

JOHN T. BEATTIE

John T., son of Gabriel Beattie, married Harriet Roberts. His father lived near what is now Patterson Springs, North Carolina. He was a farmer, a Methodist, a Mason. John had three sisters: Betsey, who married — Kendricks; Roxana, who married — Scott, who abandoned her and the one child; and Emmeline, who married — Murray, and who died before I knew the family, and left several children. Harriet had two brothers: John Roberts, who held offices, the gifts of the citizens of his county; Rufus, who was Justice of the Peace. Each of them lived to a good old age and left several children.

John T. Beattie was a man who wanted all things to be right. He could not countenance drinking or rowdyism. He was a good Christian, and endeavored to live up to the precepts of the Methodist Episcopal church. He was ambitious to secure a competence, was honest and was liked by all because he let other people and their affairs alone. He died of pneumonia just before he was to have been married a second time.

Harriet Beattie was a tender mother. I especially appreciate her goodness to me. She, too, lived close to the Lord and was loyal to her church. She ably helped John T. in all of his undertakings and was sympathetic in all that he did. To such women is due all praise.

John and Harriet had born to them nine children, of them, Munroe married Nancy, a daughter of Sidney Elliott, [and] had four children. They are both buried in the cemetery at Shelby, North Carolina, in which place they lived after leaving their farm on Brushy Creek, near his father's place. Eli died in his teens, a splendid youngster, loving his parents and careful of their welfare. Margaret E. Beattie, the eldest girl, married the writer of this book, July 25, 1874, when she was twenty-five years old, her birthday being Feb. 8, 1849. My estimate of her is given elsewhere. Martha Jane Beattie married Thomas Tucker. He farmed, milled corn, flour and sawed—until his health failed. He is a good citizen, a loyal member of his church, Methodist Episcopal, a sympathetic husband. Martha ably seconded her husband's efforts, and sustained him in all his undertakings. Vick married Columbus Tucker, a son of John Tucker and a brother of Thomas Tucker. He also engaged in farming and milling. He lives at Waco, N. C. Vick has been a helpmeet in every sense of the word. Both are upright and generous Methodists; Lilly Beattie married Haley Cabiness, a son of Mont Cabiness, whose wife was a sister of Sidney Elliot. His father gave him a farm on Brushy creek, to which he took his bride. He is a good farmer—interested in all agricultural developments, in good stock. He will not have skinny mules, keeps the best of cows, hogs, and dogs. The thinnest things on his place are his wife, his daughter and himself. Minnie, his oldest daughter, is at home and has the burden of the household. All three are known for their hospitality, lavish and wholehearted.

Laura Beattie married James Wright, son of Winston Wright, who married Lucy Wright whose father was George Hamrick, and whose mother was Phoebe Wright of York County, South Carolina., Her father was Martin Martin and her mother was Dicey Hicks of Spartanburg County, South Carolina. Her father was the famous Revolutionary patriot and hero.

Much speculation has been made on this connection. I wish to set it straight! I secured my information from an old negro woman, Jenny, who belonged to George Hamrick, and who said that she was at his house when he brought Phoebe home. She said she helped cook the dinner that day. I said to

the ninety-odd year old negro, "Granny, aren't you thinking of Annie?"

She answered, "Chile, God bress yur ole soul. I knowed em bofe. God bress yur, chile, his fust wife was named Febe and his las Annie. Bofe of dem wifs wuz Wrights. Why, chile, ise nuss yur mammy jest as good, and Ise been nussin' youse when youse a bebbly."

I still questioned her to satisfy any doubts. She told me that Wright Hamrick married Ellen Peeler. I was thoroughly convinced that she knows what she is talking about. She would convince Thomas Wright, if he would see her and talk with her.

James and Laura have lived happily together, and have had much fun through it all.

One time Laura had the headache. She complained and said that it was due to not having coffee.

Jim said, "Wall, I'll go and get a whole sack of coffee. Then, mebbe, I'll not hear any more about your headache."

In a day or two James had no tobacco. He stretched and "fidgeted" and was unable to eat, and was ill-tempered towards cats and dogs and even inanimate things.

His wife said, "Oh, the headache! Go to town and get a full box of tobacco. Then mebbe I will hear no more from you!"

He went, bought the tobacco, and returned home. His wife met him at the door, "Did you bring any snuff? I have not had any today."

"I thought that coffee was all you needed. Go off, wife, I had to buy this box on time."

So together they have lived happily, getting their share of the spice of life and living it fully.

I cannot leave without telling a story on Jim that happened in our younger days, and that will show another interesting characteristic of the man.

One day I told him how I had been calling on folks and telling than I was someone else in order to get a joke on them. He said that I could never fool him like that. So I arrived at his house one night after dark. I asked him to come to the gate. He came slowly and demanded my name. I talked with an Irish brogue and said, "Jones is my name, Sir. It is getting late. I am a stranger in this part of the country. Can I get to stay all night with you?"

Jim was slow in answering, "See here, Mr. Jones, my wife is not such well, and I don't see how I can keep you."

"All right, if your wife is sick. I am out buying cattle, and am going to see Mr. Walker who sells cattle. Can you show me the way?"

