

The following manuscript was written by my uncle, Stuart Morse. It was copied exactly as he had handwritten it. I wish to thank my daughter, Bethany, for her time and effort to type this article in its entirety. Also special thanks to Nanda (Morse) Fowler and Billy Morse for permission to share their father's feelings and thoughts in writing for us all to enjoy.

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SCACYFAT A to Z

Introduction

Hello!

You are invited to relax, and take a few minutes visit with me in the place called "Old Skacyfat," as it was in days gone by.

If you ever pass through the community, maybe it will give you something to think while passing, or long to remember while living. If you have lived there you know its not the same today, and will never be the same tomorrow.

We can "live the past" in memory, but we can "never change it" that's why I have written this while still living and able to remember. I guess it's "One Chapter" about "One Place" by one writer so far, called Skacyfat by many.

This was written during two winters 1975-1976, sometimes during the stillness of long winter nites. Or during the day while working I'd jot down on a note book things, while still on my mind.

To cover as large period of time it took much thinking to "live the past over". There is much that hasn't been said, or could be.

I hope this may not be destroyed, as the ways of life in Skacy are fast disappearing today I'm afraid will never return.

Thank you, take care, and God bless.

Stuart Morse

Old "Skacyfat"
(name unofficial)

A portion of land in Caldwell Co. located four miles North of Princeton, Ky on highway 139 route one, once called "Scarse of fat" by the Indians I've been told, approx-location the Freewill school district, South beginning at Meek Cemetary road and Escue

hill, and extending about two miles north to just beyond Weeks bridge, width about one and a half or two miles.

It's a narrow valley running north and south with a hill or ridge on each side with considerable elevation. It has a main stream which flows very swift at times as it has so much fall. Called Skacy creek, I suppose because it runs through that locality. Its head waters beginning at the Meek Cemetery same as that of the Donalson watershed. It has been four other small streams or tributaries entering it I believe it flows continually fed by a number of springs.

It was once an Indian hunting ground, my great grandfather was one of the first settlers there, I've been told. "A Wilderness" you could claim the land by surveying. Building a ten rail fence around it, and start paying taxes.

And about that time an epidemic of smallpox almost wiped out the people of the community what few did survive began to multiply fast,

It became a small farming community and mining area several mines have been opened there in the past which produced a very high testing, as the senator and bogard mines have been noted. For, there was also at one time a fit of fox hunting and, some fur trapping too.

There is abundance supply of water there carried by the rock formation under ground I know of thirty six wells and eight springs of water. There was once a one room log school house there. Later a little red school house on the hill named "Free Will" why that name I do not know. Probably from the freedom of life that could be enjoyed at that time and a willingness to share it with one another. No "Honke-Tonk", massage parlor or store ever there to my knowledge. A "road house" was being constructed the carpenter accidentally stepped on a nail, died with lockjaw. It was never completed for some reason. It was to be called the "Blue Moon".

No church was ever erected there. It was about two and one half miles to the Donalson Baptist Church the oldest organized church in Caldwell Co. There were a great number of camp meetings held in the community from world war "1" days till the mid thirtys. Also one "Moon light" school about 1917 to teach elderly people how to read and write.

I've been told there was a steam powered stone burr grist mill operated at the Weeks Bridge for a time. Several sorghum mills operated in skacy for several years. A saw mill, a rock quarry, two cider mills two moonshine whiskey distills one produced 110 proof "white lightning" or "white mule" with a terrible "kick". The other one Peach and Apple brandy. "Out of this world" for flavor many thought. Each year a number of steam

powered wheat thrashers passed through the locality as well as a black hearse drawn by two white horses. I saw hundreds of turkeys driven on foot up the Old Farmersville road to market or to be shipped at Princeton a sight to see “men yelling” “turkeys gobblin”. A few “peddlers” foreigners you could not understand (“Walking ten cent store” you might say). They traveled by foot with heavy on. “Witches” foot jacks and ash hoppers were plentyful at one time. Also traveling “Gypsies”. I’ve been told by elderly people quite a bit of gold was buried there during the Civil War beside old springs or old trees to be used as markers, verry little has been known to found and was kept tight lipped by the fenders. A sample of mineral was also analized and found to contain a small amount of gold. Gold in skacyfat believe it or not? Transportation at one time was verry slow. It was walking, horseback, buggy, two wheel cart wagon, bob sled, sley, and the model T Ford “Tin Lizzy”.

But to hear the whippoorwills challing-“Whip Poor Will” “Will Brown” and “Chuck Wills’ widow” in springtime. Water running over the ripples in the stream on it’s way to the Gulf of Mexico, was something else, it made a person be thankful to be living.

About that time you might hear a “Screech Owl”. That would almost make your hair stand up upon your head or see some “Lightening Bugs”, “Fox Fire” or a “Mineral Light”. (jack o lanterns) floating along in the lowland or a . In fall of year (Indian Summer) when “Harvest Moon” and “Hunters Moon” begin to shine and the Canadian geese begin to fly over tin their V-formation, honking on their flight south, people knew they would soon be feeling that cold north wind coming across “The Peach Orchard Hill” which is just north of “Skacyfat” making a person think about what he had done with his summer’s work.

I am sure the cave men of old shuddered a bit at the mid-winter calling of the great Horned Owl or “hoot owl” which you could sometimes hear on a dreary Febuary night that “Who-who-who-are you?” a hard to answer I guess, “He’s still calling”.

Most all the boys of Skacy and a few from the Bethany community really enjoyed running around together a few years during the late 1920s, especially to the “home town of their heart”, where they could find plenty of activity day or night.

