
History of Engineering Society

IT was at 11 o'clock on the 19th day of April, 1890, that a heavily loaded wagon, drawn by two mules, and with two boys and a dog walking along side, was seen leaving the city of Athens over the "Lower Bridge." To the inquisitive bystander, who inquired the meaning thereof, the reply was given that the wagon contained the camping equipments of the Engineering Society of the University of Georgia, and that it, together with the boys (Coates and Collier), was bound for Elberton, from whence the ever-to-be-remembered survey of 1890 was to begin.

After a seemingly long and lonely trip of twenty-one miles, the wagon stopped to pitch camp for the night at Paoli, from whence it again moved the next morning, completing the distance (thirty-eight miles) by two o'clock. It was at Elberton that Professor Strahan was to meet them (which he did), and the camp was pitched that (Sunday) afternoon in a beautiful grove near the pretty little city of Elberton, to await the arrival of Prof. Barrow, with the rest of the boys, who came on Monday afternoon, as "tough looking a gang" as the people of that usually quiet little city had ever seen. Indeed, it was not at all strange that, when Jim Dozier and Garnett Basinger stepped off the train, a horse ran away, and a little girl who had looked on delightedly at the rest of the party became dreadfully frightened.

In the meanwhile, however, Prof. Strahan had carried Coates and Collier to church on Sunday night, and they

looked so thoroughly unused to such surroundings as to cause general merriment throughout the house (at least something did, and of course it couldn't have been the appearance of two such Apollo-like young gentlemen).

But ye historian wanders. I was to recount facts and not indulge in these — (i. e., not “tell tales out of school.”) That afternoon the survey began, and after diligent application the boys succeeded in “running” a short distance past camp, ere the shades of night bade them go thitherward. That night was the first experience that some of the boys had had of camp life, and when “Handsome Bill” Harris asked “if the boys really had to sleep in those little tents,” Mr. Solomon Lane replied: “Why, yes, but I don't like them as much as I did those that we had when I was on the G. S. and F. corps.” Bob Gantt appeared especially uneasy after supper, and was very anxious “to go to town to get his valise.” Prof. Barrow had suggested that “Bob had a girl in town,” so several of the boys decided to follow him, and they saw him disappearing in a gate that led to a beautiful little cottage. They decided to hang around and see what “turned up,” and a little later, the moon breaking suddenly from behind a mass of clouds, revealed Bob sitting with his arm around a young lady (imagine it) and she only weighed 175. That “did the boys up” completely, and they returned to camp to dream of their own girls that they had left in the “Classic City,” or rather I should judge that they did, for that night Tom Gerdine was heard to say, “Oh, darling, darling, would that Miss Millie would allow me to see you, if only for a short while, in order that I might breathe into your ear the story of this intense love I bear for you.”

The next day (Tuesday) was one of real work, as indeed were Wednesday and Thursday. No time was had during those days for anything but work, which we did so faithfully as to complete a line of fifteen miles by Thursday night, besides crossing Broad River, and also having abandoned about five miles which were impracticable. Nothing of interest occurred in camp during these nights except that every one had to stop eating now and then in order to watch Camak. That young gentleman made the splendid record on the trip of having eaten an average of fifteen biscuits to the meal, besides an incalculable amount of chickens, eggs, etc.

On Thursday night we camped in a grove very near the residence of a "grass widow," and now Professor Strahan bears deep down in the recesses of his heart remembrances of that night's camp. Several of the boys accepted an invitation "to come up and have some music," and after several beautifully rendered pieces by our hostess, they left "the Professor" (as she called him) to his glory, and he stayed. The next morning we broke camp early and started for Elberton, intending to do some more work at a certain point on the way back. When we reached the ferry (three miles from our camping place), we ran up on a fishing party, and there Billie Gramling saw the "Pass" that he would rather obtain than any other. "The widow" was at the picnic, and the first thing we heard when we stopped on the flat was, "Oh, there's the professor," accompanied by the most delighted peals of laughter. It caused blushes of crimson hue to play hide-and-seek around "the professor's" face, for full well did he recognize those silvery tones.

But that night and the next morning were the climaxes of the whole trip. All reached camp, which had

been pitched at the same place at which it stood the first night, after having made a very exasperating attempt to find a slope which we could utilize for a certain change that we would have liked to have made, and everybody began to think of going in and viewing the beauties of Elberton. With this end in view several of us "dressed up" (put on a clean shirt), and went in to pave the way for the advent of the crowd the next morning. It was that night that Gramling and Collier passed by a church, and both being very religiously inclined, went in. "It was a private meeting which could not proceed further while those boys were present," and so they left. Also Jesse Coates met his fate that night in the shape of a beautiful golden-haired young lady, who bears the (to his ears) sweet name of Agnes. Oh he's "all broke up" on the girl who wore the dress of an emerald hue, and even now he can be heard to give vent to the longest, deepest drawn sighs, and murmur to himself something about her charms.

But again I wander, for who could help doing so, when he thinks of how a friend of his, as did one of mine (sometimes called Garbutt), looked one morning when the girl, who at that time seemed dearest to his heart, murmured, "But, Moses, how can you say that you love me, when Mr. 'Pie' Cooper has just told me to-day about your calling on a young lady in Lula, when you passed through, and making love to her?" "Pie" had done Garbutt up. "Brown."

That little scene occurred on Saturday morning, April 26th, while the rest of the boys, all of whom had come into Elberton, after having sent the wagon ahead, preparatory to leaving for Athens, at 1 P. M. Everybody in Elberton was very kind to us, and tended to make the stay a very pleasant one indeed.

We left Elberton on time, and as the train moved out there could be heard the sighs of several of the boys about the girls they left behind them. Nothing occurred on the trip home except that at one or two stations we saw objects of especial interest that needed viewing through the field glasses, and indeed Roy Dallas became so wrought up at one place as to actually get "Cheek-y."

That night at ten o'clock the party crowded out of the car and dispersed, wending their different ways boarding-house-ward, thus ending the survey of the E. & W. Air Line, which had been one of unusual pleasure and profit.

THE HISTORIAN.