

The Smithfield Herald  
08/19/1969

'Mr. Woody' Loved His Horse

## **A Most Unforgettable Character**

By C. Stanton Coats

If ever there was a man who loved an animal more than he did himself that man surely was Cleveland Haywood (Mr. Woody) Parrish (1856-1924) of Pleasant Grove Township. {Editor's note: Mr. Parrish's name was actually **Calvin** Haywood, not Cleveland Haywood}

Born five years before the Civil War, upon maturity and marriage, he settled his little farm near the head waters of the Massengill Mill Pond, about ten mile northwest of Benson, where he eked out a living for himself and family of a wife and five children. He never possessed much of the world's goods. But he did own a shiny top buggy and a very sleek and well groomed horse to pull it. He treated his horse almost as a member of his immediate family.

I grew up on a direct line from Mr. Woody's home, two miles toward Benson, where he did most of his farm and family trading. About every other week he passed our house early in the morning heading for town, usually returning about mid afternoon. Occasionally a neighbor accompanied him to town, both riding in the buggy. All of this was before the roads were improved. At that time, they consisted generally of deep wheel ruts, half filled with fine sand. Merely pulling a buggy over such roads was quite a strain on the average horse. But Mr. Woody's was perhaps better than average, and he believed in taking tender care of his horse.

We lived atop the hill about three-fourths of a mile from Hardee Mill Branch, up grade all the way, which was rough on either beast or man. Mr. Woody seemed to believe it only tired his horse. He felt no concern for himself. On really hot days it was not uncommon, on his return home, to see him walking beside his buggy carrying such items as a bucket of lard, ten-pound sack of sugar, or a bag of groceries, in order to lighten the load on his horse. On reaching the top

of the hill at our house he would get in his buggy and slowly disappear down Martin's Branch hill in the direction of his home.

One time, as told by a neighbor who accompanied him into town, he purchased among other items a fifty-pound stand of lard. On their return home, when his horse began to show signs of fatigue, Mr. Woody politely dismounted from the buggy, taking a five-pound sack of sugar under his arm, and he unsuccessfully pleaded with his neighbor to dismount and assist him in carrying the stand of lard. Mr. Woody was very loyal to his horse.

Kind hearted as he was he suffered a great loss. In the spring of 1916 (we had just had dinner), I looked out the kitchen window and saw a very black smoke billowing toward the sky, in the direction of his home. In the absence of local telephones and speedy travel, it was perhaps a couple of days before we learned that Mr. Woody's home had burned to the ground. But it was not long before he resumed his frequent trips to Benson and on his return home, in hot weather, he would surely get out and walk beside his buggy, carrying a small package of some kind under one arm. And those trips continued until we left the farm in 1920.

Mr. Woody loved his horse.