There were two or three large carnivals in early spring and fall, circus, partys, Halloween parades to look forward to each year, revivals at the Pennicostal church, and spending much time at the C. Depot watching the big steam passenger train engines arrive carring fast mail and passengers, watching passengers arrive and depart happily meeting loved ones and sorrofully crying and saying by to others.

“The Baggage Coach ahead” sometimes carried caskets. I saw a early morning train carrying two on it. The two (man and son) had paid the death penalty in the electric-chair at the Eddyville Penitentiary. The whistle seem to sound long and lonesome.

Passenger trains was the main way of travel at that time. Twenty or more arrived each day during the “Roarin Twenties”. It was something I’ll never forget, seeing the engineer receive his “yellow paper” orders, conductor give the on acknowledged by a short sharp whistle to move on to such places as Paducah, Cairo, Memphis and on down to New Orleans.

We also watched hoboes catch freight trains “on the fly” saw a one legged one on crutches catch on (not on the fly), saw their “jungle” out by the yards. They said it made no difference which car (N-S-E-or West) they caught if you didn’t care where you were going, as it was an endless journey many years long with most of them, anyway, unless they lost their life by accident or disease.

During those days a roarin fire destroyed almost a city block down town on a cold zero nite when all water hydrants were frozen solid. It was about New Year’s Day night I believe 1928- the “Fire Sales” occupied our time for many days.

Then the “Ole Courthouse” got its cupola and bell blasted off (dynamited) and was rebuilded by the W-P-A-Labor force.

The old courthouse yard was our gathering place for many years. With its homemade seats underneath large maple trees you could almost always stop and hear a good Gospel sermon being preached. Preached Hell so hot you could almost feel the heat, and good ole gospel songs and guitar music played and sang by brothers and sisters that new the Lord singing in the spirit that went home to the hearts of the listeners. They have all gone home now to meet their Maker A-Men.

There were all kinds of music played under those trees from brass band, guitar, violin, French harps, tambourines to hand saws and wash boards.

Many “medicine men” sold and demonstrated their products. One said his remedy would cure anything on Earth, except hydrophobia and sugar debitis. They sold snake oil, hair remover, wart remover, Indian herb root and bark tonic recommended for “men only” when everything else failed, including (monkey glands).

One salesman was giving away “sneezing powder” recommended for “mothorn laws” said that was one way to get them “on the move”. Many card tricks rope and slight of hand did by cowboys and many others. It was said some boy of Skacy became “spell found”. What’s that? Lord only knows.

The old “hitch rack and water trough” was a place to get answers to difficult questions answered, such as who Cain’s wife was, the unpardonable sin, how to fall from grace, weather forecast, politics in general, with a “whif of whisky” and a fight or two.

Most everyone in “Old Skacy” looked forward to Saturday in the old home town of their hearts to be on the streets for a happy get together each week end. They would arrive early, but couldn’t stay late, because they traveled by foot, wagon, buggy, horse back and the faithful ole Model T-Ford hand cranked “Tin Lizzy”. When the country roads permitted used bob sleds and sleighs during deep snows.

Many brought their cream, eggs, poultry, produce, malasses, ax handles, homemade brooms, animal hides, apple cidar, and sometimes a jug of “moonshine” hid away in wagon bed to keep their feet warm in case a “blizzard flew up” without warning in winter of which many did. With many miles between them and home, didn’t have weather reports like today nothing much but the “Birthday Almanac” weather predicted one year in advance. No radio, television, or scanners. For many many years we just new it was raining or snowing when it was falling or wake up at morning (many times surprised) at a snow fall over night.

People of Skacy sometimes just made a trip to town once each month to purchase coffee, coal oil, and take a “turn” of corn to the R. Kevil roller mill, and provisions not many tho, as they raised most all the food they ate, at that time.

There were lots of “gossip exchanged” on the streets, some drinking, trading knives, courting, and “love making” to complete the day, some “bootleggin” and “hustling” (some did both).

A few “hand guns” homemade long handled razors such as “Wade and Butcher” and jacknives, were carried by many “just in case”. Some seem to like the words “be prepared”. Anyway, I think the youngsters really liked to go to the “movin picture show” when they had a chance but living in Skacy those days for miles away wasn’t like living in town.

The pictures at that time were all black and white, silent, no sound, just read underneath picture in print (fast) and eat popcorn and drink “pop” (soda). One ole boy went out west on a few weeks visit, must have contacted cow boy fever. Came back, got himself two old worn out revolvers a Smith and a Colt, one’s cylinders turned right the other left, he said that way he could shoot right and left at same time. Said that make him feel more like one of the “James boys”, he went about his work singing “Streets of Laredo: and Old Joe Clark, not knowing when he might meet a “cowboy” or a “western bad man”.

I was told a young lady walked perfectly “nude” a block downtown on a very cold day, and got arrested as she crossed Main St. No she wasn’t handcuffed but was “watched verry verry close” a block to the lock up. She had probly had a “hot flash” or was advertising her “products” or “commodities” in full. I was told this by a man who saw her said he new her, Amen.

I sometimes wish I could live those old days over again. People seem to enjoy themselves much better than today if they didn’t have much of this worlds goods. Also many of the boys of Skacy while growing up seem to have a ball that’s why you can take them out of Skacy but you can’t take Skacy out of them, Amen.

“The Morses on the hill” in the year of 1924 decided to bid Skacyfat and Princeton the home town of their heart and their old ky home farewell and go “west of the Mississippi” to south east Missouri, to raise cotton and sunflowers to probly never return if they found a “Big Rock Candy Mountain” there. (They didn’t) instead found tornados, rattle snakes, boll weevils and a number of haunted houses, haunts, cries of night animals, large horn, hoot, and laughing owls among strange people, strange country, strange environment. Living in a “haunted house” didn’t help any either.

