

By Lynne Garvey-Wark

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To: 'Dariece Rau'

Subject: Clifton in 1904

As I have been conducting research on Clifton's history for the pictorial history book on Clifton that I am writing, I came across this article found in the Virginia Room from the December 2, 1904 weekly Fairfax Herald. You will recognize many of the names in this article, as they are contained not only on the town's historic plaques, but also in our book, "Brigadoon". While there is little mention of women, you can easily imagine that to keep the homes, churches and schools running, they were certainly about! The town was young, vibrant and oh so proud of its citizenry at the beginning of the 1904 Holiday Season! I hope you enjoy this description – reflecting the language and careers of turn-of-the-century Clifton! Happy Holidays!

Lynne Garvey-Wark, Proprietor, the Canary Cottage & member, Fairfax County History Commission..

"In these times of push and energy there are inquiring minds always looking for new fields and land buyers and home seekers are hurrying to and fro looking for a place to settle and a change of abode. I thought it would not be out of place, as many such persons are constantly reading the Herald and inquiring through the mails what goes on at those little railroad towns for a livelihood by the inhabitants thereof. To give a short sketch of the doings of our people in the Town of Clifton, which is located 27 miles from the national Capital, on the Southern Railroad: We have a pair of general stores, one owned and run by the Buckley Bros., stocked from floor to garret, carrying about \$8,000 to \$9,000 worth of goods; the other store run by J. L. Fristoe, who came here from the Valley of Virginia two years or more ago and has had success, doing a nice business, while we also have a lumber dealer with us in the person of M. M. Payne. A. J. Kidwell, our worthy blacksmith has a well-equipped shop and keeps two men employed at his place. Then we have J. B. Cross, wheel-wright and undertaker, who also has a helper. We also have an up-to-date butcher shop, owned and run by R. M. Kivett, who has been in the business eight years and built up from a baby to its present proportions.

We have a saw, lath and grist mill, owned and successfully operated by Mr. R. W. Woodyard; two liverys in the village, both of which are more or less busy all the while, the one run by S. H. Detwiler and the other run by F. G. Mayhugh. Messrs. Wright and Hickey deal in ties and cord wood; they also run a mill in the woods in company with W. H. Mathers. J. M. Fulmer, a lumber man, deals extensively in oak lumber for the Northern markets. T. O. McMullen, who follows contract carpentering, owns and runs a portable saw mill to cut wood for families at their homes. C. H. Ford manages his mother's estate in and around the village, which consists of much good property. Rev. W. H. Edwards the pastor of the Presbyterian Church, resides on his little farm in the corporation, which is stocked with a fine variety of fruit trees, which he markets in season. R. B. Dorsey and W. Richards who push the pen for Uncle Sam, go to Washington every work day, also reside in town. W. F. Ford, a clerk for Buckley Bros., and George Mayhugh, a helper for his father's livery, live on Chapel Street in the village and run on the Southern railroad to Greensboro, N.C. from Washington, DC. Dr. J. L. Stanford, a surgeon who up to a year ago was in the Philippines and Cuba, in the U.S. army, also lives at the hotel, which is conducted by Mrs. Annie Bell in a very satisfactory way.

Mrs. Remsberg, a widow and her daughter and little son live here and take boarders. Mr. George Kincheloe lives on Main Street and hucksters from this county and Prince William to Washington market. Dell Avenue, a new street, contains six houses, in a row, occupied by D. W. Mathers, a stone mason; R. S. Fullerton, a machinist; T. O. McMullen, a joiner; Paul McMullen, a carpenter; W. C. and S. W. Puckett, carpenters, and F. G. Cooksey, a stone mason for the Southern Railway; G. F. Holland, formerly of Charlotte, North Carolina, lives here. Mr. Holland has charge of a material train of the Southern Railway. We have also two telegraph operators, H. Adams and H. N. Payne; T. W. Ayre, agent for the Southern Railway, lives with his mother-in-law, Mrs. Thomas Payne, and R. B. Fitstengle (colored) cobbler's shop is on the Railroad Avenue. We have three schools and four churches. The town is incorporated and governed by a mayor and five councilmen and a town sergeant; court convenes when there is anything to do in that line. We have a lockup that is used very seldom. A Masonic lodge is located here with 37 members, A. J. Kidwell, W. M. A. W. Robinson, secretary; R. R. Buckley, Treasurer, meets Monday before the full moon each month. There are three local trains South, and as many going North each day; the Southern has a double track, and this station is equipped with the automatic interlocked switch absolute block system; the railroad has a floating gang and a local section, with headquarters in the village. The business houses are lighted with acetylene gas, manufactured in a plant belonging to a local company. R. T. Payne, a carpenter by trade, also resides here. Mr. R. H. Butler lives at the home of his nephew, Mr. G. B. Wright; Russell Barbee, a clerk for J. L. Fristoe, lives at the home of his employer. We have the best water that has ever been tasted in Virginia in a spring on the public highway that never fails even in the driest seasons; there are wells also in the town that can be reached with a long-handled dipper from the top of the ground, the contents of which are wholesome and pure. The drainage in the town is perfect, the winters mild and the summer seasons comfortable; fishing and game is plentiful. Bull Run, lying just one mile and a half from the limits of the town; the county round about is literally specked and dotted with farm houses, said farms producing with a little work more grain than any place I have ever been; the principal crops are wheat, corn, potatoes, oats, barley, buckwheat and vegetables. A truck farm would do well hereabouts, as there are hundreds of dollars worth of early vegetables consumed in this little town that are purchased from the Washington market.

R. V. Riddle, R.M.S. of North Carolina is in the village. Mr. Riddle looks well, his health having improved since his departure from us. Anticipating a visit by the District Deputy, the Masons had a supper at the home of Mr. G. B. Wright, in the village Monday night of last week. Your correspondent was in attendance and enjoyed the repast with twenty odd members of the local lodge and S. Ella Davis of Washington and W. H. Clarke and Charnett Ford of Swetnam. They had oysters, salads, celery and a huge turkey that was knocked out in the second round with Marquis of Cranberry rules. W. H. Mathers, they said, had ridden the goat at the hall before coming to the banquet. W. H. Clark, as usual, with some excuse for cleaning up everything in reach of him, apologized to the party by saying he had missed his supper, and the sitting just came in handy for him. We noticed that things went off in a quiet and business-like manner. Mrs. G. B. Wright and Mr. A. J. Kidwell attended to the culinary departments. Mr. A. J. Kidwell carved up the fowl. [signed] NUF CED"