, not yet entirely filled up, although the bushes, logs and vines that were around it are gone. What we knew as "the old clearing" between the field and the house is now a beautiful piece of woodland, mostly oak, only an occasional pine, and with scarcely any undergrowth. The oaks are not so large as I expected them to be - none of them over 6 inches through, and very few that large. All around both fields I ~~was~~ old rails that we split and put there. And McLeod said the old bars at the lower field are the same ones we made. They are not used now, being in the part thrown out.

I made a second visit to the old home, and having told Monroe Walford what day I would go, he told some others, and when I got there I found exactly 40 people, with a big dinner, and one of the nicest picknics you ever saw, all to my surprise. We spread dinner in the shade of the trees around the old crib. There was but little work to do, everybody being up, and it seemed like everybody turned loose everything to make my stay pleasant. I couldn't have gone at a better time.

so I believe I have told you most of it, but upon looking over it, I find it falls/short of what you would have got if you could have gone that it seems like a poor effort. It is like religion: we can read the Bible, hear our friends tell their experiences, and conclude that it must be a great experience one has when he first sees the face of the reconciled Savior, but no book or testimony can take the place of a personal experience. So I say, if the opportunity ever arises, go to the old home by all means. I feel richer for having gone. It only cost me \$20 even - everything I spent, ticket and incidentals. My ticket was \$11.40 to Mobile and return, and \$2.05 from there to Jackson and return. I never got so much for my money, except when I got my marriage license for \$1.50.

Des Morgan went, though we didn't go together. We intended to, and meet at Shreveport, as per agreement, but when the T. & P. conductor came in for his ticket he found that the agent at Como had issued his ticket via the Louisiana & Navigation R.R. Co., another road running from Shreveport to New Orleans, so they carried him down about 40 miles to where we met the next train coming up, and sent him back to Shreveport, all without any cost to him, where he had to wait 24 hours for the next train on that road, their train having pulled out just before my train arrived. The boy was very much worried but it couldn't be helped. He said he told the Como agent that he wanted to go over the T. & P. from Shreveport to New Orleans, but I guess there was more friendship between the Katy and the other road; and he, like nearly every other passenger, took his ticket without reading it, supposing it was all right. He came through all right, ~~and~~ however, and had a fine time.

Now let me say in closing that I am proud of our kindred and old neighbors back there. Not one of them has gone to the bad - all have made good. No finer blood flows through human veins than that of the Calhouns, McLeods, Chapmans, and Mathews. And Dr. Hicks told me that our Hicks connections, a numerous tribe, all up about Lower Peach Tree, are splendid citizens and doing well.

Customs differ from what they were when we lived there. The ox wagon is a thing of the past, except in the saw-rill camps; nobody makes cloth now; everybody has a buggy or surry; there is no more cooking on the hearth; scarcely a house but has a piano or an organ in it. In other words, they are as up-to-date as any rural community to be found. They are making 1/2 bale of cotton and 20 to 25 bu. of corn per acre. Of course they have to fertilize, but they all do it, and with their economical habits they are simply doing well.

I believe this is about the longest letter I ever wrote, but I have done what you told me to, and would have done if you had not told me, and I hope you will enjoy it. I think I shall go to Hopkins County this next week. (This is Sunday evening, 15th). A letter from Dee since I came home tells me Sallie was sick all the time he was gone, and was still sick when he wrote, though some better. Didn't know what was the matter, just high fevers and a bad cough. Don't like it. So I think I will go perhaps day after tomorrow. Would go tomorrow but tomorrow night is graduating exercises in the high school, and as Virgie is one of the graduating class I guess I better stay and hear her class poem and see her receive her diploma. Her teachers say she has a most extraordinary mind. I am anxious to send her to some good college, but reckon that is out of the question. I think she intends to apply for a teachers' certificate and may secure a school to teach next fall.

Write me a letter soon.

Your brother,

/s/ R. C. Hicks