Mother got “homesick” so did the family for Skacy and the hills of old ky. So on a beautiful Thanksgiving morning after a nine months stay, a covered wagon was greased and ready to roll at sunrise “Gypsi Stile” with a four wagon greasings, or two hundred mi trip with part of the family aboard, a watch dog “Bruns” and Old Maud the Mare hitched behind, with the rest of the family traveling by car, train, steam boat down the Mississippi and up the Ohio and by wagon toward the rising sun and “Ole Skacyfat” to “live” and “die”, Amen.

Skacy home place of Frank and Jessie James? No just three members of a family named Frank, Jessie, and James Howard. There were a few years of Depression during the mid thirties. But Skacy was found fully blessed with plenty of “chittlings “hoover hogs” (rabbits) “opossums” for their meat supply of which we now could not boast of in this “Pepsi-generation”. As far as I know there were also plenty of grist mill corn bread, “wild honey”, sorgum molasses, wild onions, thicken gravy, and sasafrass root tea available.

The population of this community has been decreasing the past few years. At one time there were many large families there not so today. There are more Morse’s by name today while at one time there were more Williamson’s than any one else. Communication was also poor before the telephone. Most every home had a large bell called the “Dinner Bell”. They rang it at 12 o’clock noon “sun dial time”, during the summer months.

Or by measuring your shadow, at the time it was shortest, or when you could step on it, it was 12 o'clock noon during the summer months. Some people had or spring hand wind eight day clocks. Some had none. They used "sun dials" or "hour glasses" a lot to give medicine by.

The Dinner Bells they rang were of different sizes which accounted for their different tones. It was no problem to determine which neighbor's bell you were hearing. They rang them in case of accident, fire, or to summon help any time day or night. They all rang on Armistice day Nov. 11, 1918, I think.

The Sears and R-catalogue was a valuable old book, called "Precious Old Book" by some, much mail ordering was done for many many years. Its pages turned many times for just pass time during long winter days and nights, then to finally come to rest at the "out-house" (privy) Amen. Also the Lady's Birthday Almanac was about the only source of the "weather reports" for many years which was presented a year in advance. The predictions sometimes proved "right" and sometimes "wrong" sort of hit and miss. It was also used by many to plant crops and gardens by. Most everyone looked forward to the arrival of the "Twice A Week Leader" with the local and world news. The "Comfort" and "Pathfinder" mag were also enjoyed by many. Also the F. C. Taylor, Funsten Hill Bro's Fur Co catalogues and price list each fall and winter.

Indians or the red man of long ago camped there hunted, chipped flint or arrowheads made war bonnets from wild turkey and eagle feathers made clothing from animal skins, grew maize (Indian corn). The soil was once fertile, but time and erosion had had its effects. No doubt much of Skacyfat soil has helped to form the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys lowlands also some of it may have been in the making of the Mississippi Delta at New Orleans and Gulf of Mexico.

Most of the people who once lived there have scattered to other places or crossed the great divide and gone to meet their Maker. Most all are now new residents. "The good old days of old" are gone forever, yes forever I guess. But "Skacyfat" will always be home sweet home to me.

There were many "musicals" (string bands), pound suppers, Easter egg hunts, quilting parties, candy breakings, and neighborhood get togethers.

There were lots of cutting and drying peaches and apples, lots of canning, and catsup making each year. Used lots of ceiling wax and parfone to seal bottles and jars. Lots of cotton and wool "carding" done on "cotton cards" lots of coloring done with homemade dyes (diamond dye was a must) such as walnut hulls barks and see. About every two or three years the "Endless Chain"

letters would arrive through the mail each receiving one was to send 5 I believe to some other friends and every one was to follow suit. If the chain was broken you could expect bad luck to follow it said. So the letters began covering the earth like Sherwin W. Paint.

I would say Skacyfat had a good environment in those "good old days". Wood smoke at morning settling thru the valley from the chimney's fire places being fired by wood mixed with the odor of fresh sausage, country ham, or bacon, and brewing coffee being prepared for breakfast. A person could get up feeling like a "jackass" in a hail storm but after a few hours of the Skacyfat environment he could wish he "moving on" his way to "that house in New Orleans" called the "Rising Sun".

There was also a spring of water known as the "Wilson Spring" at the fork of the road where the Old Flynn Ferry road intersects with highway 139 near the center of Skacyfat. Many travelers in days past have stopped and drank from it.

Traveling "gypsies" in their covered wagons called "caravans" have camped there a roaming people, called "people of the wind" with yellow-brown or olive skin and course jet black hair, slant eyes, also verry white teeth.

They smoked stone or clay or homade hickory pipes wore silk "neckerchiefs" around their necks liked bright coulared clothes red, yellow, and purple, men wore black, tan, or brown. They smoked those pipes around their campfires. They seemed happy and musically enclined as they made verry sweet music around the camp fires in the late afternoon or early night, with violin and an instrument they called a harp, which had many strings. Their favorite tunes seemed to be "Indian mohee", Arkansas Ttraveler, Sweet Fern, especially "Indian Mohee". They told "fortunes" and made willow furniture for sale or trade, they traded more for food. One traded an nice table for a pound of "green" coffee and a chunk of "rock candy" of which the owners kept until they "went west" of the Mississippi in 1924 (S-E-MO). They seemed happy with their way of life, when asked where they came from they said they left a placed called St. Augustine Florida. They said they had no particular destination in mind, just traveling, north at present. Ask where their home was, one lifted up a large gray hat off of his head and placed it back as to say was "where his hat was home".

There was also a deer and buffalo "lick" in Skacy at a sulphor spring which is now under the highway close to roots of a large old white oak tree, that is still standing at present. I was taold that about 132 years ago my grandfather cut out the top tacked a board there to set on and killed his first deer to be remembered always. (This tree was cut 5-9-77 growing rings showed it to be over 160 years old.)

