

The Story of the B.B. Rifle

My daddy had a B.B. rifle. When I was big enough, I got to shoot it. My brothers would load it for me. One time I got shot in my finger. To load it, you put the B.B.'s in and then you had to rock it back and forth to pump it up and build enough pressure to shoot the B.B.'s out. My older brother loaded it up. You had to hold one hand on the end of the barrel when you shook it. I got in a hurry and shot the end of my finger. It wasn't bad, but enough to carry me to the doctor. Daddy got angry and broke the stock of the rifle, but he bought another the same day.

James described toys boys made. Pistols were cut out of a piece of wood. They were just cut in the shape of a pistol, and we would run around pretending to shoot. They made "flips" (slingshots). To make the flip, a "string" (of rubber) was tied to each end of a forked stick. The string could be cut from an old inner tube. "You'd trim it down kind of slim." The piece tied to the string to hold the projectile was usually made by cutting a piece from the tongue of an old leather shoe. Then you would "stretch the rubber back and put in a gravel or a marble." The researcher questioned the use of a marble, wondering if the boys would want to lose their marbles. James said the marble wouldn't go far, maybe 20 or 30 feet, and if the land was cleared, the boys could go pick them up.

Lodges. James did not belong to a lodge, but two of his brothers belonged to a Masonic Lodge and had been Wishful Masters. His father had also been a Mason. James explained that members were divided into groups and each group had a Wishful Master. Since he had not been a member, he did not know much about it. The Center Grove and the Grange Church each had a lodge by them. Some churches were used for lodge meetings, which took place during the week, at night.

The Fair in Huntsville. The White people usually held the fair around the 15th of October. In the next two weeks, after the White fair was over, the Blacks would have their fair. It was down off Wheeler Street, where Books a Million is, at University and Pulaski Pike. It was a county fair, with 4-H, animals, FFA giving prizes for the best animals, vegetables, etc.

Leaving Their Home

James said even before their land was sold to the Army, the Army had started to build. Gates, manned by guards, were put up to close off the roads. The residents who hadn't moved yet had to stop at the gates each time they went in and out.

When families left, they took their stock and possessions. Moses Love bought 280 acres north of Huntsville at 10th Cavalry Hill. This hill is where the Black Buffalo Soldiers camped (Civil War). James said "piled up dirt from their camp" (palisade) was still there when his father bought the land. James said Moses "tore up" a couple of the houses that were on his land in Mullins Flat, moved them, and rebuilt them on the land he bought.