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## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO COAL OIL?"

By Jerrald Chandler

(Editor's Note: The writer has been a photographer and assistant at The Hickman County Gazette in Clinton for many years and more recently began a Gazette column on "Old Time Reminiscing." This appeared in the Nov. 3, 1994 edition.)

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While browsing through the drug store, waiting for a prescription to be filled, I noted all kinds of patent medicines on the shelves for all kinds of ailments. "Whatever happened to coal oil?"

Once, while going barefoot, I stuck a piece of baling wire in my foot. Mom pulled the wire out from the foot of a crying, screaming kid, and soaked the foot in coal oil. She took the lid off the old wood-burning stove and removed some soot. She placed the soot over the wound, then bandaged it with a piece of cloth torn from a flour sack. No soreness or infection.

The Star Mill flour sacks came in handy around home. They made good towels, dish cloths, and sometimes underwear.

There was the time when I was around five or six years old, that I had poison ivy from head to toe. Mother was taking me to the doctor and we went past the old blacksmith shop (located a block north of the stoplight in Clinton) which was operated by Mr. Ned Benedict.

Mr. Ned asked Mom, "Where are you headed?" After Mom explained to him what she was doing, he replied, "No need wasting your money on that, bring Jerrald in here."

Mr. Ned had me to remove all my clothing, then took me under the arms and lifted me up and lowered me into a barrel of rusty water. The barrel of water was used to cool hot iron that he fashioned for repair and fitting horse shoes.

He put his hand on my head and said, "hold your breath," and proceeded to baptize me, not in holy water, but iron water.

After removing me from the barrel, he placed me near the heating stove to dry without toweling off. I looked like a rusty pole. He told Mom to leave it on till bedtime.

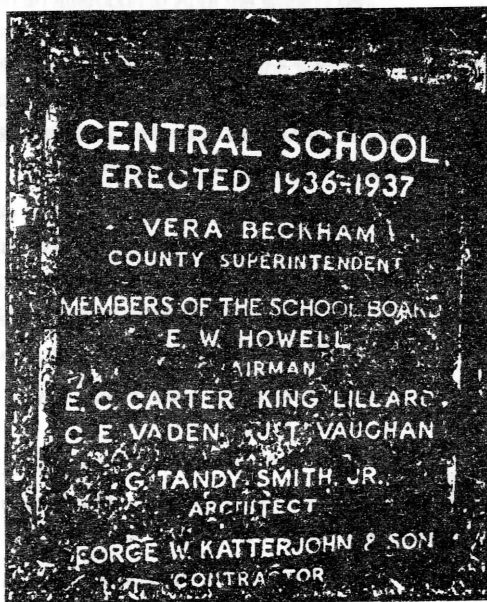
Believe it or not--no poison ivy since. Yeah, whatever happened to coal oil?"

[Blacksmiths commonly referred to the barrel of water used to cool the iron as a "quenching barrel."]

Jerrald Chandler is leading the drive to restore the columns of what was once Clinton College, later Central School, and then Hickman County Elementary School.



The Central School columns remain laying in Jim Brummal's yard. Photo/J. W. Chandler.



The above plaque was saved from the fire that destroyed the building. The plaque was bent in a "u" shape. The Bernag Corp. of Hickman, KY. straightened the plaque so that it can be used in the Memorial.