I've been told that there has always been quite a bit of "excitement" in Skacy from the days of the murdering of a child (E.B. Hogan) by the "Harpers", The Haley's Comet, Night Riders, people and dogs chased by wild cougars and panthers, or witches, Klu-Klux, appearance of the Aurora Borealis, the great northern light seen a few times. Many thought some large city was burning or "Doom's Day" at hand. The Kuttawa Springs and Piney Fork Creek "camp meetings"-one fatal case of "Hydraphobia", one fatal case of "Spinal Meningitis", a case of "Walking Typhoid", one of "creeping paralysis", two of "Saint Vilis Dance", "Gallapin T.B.", "Membranous Croup", "Typhoyd Fever", "Rheumatism", "Lagripe", no cases of turema (rabbit fever) or cabin fever, some cases of "love sickness", but no deaths resulting from it to my knowledge, but no medical cure for it known. One man killed by lightening wagon and team burned up. A lady drowned in the swift waters of Skacy Creek. William F. Cody "Buffalo Bill" Wild West Shows, Barnum and Bailey, Wallace and Hegenbach and Ringling Bro's Circuses showing at Princeton Ky with many street parades with brass bands, wagons (cages) of wild animals, and clowns. Lots of excitement for all, lots of "cotton candy" and "pop" and odor of wild animals. Manny carnivals, and manny "Chawtawqua's" on the old college grounds, what's that?? Ask someone that's been to one, if still living, I don't know. The fear of many escaped convicts from Eddyville St. Penintentiary some lonatic excitement (sherff shot at in Skacy), the 1930 panic, many forest fires moving like salts through a widow woman some said, first air plane seen to fly over 1920, two World Wars, and the North Korean and Vietnam with many boys called to service from the community, one house breaking and robbery in Skacyfat.

It was a sad gloomy day for Skacy when word was received of sudden death of Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt, (a friend of the poor until the end) and then accidental death of our U.S. mail carrier Sully McGoodin on route one through Skacy where he had carried the mail for many many years 20, I believe through blizzards, heat, storms, and high watter, the explosion of a "roller" flour mill at Crider killing one man, the bombing of Pearl Harbor, large snake passes thro Skacy.

Now the Water Gate Scandall, and Energy Crisis, the disgraceful resignation of Pres. Nixon, the Congress oval scandal and Fanny-F the "bombshell" and Elizabeth-R the "firecracker" ("strippers").

Then "Peanut" Carter elected president, the deep freeze of "77", then came "78" with a 60 year record breaker "snowfall" of 24" and the most severe blizzard in 65 yrs snow covered ground completely for sixty days. The great 110 day coal miner's strike of "78" longest coal strike in history of the nation, then a Frank and

Jessie James type “armed and hold up robbery” of a Skacy family. 42 Americans held hostage in Iran for 444 days before being released alive.

Skacy certainly has had its excitement, its joy and happiness, sorrow and sadness, guess that’s part of life in any community.

There were never any “ill farmed” houses, “brothels”, “honke-tonks”, and no “massage parlors” operated in Skacy. The people were respectable citizens, most all industrious, never as much as a “cold collard” horse in the community as far as I new. Only one “jackass” and one “jinnett” several mules and horses, cows, sheep, and goats, because there no street cars, there were no streets, no airport, but lots of “hot air”, not railroad either but one close enough to hear the barking of the smoke stacks, slipping of the “drivers” on the long coal drags, the whistle of the “Ole I-C 29 hundred”, that most everyone recognized from all others, also the “round house” whistle and R. V. Kevil mill, must have caused some of the youn men “me” for one to have “box car fever” for “ho-boing” to such places as strawberry fields Kansas wheat harvest, and other cities, riding box cars (two door pullmans) and the blinds and decking of “high balling” passanger trains of the nickle plate, Illionois Cont. Mo-Pacific, and the Frisco. Sleeping under the stars at night with the earth for a bed and sky for a blanket, dreaming maybe of the next “highliner” to catch, or a gal they left behind to be awakened by a “hobo squall” or a whistle of a freight entering the yards. An experience hard to forget, yes hard to forget. Never any “shacking up” in Skacy no “wich or wart drs”. Jazzy music and booze I’m told was unpopular by some, but well liked by others, no “Jimdandy’s” around either.

Some geese plucking for feathers, sheeps shearing for wool, little if any oyster shucking, many of the house wives made homade soap with lye produced from ash-hoppers, traded hen eggs to set in spring time, picked dew berries, black berries and wild grapes to can and pick polk “sallet”. Some kept their eyes open for good tooth brush timber (hickory or blackgum) for tooth brushes. Some dipped snuff.

During the years I spent there (22), I never saw a lady smoke a cigarette, drink a drop of whiskey, wear jeans or “hot pants”. Not a divorce in a “blue moon” only 2 or 3. Lots of marriages, and three sets of twins, and only four r---d. There was a large scaley bark hickory nut tree in the center of Skacyfat community. It was called the “office” by many of the boys. That’s where they would gather to plan trips to “Protracted meetins” at White Sulphor, Donalson, Bethany, “tent meetings” and brush harbor meetings, grave yard cleanings, moving picture shows, at Farmersville and Freewill school houses ice cream, box

suppers, old fiddlers, contests fishing and swimming, hunting and just plain “old-loafing” hurrah!

