

Cotton Picking Adventure

With fall quickly approaching I have decided its time to begin to decorate with fall colored leaves, pumpkins, scarecrows, and all the things that say FALL. As we were coming home from a day trip yesterday the cotton fields were ripe to bursting as the downy heads of the durable plant's white bolls popped out. The persistent crop is so beautiful each year as it matures it always stuns me with the delightful landscape. Of course, then my memories began their assault as I go back so many years ago when my Daddy's kinfolks lived on a cotton plantation. The old antebellum house they lived in was called "The Old Strain



Peggy's Take

House" as Dick Strain was the original owner. The house had seen its glory days many years before the Price's took up residence. It was a post- civil war house and was at one time a Beauty. Two stories of white brick construction with large white columns holding up the upper portico and a wide hall running down the center of the inside. Once it stood in all its glory with brocaded curtains, polished antique furniture, canopied beds, a winding staircase, and the epitome of affluence. Now it stood woefully with its peeling paint, collapsing columns, and in such disrepair that you knew the war had taken its toll on the magnifi-

cent old mansion. This once plantation had seen many crops of cotton baled from the vast acres in times past but now only a few of the acres was cotton farmed. My "Big Daddy" raised a few acres and scratched out a small living for his family still young enough to live in the old house. The pay for picking cotton, by hand back then was \$1.00 to \$3.00 per one hundred pounds. Now hand pickers according to the internet makes \$19.00 per hour. Only able to harvest one row of cotton at a time. However most of the cotton picked today is picked by a six-row self-propelled machine that removes cotton lint and seed from the plant up to six rows at a time.

I had a cousin, same age as me, and we decided one day we would help pick cotton in the abundant white fields and make us some spending money. We picked through the cotton burrs, briars, cockleburs, and tall grasses, no herbicides were applied

in this field, and pulled that old heavy canvas cotton sack down our one row we were given for a full day. At the end of the day the cotton in our sack was weighed, paying us \$1.00 for one hundred pounds and we were the partners in all of fifty cents. Our hands were cut from the sharp cotton burs and our knees were engrained with black dirt from crawling along the row and we were so proud of our fifty cents, (a quarter apiece). I realize now that we actually didn't pick fifty pounds, but he paid us as we had. A really good cotton picker could pick at least 200 pounds a day. A cotton-picking machine is probably one of the most ingenious inventions EVER!

I love to paint cotton bolls and every time I finish a pic-

ture, I am always reminded of my time as a cotton picker. With the smaller cotton farmers, the field hands were provided their lunch usually consisting of "hoecakes". This is my recipe and we like it with vegetables. The original ones were not made like this but way more frugally.

Hoecakes

- 1 cup self-rising flour
 - 1 cup self-rising meal
 - ¾ cup of niblet corn
 - ½ diced bell pepper
 - ½ diced onion
 - 1 egg
 - 1-1/2 cups of buttermilk
- In a large bowl combine all ingredients. It will be thin. Add enough bacon fat in cast iron skillet to fry and drop by spoonful, flatten out and fry about two minutes on each side or until firm.

* Peggy Sims is a life-long resident of Attala County and columnist.



- September 6 - Paul Warren and Kim Winstead
- September 9 - David and JuliAnna Wynne, Michael and Charlene Smith, Tim and Jackie Turner
- September 10 - Jon and Crystal Tate, Dustin and Lauren Boling

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Q and A with: Cruger Police Chief David Simmons

The *Holmes County Herald* will feature a profile every other week of the county's acting police chiefs in each municipality. A questionnaire was sent to all acting chiefs and sheriff on August 10. Those who responded will be featured here in efforts to support local law enforcement and familiarize readers with local law enforcement.

1) Tell us a little about your family, spouse, children, parents, their careers, brothers and sisters (if any/if applicable)?

My parents are Rosie and Robert Simmons of Goodman. I have three sisters and one brother. I have a total of four children, one son and three daughters.

2) Where/When did you attend school? High school and college (if applicable), career training?

As a child, I attended Goodman-Pickens Elementary and Williams Sullivan High School until the 10th grade and I then transferred to Chicago Hope Academy where I graduated High School. I later attended and graduated from police academy at Mississippi Delta College in Morehead. I also received a business degree from University of Chicago.

3) What influenced you in pursuing a career in law enforcement?

As a child I have always dreamed of becoming a police officer. I have always loved helping out in the community and most of all helping keep the community and everyone in it safe.

4) What areas of law enforcement do you enjoy the most?

I have no particular area of law enforcement that I enjoy the most. I really enjoy all areas of law enforcement.

5) Are there proven tactics and best practices you prefer?

I prefer team arrest skills (The ability to make a team physical arrest in the presence of the crowd and media quickly and efficiently is a necessary skill and protective equipment to help with the arrest.)

6) What brought you to serving in your town (county-sheriff)?

My town had a lack of police officers and so I decided to take stand and help out with everything that needed to be done.

7) What are some challenging areas working in law enforcement?

There are many challenging areas while working in law enforcements but the one that stands out to me most is domestic violence.

8) What are rewarding aspects working in law enforcement?

The most rewarding aspect you can give someone is providing great satisfaction.

9) How has technology supplemented/strengthened law enforcement? How has it hindered/hurt law enforcement?

Technology has helped law enforcement by allowing us to have body cameras. Body cameras and police car cameras is a way to increase officer accountability as well as their own safety and cut down on unnecessary violent incidents. Social media helps us by gaining crime tips from the public, investigating crimes, and updating the public on crime. Technology has hurt law enforcements by drawing away the attention from even the smallest situation. It can be extremely distracting for officers and even dangerous when their full attention is needed on a single situation.

10) What do you see as some of the challenges the department and the city (county-sheriff) faces?

The most challenging situation I have in my town is getting the equipment I need to help me solve the crime and make my town better.

11) How do enjoy free time outside of work?

I enjoy my free time by spending time with my family and children.

12) What was your first job?

My first job was working at Main Street Grocery in Goodman.

13) What is the best advice someone has ever given you?

The best advice I was ever given was Treat people the way you want to be treated.

14) What is your favorite book?

My favorite book is Higher is Waiting by Tyler Perry.

15) What is your dream vacation?

My dream vacation is going to London, England.

Chief David Simmons