He said that he could, but because it was pitch dark, I asked him if he would get into the buggy with me and show me where to turn off about a half mile away. He got in. On the way he talked such about how Walker was a sharp trader and how he often skinned buyers. At that point I laughed out. He was flabbergasted. I had my joke. We went back to the house and found his wife as well as usual.

James Wright is one of the most interesting traveling companions imaginable. I went with him from my home on Broad river to middle Georgia, a distance of two hundred and forty miles, when we left our home in 1870, in order to save ourselves from a prison sentence on account of our activities in the original Ku Klux Klan. During the trip, we arrived at a farm house one night about twelve o'clock. When we asked if we could stay through the night, the man of the house said:

"Yes, but I have just moved in. My fare is hard, but mebbe men from South Carolina can stand it."

Jim said, "Yes. We have been lying out on the ground."

I shook my head at him, fearing that our prospective host would refuse.

Wright then hastily spoke up, "We have been practicing for this trip."

The host said, "Let's go put up your horses."

While I was gone, Jim remained in the house. A negro showed him a picture of a beautiful young lady hanging on the wall, and told him that it was the likeness of his young mistress who was off at school.

When I came in, cousin said, "Come here. Dick, here is my wife."

I laughed, "Why, that's nothing except a cheap print."

That raised his dandruff. "Dad burn your hide, just because you have a wife, you don't care whether I get one or not."

At that point our host asked if we wanted supper. I said, "None."

"Supper. Yes. Supper," Jim contradicted.

Supper we had—biscuits, coffee and molasses. Jim wants molasses every meal, and he ate heartily of them all. I ate a biscuit and drank some coffee.

After supper I asked him, "Did you look in that pitcher?"

"Now," he said, "Cousin, I want you to keep your mouth closed while we are here. I am stuck on that young lady off at school."

"Aren't you ever going to learn anything?" I asked.

About that time our host came to us with a bundle of split pine splinters and said, "This will light you to bed. We have no candles."

"This is all right," as we went up the steps to the garret above.

When we were up, I looked around in a large room, bare except for a bed in a corner and said, "I bet this is eaten up with chinchies."

I looked in the pillow slip. Whew! There were thousands. I took the torch to the crevices in the bed out of which fell great quantities of burning and popping bugs. I said, "Watch them fall, Jim."

"You'd better quit hollerin. This old man will charge you double."

"I will sue him in the morning, if I get to Athens," I said.

Jim answered, "I have paid for this bed, and I intend to sleep on it."

"They will eat you up, if you got on that bed," I said.

I took a quilt, shook it, and carried it to a corner in the other end of the room, which was about fifty feet long. Out of this I ran an army of rats as large as squirrels and as thick as those bugs, and lay down. "Jim, if you come here, I will drive this knife through you," I challenged.

He flopped down on the bed. I knew what was coming to him and lay on the quilt awaiting developments. They were not long coming. After lying awhile, he brushed his hands over his face, and then again.

"Dick," he said.

I lay still.

"Dick" he repeated more loudly. "These damn chinchies are all over my face," and then again.

"Dick, these damn chinchies are all over my face and in my eyes."

I put my knife beside me and said, "Jim, if you come here with those sweetheart bugs, I'll stick my knife in you."

But that did not deter him, and he brought a swarm of those grey-backed pests along with him.

We did not sleep that night. The bugs ate up poor Jim; the rats scampering over the floor and standing on their haunches in the window eyeing us kept me awake.

At breakfast the next morning, we saw for the first time the hostess.

She was cross-eyed so that both eyes turned towards her nose.

“Jim,” I said, “This is the mother of your sweetheart.”

“Shut your mouth,” he threatened.

When we had sat down at the table again to the coffee, biscuits, and molasses, I took my knife and dragged nine flies out of the molasses. I showed them to James, who motioned me to keep still. Besides, in the first biscuit I broke was embedded a beautiful specimen of rat excretia. I turned it up so Jim could see it.

Under his breath he said, “Turn it down, turn it down.”

I laughed. Jim still dreamed of his picture sweetheart.

A year later I was in the same home again. It was as nice and clean as one could find.



Catherine Beattie, a daughter of John T. Beattie, married Shelton Jones. He, as did the others tried his hand on the farm for a while. During the greater part of his life he was an officer of the law. For many years he was a revenue officer, and in that capacity was an indefatigable worker, a daring man, and brave officer.

One time, he said that he had captured a white man who had been making illicit liquor in the mountains. He got down off his horse to walk with his prisoner. Everything was very pleasant until the man snatched the pistol from his holster. Then the prisoner stood with the pistol pointed at him and made him dance until he was extremely tired. Finally, the man bade him farewell, and left him standing in the road footsore and chagrined.

For many years he was Chief-of-Police at Shelby. In that capacity he was killed by a negro whom he attempted to arrest.

Catherine and child were left to mourn a good father, and a patient husband.

Amanda, a daughter of John T. Beattie, married Beasley Ellis. After her mother's death, they lived with John Beattie in order to make his last days more pleasant. They buried him with his wife in the cemetery in Shelby, North Carolina. I believe that both have gone to their reward. Beasley, a printer, tried to farm and run a print shop. However, they lived at the old home place until his death. Afterwards Amanda and son, Hudson, moved to Shelby. She lives in her own home. Her head is as white as snow, but she is still able to move about readily. God bless her and hers. May her days be long and full of happiness.