There were three dogs that roamed that hunting ground for several years. A bob tail bulldog named “Dugan” a german police named “Bruno” and a fox hound named “Smart”, also a cat named “Lightening Rod”. They are gone but not forgotten. Many of the male adults smoked pipes Mo. Corn Cobb’s and Wellington, verry few cigarettes most all “roll your own” from a can of Prince Albert, Stud or R. J. R. and Bulldurham. They did quite a bit of chewing, such as “homade” and sweet flat they called it, such as apple, cup, and mule guess that was before the day of “Bull of the Woods” and Red Dog. A bit of cigar smoking too, some used “coon-bone” for toothpicks and goose quills for writing pens. Some of them liked a little of “Old Taylor” or “apple brandy” during the Christamas holidays and some times on Election Day. A few would get drunk as “Biled Owls” and feel fore a few days like an orphan boy at a picnick and a dog his best friend.

Back in those days the school term was six months instead of the nine we have today. That gave the youngsters a six months period to enjoy life and enjoy it they did. They played ball (town), walked on stilts, robbed bird nest, spin tops, flew kites, skate, sled, many were armed with “slingshots”, play marbles and fight and see-saw. Many of the teenagers at one time seem to enjoy “yo-yo-ing” verry verry much and other sports as of today. But many of them had to help do house work, and work in the fields to help make a living, but the sweat of the brow and to make ends meet.

After the days of the telephone communication begin to improve. It wasn’t uncommon to have six to ten boxes on one line, “grapevine system” it was called, that’s why the need for the “gossip fence” came in. One person claimed he contacted the measles over his telephone, said if speech could travel over wire, why couldn’t germs?

Back about 1918 or 20 the days of the “flapper” and “shiek” the “foxtrot” the dance, the handwound “talking machine” and “music box” became the disc playing “victrola” “graphanola” “graphophone” and “phonograph”. For several years there were only two machines in Skacy, one a “graphanola” the other a “phonograph”. They were one mile apart. Neighbors would often gather on long winter nights before a log fire to hear music and songs such as “Steamboat Bill” “Casey Jones” “Sweet Kitty Wells” “Barbra Allen” “Uncle Josh” “Alcoholic’s Blues” “Sweet Fern” “I’m Forever Blowing Bubbles” and “It Ain’t Gonna Rain No More”. That was the days of the “roaring 20s” and days of the hightop shoes and bloomers for the ladies. It was goodbye “sidesaddles” “hatpins” “corsets”. Girls (catching boes) and fellers gents (hattipping and sparking).

No “shotgun weddings” to my knowledge in Skacy, but quite a number of weddings to be well remembered, and almost always a “shiveree” to follow the wedding. When I would hear one begin I always knew what was taking place or I would have thought “hell had broke lose in Georgia” or “the battle of the New Orleans” had been renewed.

Then came the battery radio to Skacy only one for a few years. People would gather to hear “Bradley Kinkade”, “Jimmy Rogers” with his blue yodels, such as “Train Whistle Blues” “Little Hometown in New Orleans”, “In the Jail House Now”, “Grandpa Jones: Eight More Miles to Louisville”, “Carter Family’s: Diamonds in the Rough”, and Roy Acuff with the “Wabash Cannonball”.

“It Ain’t Gonna Rain No More”, “She’s My Baby Now” were verry popular songs about 24 to 30’s. The dance was the “Black Bottom” and “Charleston”. Then radios began to multiply fast till most everyone owned one.

Then came the television to Skacy which we have today with “Disco”the dance and shorter hours to work and longer hours to watch tv with “panty hose” “birth control pills” and “all the rest”.

Hurrah! For old Skacy “Gone with the Wind” I guess. At present there is a large sign there reading “Skacyfat Subdivision”. One is being developed there now lots have been purchased and several trailers, a few houses, a good place to retire in “Skacyfat”. At one time a car tire was put on a post with a walking stick hanging on it to remind people passing of a place to “retire.”

During the days of the influenza epidemic, Dr. W.P. Morse was kept verry busy caring for the sick. There was a lady there who also assisted in delivering babies and calves for several years. She was a great blessing to the neighborhood or community.

Some people doctored themselves with homade teas, salves, lenements, poultaces, Vick’s, cloverine, and rosebud salves, whiskeys and rock candy. When they were out of rock candy they didn’t seem to mind using the burbon anyway.

There was an abundance of medical herbs and roots, such as may apple, star sarsaprilla, ginseng, gold seal, calamas “red safrass” and horse radish. Also catnip, whorehound, vermifuge, garlic, camomile, and peppermint, oh yes last but not least hog “pistol grease” the wonder croup remedy. Claimed by some to cure anything from “spangue” to the “zeppiditis” and grow red hair on doorknobs.

One young lady said she had it used on her several times always with good results. Many people gave medical aid to cattle for hollow tail which occurred in late winter months, it was not always successful. Sometimes resulting in a bob tail cow for life,

or to make her an artificial switch. Sometimes a cow would lose her "cud". One gentleman said he had made several for his cows that really worked well, they were made out of dishcloths.

Skacyfat has "reeled and rocked" by three earthquakes in the past I have been told by several people. The great Sanfrisco Cal. quake of 1906, the East Prairie Mo. quake 1811 during slavery and that formed Reel Foot Lake, and the 1964 Alaska quake that destroyed Valdez, Alaska.

Several "cyclones" and a number of "whipporwill storms" with no lose of life reported just a few pair of drawers to be lawndered.

Old granddad took a flying trip to Skacy on one of the first Illinios Central passanger trains of the Hopkinsville Ky and Evansville In divisions (run).

