

Nov. 21st, 1905.

Col. A. S. Colyar,
Nashville, Tenn.

FROM THE COLYAR PAPERS, #1438-Z.
SOUTHERN HISTORICAL COLLECTION, THE LIBRARY OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL.

Dear Sir:-

Referring to the dinner to be given to you to-night by the Press Club. I hope very much that you will find time to refer to some of the incidents in your life since the close of the Civil War that may have escaped your memory.

One is your great legal fight over the property of what was then the Sewanee Mining Company. When you argued the case before the Supreme Court for your clients McGhee and Best, and the Court decided from the bench adversely for your clients when you asked for a rehearing and the Court stated that it would hear you the next morning at nine o'clock. You went to your office and went to work and never left it to eat or sleep until the Court was called the next morning, when you appeared and made the argument and got a rehearing and a reversal and won the case for your client which resulted ultimately in the property coming into the possession and control of Tennesseans headed by yourself.

Another fact I think you should touch upon is the repeated made to change the county line so as to put Tracey City, which is on top of the Cumberland Mountains, in Grundy County detaching it from Marion County which lies largely in the Sequachie Valley. This effort had never been successful. When the Constitution of Convention in 1870 was called, you went before a convention of a committee and succeeded in having that convention change the county line so as to detach Tracey City from Marion County and put it into Grundy County. This I think is the only incident on record where the constitution

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of this state ever changed the county line. Frequent attempts have been made since to change this line by detaching territory from Grundy and putting it into Franklin, but it has always been met with this constitutional inactment and the result is that the line stands to-day as fixed by the Constitution and cannot be changed by the Legislature.

Another fact is the origin and history of the Four Mile Law. This you will remember was passed soon after the adoption of the Constitution of Convention of 1870 and before the country fully realized the difference between a general and special statute and while it was thought at the time by most people that this law was for the exclusive benefit of the University of the South at Sewanee. The country did not realize that it applied with equal force to each chartered institution outside of an incorporated town or city in the state. You drew the bill that became the law and you are entitled to all the credits and benefits that have accrued to the state from the operation of the Four Mile Law.

You were the first public man in Tennessee to announce from the stump that the great debt that was hanging over the state at the close of the Brownlow Administration would have to be scaled. This idea at the time was very unpopular and repugnant to Democratic politicians and put you out of line with your party at that time. A few years later when everybody realized the truth of what you had first stated, others assumed the leadership to cut down the debt to almost repudiation. To such an extent was this carried that you threw yourself into the breach to extend the tide of repudiation all over

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Referring again to the industrial developements of the state. The first letters after the Civil War calling attention to the great mineral wealth of this country, were written by you and published in the Nashville papers in 1863 after you had made a trip through the coal and iron districts of Pennsylvania which had impressed you very much as to the wealth of that country on account of its coal and iron.

One word about the very early history of the T. C. I. & R. R. Co. after the close of the Civil War. You took charge of this property on the 5th day of March, 1866 after the litigation between Tennessee and New York credits had been compromised by you. The equipments of the property consisted of one old red mule that was pulling all the coal that was then mined by the T. C. I. & R. R. Co. and six barlow knives that are on the shelves in the old store. The mule had been levied on for taxes and a distress warrant issued at the time. Two old locomotives ~~had~~ had been taken south during the war, were brought back worn out and dilapidated and thirty four old worn out coal cars. The railroad from Cowan to Tracey City was in such shape that for many months it was impossible to get an engine over it without getting it off the track. In addition to this you assumed a debt of \$20,000.00 against the property. The property at that time producing ten tons of coal per day is now giving to the railroads that serve it more than 10,000,000 tons of freight annually.

I wish very much that you had time to refer to ~~THE~~ Millin's race for Congress while Brownlow was governor. When you went to Salem and denounced him as a liar, perjurer when he was surrounded by a hundred of Brownlow's militia at his own appointment when he refused to let you speak. When you stated from Millin's stand that

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you intended to denounce him notwithstanding the fact that he was surrounded by 100 of Brownlow's barefooted thieves armed as militia.

I know you will refer to the litigation which resulted in overthrowing the Alden ring, the putting of the City of Nashville in the hands of a receiver which up to that time had never been done in America, the bitter work that Alden and his aldermen wedged upon you cutting off the gas and water from your residence and threatening you with anonymous letters, etc. There are many other things that I would like to suggest and the things that you will necessarily have to talk about will probably consume more time than you will have to give them.

Yours very truly,

A. M. Shook.

This is an old letter I found in a file of my father's. I have been going through the last of his papers recently & thought Colyer might enjoy seeing this - I think one page is missing -
Margaret

[From
MRS. Edwin A. Price?
Nashville, Tenn.]