

Things in Motion

ALL THINGS ARE IN MOTION AND NOTHING IS AT REST ... YOU CANNOT GO
INTO THE SAME (RIVER) TWICE. --HERACLITUS (540?-480?)B.C.



This photo from early spring of 1944 depicts a group of people representative of what typical southern farm people and country life during wartime might look like. To the left is my father, 53 at the time, a man used to long hours of work, dedication to his job, and steeped in the customs that brought him to manhood in 1910. I stand next to him, 12 then, and filled with young urges to take my own place in the company of such men as Billy Turton on my left, a telephone lineman whose job kept him from military service and whose ability to patch up and extend the life of outdated and broken equipment made him an essential part of Dooly County. Next to Billy is the youngest of three sons, Lloyd Burton, who with his brothers Ralph and Olin and their father comprise one of the largest farm families in Dooly County. The Burtons were successful farmers who managed to hide their substantial wealth while taking an influential part in community affairs. My father was the bookkeeper and manager of the country store shown in the background. I attended Dooly County High School, a “country school” in the truest sense and helped my father in the store, as well as working as a farm hand in the

summer months. There was no A/C, country roads were not paved, wood and coal were the common sources of heat in cold weather, and in 1944, gas was rationed. Many farmers still used mules for plowing, although the Burtons had already converted to mechanical farming.

In 1945, my father suffered a severe heart attack and moved back to Clay County where he opened a country store. I transferred to Ft. Gaines High School and graduated in 1948.

Billy Turton died in a car crash in 1945 near the Flint River. His mother, who owned the telephone company in Dooly County retired and sold the company.

Lloyd Burton continued to farm well into his seventies, later helping his children and those of his siblings to establish their own farms. The Burton family is still a major influence in Dooly County affairs.

The country store in the background of the photo still exists and is still a country store. I last visited there in 1986, and the landscape was much as it was in 1944, although the farm tractors buzzing along the roads no longer stirred up a cloud of dust. Progress?

Dooly County High School was abandoned during the decade of the 60s and its capacity to draw together the community it served has been sadly lost. The people I knew and loved are mostly gone but the farm spirit lives on in their descendants. A part of me will always live there, also.

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