He boarded the train at Mexico Ky for "White Sulphor Crossing" flagstation. A distance of about 12 or 15 mile, or about a wagon greasing that day from home. From there he had to walk about three miles, during the walk he swallowed a chew of tobacco, which didn't help him any. He arrived deathly sick, but after a cup of "strong coffee" and a "hot toddy" he soon recovered and was able to describe his breath takin trip on a passanger train. Said the train didn't seem to be moving at all, just everything seemed to be passing the windows at a high rate of speed. Said telegraph and telephone posts looked like fence posts and fence posts like comb teeth. Whistles sounded "long and lonesome" as it passed crossings and cattle guards, wheels rolling over expansion joints on the rail sounded like someone "tap dancing". Said his vision blurred and it was hard to tell if "he was coming or going" and had to walk bo legged and scoot his feet on the floor to keep the train from running from under him felt like butterflies in his stomach a few times. Said there was one thing he knew, he was "movin on". He said "fast living" "wild women" "strong drinking" and income taxes wreakin the world.

Man hadn't been to the moon then and brought part of it back home with them and rode moon buggys up there. God only knows what the future holds.

I doubt if anyone in the community enjoys life today like they did years ago. Probly don't have time to live anymore. I remember when it was different they didn't seem to value time much people would come and visit for two or three days at a time, throw "pallets" down on the floor in front on the fire place for the kids to sleep on. They really enjoyed scuffling and giggling until they finally fell asleep.

People came long ways to visit or did they? Maybe the way of travel then just made it seem that way.

I saw a family pass through Skacy going for a few days visit I suppose, in their wagon. They had the children, chicken coop of hens, a pet pea fowl, and watch dog following along also a milk cow roped to back of wagon following along. Leaving no worries behind to worry about, taking all "live stock" milk butter and eggs and all along, for a happy get together.

Speaking of distance Hopkinsville Ky seemed a long ways from Skacy at one time, 14 hrs drive in a wagon over dirt roads most of the way "my first trip there". A man with us told them at the tobacco loose floor office where people set around a large hot "pot belly" stove all nite, told tall tales, swap and spin yarns, smoked, drank hot coffee waiting for tomorrow to come for their tobacco to sell. That we were from way down in Old Ky, he looked up and saw a big full moon ask if that was the same one we see back home. He was told it could be, alright. He said he did hope the river didn't rise up until we could get back home (little river) new his dog was missing him.

I remember when Evansville Ind. seemed a long long ways from Skacy also Paducah Ky. About 1928 one boy made it from a pad, strawberry field in a Model T-Ford "Tin Lizzy" roadster in two hours and 45 min. at a break neck speed in that day he crossed two river ferries, Tenn. and Cumberland, traveled dirt road most all the way. He arived covered in sweat and dust but a verry happy boy at what he had accomplished in spite of running over a dog and two blow outs. He was singing "My Gal Travels in Automobile", yours in a train, but "my gal" gets there just the same. He had 30x31/2x3 clincher rims on his lizzy his 30" wheels only had to roll over one half the times a 15" wheel does today, to "get his gal there".

A verry little "noddlin" ever done in Skacy must have been afraid of "snappers". I captured a 20 lb one once, I ate it "of all things" 7 in one flavor. (turtles)

There were two water witches who charmed to find water veins in Skacy also, and tell the depth to it, two blacksmiths, two or more preachers, one ginseng hunter, no fortune tellers, two lunartics, one electrician, one magestrate, one school board member, several school trustees, one photographer, no alcholic, and far as I know no bi-sexual. I wish there had been at least one "jimdandy". She might have entertained us when we had the blues, or lonesome. Lots of neighborhood visiting done, many neighborhood paths from house to house well traveled day by day. Some seem to fear storms verry much only one lightenin rod in community. Many trees were struck lots of roaring thunder sounded louder in Skacy for some unknown reason. Many beautiful rainbows after the storms but to hear raindrops on a metal

roof and a waterfall at night was something hard to forget, so is a “howl” of a northern blizzard, or the march winds each year.

I honestly don’t think there were many, if any “wild oats” ever sowed there. My brother thought he would reap what he sowed, he sowed tomato seed and reaped mushrooms instead.

One young man swallowed a 12” sword or dagger up to the guard handle greased with pisol grease and said he got some of it on his xiphisternum and hadn’t felt worth a cuss since.

I’ll never forget the “good ole days” I spent in Skacy, and that was from the time I could tell the difference between my right hand and left, or a cabbage head from a wagon wheel, until I was bitten by a “love bug”.

Then I bid farewell to the place I loved so well and its ways of life if it was called a “hell-ova-place” by some,

The large red and blue bandanner handkerchiefs that’s used by railroaders, farmers, and their wives it was hard to find a man without one in his pocket. Many of the ladies used them for head scarfs, neckerchiefs, and in case of emergency diapers. I don’t see how Skacy could have made it without them bailing wire, binder twine, Russel Barlow pocket knife grind stone, whet rocks, hand ogar, and then goose neck hoe. One man got his wife a goose neck hoe for a birthday present, (yes, she’s still with him). All seem to be items of priority there.

Also the large palm leaf fan had its place in revivals and camp meetings. Some gals used them for signal communication with their boyfriends. Many years ago didn’t have the freedom from their parents as today, I guess they had to “manage anyway”. I think only one house in Skacy was claimed to be “haunted”. A few suspicious people just not as many bleeverers in “ghosts” and old wives tales, and “witches” as in the days gone by. Guess you’ll always find some tho any place you go.

I saw a man several years and many many moons ago in Scott Co. Mo. He said his wife had left him and a “ghost” had visited him a few dark nights, but didn’t try to harm him. Then it got to appearing every night from about midnight on. Said that was just “too much” for him. Said he thought a “sexy wife” was hell enough, until he found out a ghost livin in the house with him was worse. After the ghost “moved in”, he “moved out”, sold his furniture, packed his suit case and went to Arkansas, and as far as I no today he is still down there living with cotton “boll weevils” riding “slow trains through Arkansas” and leaving a “sexy wife” and a “ghost” behind. AMEN!

