

ISCHUA VALLEY

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MERLE BULL'S MEMORIES OF SATURDAY AT PARK SQUARE

The Rusts from Wenrick Road come to town with their son Ransom in a horse and buggy. Cars were parked at an angle on Elm and North Main. There was a traffic light firmly imbedded in the middle of our main intersection.

There was a cast iron water fountain in the middle of Park Square. The top was surmounted by cupid. Water poured forth from her mouth.

The full crown elm trees kept the sun from ever entering that park. Iron park benches were plentiful. This was the gathering place for Franklinville's men of leisure. In the evening the older boys would converge to brag.

There was a horse watering trough near the traffic light (now at the Miner's Cabin). Saturday afternoons a platform would be assembled at this location. Cars and people would start to trickle into town. By dark cars would be parked from TBA to the Baptist Church and way out Elm and Chestnut.

At eight o'clock the band would tear into THE STARS AND STRIPES FOREVER! Our hearts would beat faster. Everything for the next hour was at fever pitch. Tony Pass led the band from selection to selection. THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER was the climax. Everyone stood at attention. Ice cream cones melted, romance came to a halt and conversations ceased. Good-byes were said. Some made their way home. Others, who came to town once a week, took full advantage of this interlude and would tarry till well after midnight.

The park was during this hour packed with happy visiting citizens. Many would remain in their cars. Some of those cars had been parked around the square in the afternoon and the occupants would return for the evening festivities. After each selection there would be a loud blowing of horns.

The sidewalks would be packed with people making walking difficult. Extra police would stop traffic at the crosswalks. The girls would circle the square clockwise and the boys counter clockwise. Of course a seductive smile or encouraging word could reverse this procedure and usually did.

During this hour of park activity the stores would be empty. Then, at nine o'clock upon the final note the dam would burst and the crowd would pour into the stores.