

Cold weather brought “a shiver to the sunny south”

By Rebekah Davis
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With all the talk about snow in recent days, I thought that this week I would share some of the cold weather news from Athens of yesteryear. Here are some of the “blizzards” that made the pages of the Alabama Courier and Limestone Democrat over the years.

Feb. 16, 1899 – “Below Zero:” The mercury took a tumble last Thursday night and kept falling until he reached six degrees below zero. As a result of his tumble the water pipes of Athens in many places were frozen and burst and as a result much inconvenience was experienced by the patrons of the water plat of the city. It was not quite cold enough to freeze the electric lights out, but it seemed as if they would grow dim. Such weather has not been felt in this section in a long while. Much suffering is bound to have been experienced by the poorer people who had not warm rooms and plenty of bedding. It seldom reaches the point reached here last Thursday night and when it does it brings a shiver to the resident of the sunny south.

Feb. 7, 1917 – “Coldest Weather of the Winter:” Athens and all the section have been suffering from the most severe weather in twenty years for the past week. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday brought a sudden and fearful change in the atmospheric conditions and many were caught shy on coal and others had other ills. Water pipes broke by the hundreds and much inconvenience and damage was done. Sunday morning gave a promise of a relenting of the cold wave, but Sunday afternoon a blizzard struck the town and things went blue in a true sense for a while, the mercury dropped a degree a minute for thirty or forty minutes and Monday morning brought zero weather again.

The stove of Mr. Robert L. Hendricks blew up and did considerable damage to the kitchen but fortunately no one was injured as there was no one near the stove at the time it exploded.

The stove of Dr. Wythe Crutcher also blew up and did considerable damages to the kitchen and furnishings, but in this instance there was no one injured. These are the only two accidents of this kind that the Courier has learned of.

Jan. 23, 1918 – “Eighteen Inch Snow:” Tuesday snow was reported 18 inches deep in Nashville, and snowing. Athens with a six inch fall is quite satisfied. The ground has not been entirely free from snow here in five weeks.

Mar. 23, 1921 – The temperature fell from near 90 to below freezing in 10 hours on Easter Monday and many things were killed.

Dec. 26, 1929 – The heaviest snow in many years, 7 inches, fell over the weekend. It was the second snowstorm of over 5 inches during the season. Much cotton was still in the fields because of the weather.

Dec. 22, 1932 – Many tourists spent the weekend in Athens at the Ross Hotel because of snow and ice.

Mar. 22, 1934 – The snow and ice in the past week had probably badly damaged the peach crop, but the boys at the Ag School under Mr. Matthews were busy preparing lime-sulphur spray for orchards and had several orchards under contract.

And finally, although I don't have a date for this photo, it shows Raisler Corner – the intersection of Market and Marion streets, looking north – during one long-ago snow. The church steeple belongs to the First Methodist Church of Athens, which at that time was located on the corner of Marion and Hobbs streets.

About the Archives:

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