I believe in ghost and not afraid of them, might be different if I ever see one and as for the “over sex-lady” I wouldn’t be afraid of her either, nuf-sed.

There has been many “pailings” (boards) and “tobacco sticks” and “pickets” made on a “brake” with a “frol” and dog wood “mallet” or hickory, to rive them out. Some “tie hacking” done with the “broad ax”. The hand augar was a “must” in the homes.

One man said he had one that would bore a square hole. I saw the holes, but not the augar. A wood-pecker might have made it.

Many homes had Barrell Store Hamocks. The children really enjoyed them. Some slept in them at night during hot weather. Many of them had “sea saws” for the children to ride on. A neighbor girl use to ride me on a 18 ft one up into a tall mulberry tree, until she fell off, and said she almost bursted her “caboose” (must have been the rear end of her train), so that ended that “for a while”, then we were at it again, riding high and low. I well remember our first “rope swing”. Mother sold apples and brought a 30 ft rope. It soon became a 30 feet of joy and pleasure after school hours and week ends with school mates.

Things like “these” and “others” is what keeps “Skacy” flowing through my blood stream. I thank God, that it does.

I’ve traveled many miles over neighborhood pathes in Skacy, barefoot, sling shot in pocket, eating half ripe apples, playing “Roving Gambler” on a Jews harp, smoking “Rabbit tobacco”, helping rob Bumble Bee Nest, capture hornett nest, being chased by turkey gobblers and “hissing high stepping ganders”.

The chief crops of the community were corn, wheat, and tobacco (dark and fired). Many sent “turns of corn” to the stone burr grist mill for meal, later to the roller mills also their wheat for their flour. When they did purchase flour it was in wooden barrels or twenty five and/or fifty pound bags. Also sugar came in large bags. Many of the bags were used for pillow cases, towels, and sometimes for ladies clothing such as ladies “panties”. One lady’s read “pure sugar cane” across the rear. Others “yukon’s best”, “none is better”, “self-rising”, or “this end up”. Much of the printing didn’t laundry out. I don’t think there was any competition or advertising intended. Not as much money there to spend as there is today for clothing.

Many used long handled goards for dippers, broom corn to make brooms, and sorghum cane for molasses, cut bee-trees for wil honey, or kept a few hives, tried to raise plenty of popcorn, hogs were butchered for pork and lard. They had cows to produced milk and butter, chickens, guineas, turkeys, geese, ducks, and bantams for eggs. People didn’t buy or depend on grocery stores for food like they do today.

They raised an abundance of vegetables each year for home use also shock corn, also cain and hay such as red top, pea clover, and , this was the day before cudzoo, rape, and hairy vetch.

The community was never too well fenced in my way of thinking. First it was “split rail”, “brush”, and “picket” pailings rived by hand with a “froed”, yes, dull as a froe. I have one and a “broad ax” used by the old timers. “Hedge apple” and “rose” bushes were used for fences but not in Skacy. Many of the neighbors stock roamed the community. Most all the cows wore a collar with a “brass cowbell” on it so they could tell where she was at at all times. Also one sheep of the flock wore one. The “old turkey gobblers” wore one. Many young people of today have never seen a turkey gobbler strut his wings, hear him make them roar like thunder against the ground, and “gobble”. Or hear the noise of a churn dasher operated by hand making butter, a hand operated “grist mill” making meal, “coffee mill” or “wash board” in operation. A peddel driven “sewing machine”, “wheat thrasher”, or see a “thunder mug”, “mad stone”, “fog stick”, gambling stick”, “teasing pole” uh-uh, or hear a “jackass bray”. I think Skacy had it all, believe me, and then some.

When the whipoor wills began calling in springtime, fireflies began glowing in the yards at nite and the odor of blooming roses and honeysuckle filling the air. The quails stop calling “birdie” and begin calling “bob white”. Blue jays, “katydids”, tree frogs, and night bugs singing. I think some people took “travel fever” or “wander last” to hit the Gypsy trail.

Skacy has experienced many cold winters, with verry deep snows, and blizzard conditions, which seems almost unbarable to man or beast on the outside. But after eating a hot “chittling” supper and crackling bread, homade hominey, homade saurkraut, florida yams, sorghum molasses, fried half moon pies, and eight o’clock coffee brewed in a coffee pot, it was a joyful privelege to sit before a log fire place, with it’s radiant heat from the burning logs, a kerosene lamp for light, pop corn, spin “yarns”, talk, play checkers, and carom until the late hours of nite, then tuck in for a long winter nap to awake about two a.m. having a terrible “nightmare” or “talking in their sleep”. I didn’t mind the talking at that time, I had never been bitten by a “love bug”. Night after night name calling of the same lady might result in receiving a note like “Dear Charlie or John, I’ve sent your saddle home.” A few hours later to be awaken by “bed bugs” making their “last go-round”.

Later to hear “Ole Shanghi” the Rhode Island red rooster begin crowing about break-o-day, up in the large fruit tree near the top, where he roosted close to the chimney tope for warmth I suppose.

After all a person could arise feeling like a “mountaineer”. There was a time when turkeys and chickens roosted in fruit trees all winter, goats slept on porch roofs and not unusual to see them on chimney tops.

There was a private slaughter yard in Skacy for a few years, which consisted of a large white oak tree, meat scoffel, meat block, block and lines to pull the dressed beef, goat, sheep, goat, and hogs up to cool over night, out of reach of dogs and some wild animals. It soon became a feeding ground for wild animals such as “bob cats”, foxes, opossums, some times a “cougar” (pather) would pay a visit. There were lots of intestines and waist for them to feed on. In the late hours of night they did lots of grouling and fighting among themselves usually from “midnight on”.

