

PEG LEG BELONGING TO BUD CARRITHERS

This story about the peg was told thru the years, and our cousin Cecil T Hayes told it best. I took this peg leg to one of our Hayes Reunions and gathered the children around me. I told them the story and let them see how it was to walk with a wooden leg. I think they all enjoyed it!

BUD CARRITHERS HAD A GOOD REASON FOR HATING SNAKES - By Cecil T. Hayes - March 2, 1983

To a few older people still living in the Cherokee area, the name Bud Carrithers might arouse some slumbering memories.

They'll probably recall him as a person who lost his left foot in an occupational mishaps and for the rest of his life walked on a peg leg. Being handy with tools, Bud carved the artificial leg himself from the soft white wood of the tulip tree. One of these old peg legs is today hanging in the barn of Herbert Hayes of Margerum.

Those who knew him best will no doubt agree that Bud was a gifted storyteller. They may argue, however, that he leaned more to fantasy than to fact.

The following narrative was related by Bud himself. At eight years old, I believed every word of it. You must judge for yourself as to its authenticity.

It seems that Bud was on his way to work one morning at a sawmill over in Hog Hollow. The sawmill was owned by Henry Pollard (another name familiar to older residents).

Bud was running a little late and was taking a shortcut through heavy timber when he felt something strike the wooden leg. Glancing down, Bud was horrified to see that a huge copperhead had fastened its fangs into the leg and couldn't let go. Bud killed the snake (it turned out to be the biggest ever killed in Colbert County) and proceeded on his way.

He hadn't gone far, however, when he noticed a change in the leg. On examining it more carefully, Bud was surprised to find that the leg had swollen to twice its normal size. That snake was so big and so full of poison that even the wooden leg was beginning to swell.

Bud hurried along, trying to reach the mill as quickly as possible. But he soon saw that it was no use: the leg was swelling so fast and growing so heavy that he was soon reduced to dragging it. It looked more like a big log now than it did a peg leg.

When Bud could drag the leg no farther, he decided he must get some help. It was a huge tulip poplar leg now and bore no resemblance to his old familiar peg leg.

Sam Johnson, who lived a short ways down the road, owned a team of big draft mules. So Bud hired Johnson to drag the leg the rest of the way to the mill.

When Henry Pollard, the mill owner, took a look at that log he couldn't believe his eyes. "Why, I didn't know that trees grew that big in Colbert County anymore. That thing will make an enormous pile of 2 x 4's. You'll have a nice piece of money from that log."

But I'm sorry to report that Bud's story has a rather sad ending. You see, that night it came a big, hard rain, and every bit of the poison drained out of the wood; and when the boys at the mill went out the next morning to load the lumber, all they found was a handful of toothpicks.

Some folks tell that Bud Carrithers had an intense hatred for snakes the rest of his life.