The owner “peddled” the meat used a “hack” a long wheelbase carriage simular to a buggy with a seat up front and long 6ft bed. One of the family lived in a cabin behind our farm in Skacy. He was on his way home after dark, a big full moon “harvest” began to rise just as he was nearing his home, he looked back and what did he see in that “hack” bed in the moon light?, a vistor, a cougar had cleaned up the bed, and was giving the butcher tools a working over. He had to whip it out with a meat saw. It didn’t want to leave the hack.

The twenty two years I lived in Skacy I never saw a deer or a coyote, but they are increasing all over Kentucky today. Also some “red wolves” are being sighted by trapped at present.

There was never any “counterfeiting” done in that locality to my knowledge, no cattle rustlin, and I hope no “crap shooting”. Poverty caused no one to “steal” or no one to become so rich of this worlds goods to forget their “Maker”.

It has been known to be several musicians in Skacyfat. I new six. One owning five “fiddles” lots of “fiddling around” as long as they had “rosen” for their bows, or was not “too old to cut the mustard anymore”. A few square dances ending with a “bang”.

Several old fire-arms were around during the musket, black powder, ball and cap, muzzle loader days, when people “kept their powder dry”. The making of ox-yokes and board and picket rivin with the “fro” and “mallet”, wood cutting, plant bed building, hog butchering, bee bed building, hog butchering, bee gum and ash hopper repairing, and visiting were some of the winter chores, along with some “love making” or was that what they called it?

Many of the residents could be seen in Princeton on circus day, election and county court day, “jockey”, Christmas Eve, and Saturdays. A man wanted to convert a large barn in Skacy into a theatre to have Vaudevil shows, picture shows, barn dances (square). There could have been lots of “action” by the bands playin a “Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight”, “Star Dust”,

“Jackson”, or “Arkansas Traveler (woth calls). Some one would have probly got shot, “half-shot” pistol whipped or raped, (so it never happened) because it wasn’t built. The idea must have died before it was born.

Many residents worked on public works such as W.P.A.J.C. railroad, Ft Campbell (painting), Evansville ship yard (shipbuilding), Briggs, Survell, Crysler, and Whirl Pool Corp. Some traveled with a “circus” on “carnival”, one “hoboed” to each of the 48 states. I new two that became “loafers” it takes some time to learn the “swing” or “foot drag” of it.

One fella studied psychology, said he could tell about 80% of the time if a person had “any money” in their pocket, about 50% of time “how much”. I ask him how much I had. He told me I had a worn out dollar bill. I had \$.99 in change and one aspirin tablet, now how about that?

At one time there was a lot of opossum hunting done with dogs and carbide lights during the months of “harvest moon”, “hunter’s moon”, and “indian summer”and rabbit hunting and bird hunting during the winter months, Nov. 15-Dec. 31.

Cougars or wolverines gave the dogs plenty of trouble for many years. Some of the Morse brothers heard of a bear trap at Henderson, KY and went to buy it to set in Skacy, but an Illinois man had already purchased it, so “the cats came back”.

Skacy had many other problems also. “Peddlers” and traveling gypsies” coming from no place and going no place. A few “tramps”, “railroad bums”, and “hoboes”. Worst feared of all I guess “witches”. Some put horse shoes over doors trying to keep them out. Some said that worked better than “wichtraps”.

The old gray mare is not what she used to be, neither is “Skacyfat” but long may it live and happy may it be.

The sun rises over the east hills and sets early over the west hills, making a shorter day to work. A day was once from sunrise to sunset, guess that’s why I stayed there so long, twenty two year, may go back. Amen.

Appox-geographical location

37 12’ N. Lattitude

88 W-Greenwich Longitude

U.S. Rural Mail Route One

Zip Code 42445

Elevation, somewhere between Heaven above and Hell below.

During the twenty two (22) years I lived there the total population I don’t think ever exceded at any time more than one hundred eight five or two hundred population, and a bob tail bull dog named Dugan, a stump sucking cow, a “wampus” cat named “lightening”, a jinnet and jackass, and a white boar rat.

Often as I go by I bow my head and cry, thinking what a wonderful place to live and die.

By one who lived there,(1909-1931)

Stuart Morse

The Unofficial

Motto-“Happy Hunting Ground”

Password-“Don’t spit in the wind”

Flower-“Golden Rod”

Bird-“Whiporwill”

Fish-“White Sucker”

Tree-“Scaley Bark Hickory”

Bug-“Katy-did”

Animal-“Cougar”

Bee-“Honey”

Song-“Little Brown Jug”

The Toast-“May we live as long as we ‘can’, and ‘can’ as long as we live.

I dedicate this writing to the Wade Morse Family “On the Hill” and to the dear ones whose names appear below.

Once property owners of the place called “Skacyfat”

Edd Bright

George Clift

Jim Williamson

Wade H. Morse

Zack Williamson

Maxie Sheridan

Emerson Williamson

Willie Lowery

Rivers Sheridan

Dempsy Dunning

Mack Vinson

Elisa Vinson

Frank Dunning

John Riley

Clarence Lowery

Mack Clift

John McDaniels

Zack and Ten. Williamson

Wade H. Morse Jr.

Ruffas Cartwright

Dudley Dunning

Oscar Dunning

Cordas Dunning

Leslie Guill

Billie Wilson
Urey Williamson
Jim Bright
Auslin Williamson
Jess Williamson
Lee Morse
Levi Barton
Ruffas Critmer
Jeff Sheridan
Dique Eldred
Douglas George
Bradley Dalton
Lacy Hamby
Jess Harmon
All gone but not forgotten.

Stuart Morse left this world for a better one on July 3, 1985.
He was buried at Meeks Cemetery in his beloved Scacy Fat.