

The Campbell News, July 25, 1919: Progressive Business Men of Campbell County, No. 12: Walter Cowart (written by Himself). (At top where photo would go is: "We tried to get his picture but broke the camera.") Some 15 or 20 years ago, the huckleberry crop was short around the Okefinokee Swamp in south Georgia, so the subject of this sketch took his other shirt and started north.

The change of climate or the exercise in walking started him to growing, and by the time he reached Atlanta his coat was just long enough to hide his suspender button. He also got caught in a storm, and if anybody believes that cotton trousers won't draw up after getting wet, just let him try it.

He reached Atlanta with \$6.25 in cash, which was enough to pay one week's board in advance. The fun started. He got himself a job selling books. Having more nerve than judgement, he started down Peachtree Street with a cook book under his arm. After trying this for two days, and not having sold a book in the meantime, he decided that his talents lay in other directions.

Then he got an office job at five dollars a week. If anybody wants to know just how far five dollars a week WON'T go in Atlanta, just try it for yourself.

But what he lacked in brains he made up in nerve. He had managed to store away a few dollars when Union City started its boom. He got to Union City before they built the first house. Since everybody else was going to get rich who had anything to do with Union City, he decided he would show them a few stunts about garnering the kale. He did. After getting so poor that he couldn't leave, he decided to stay. He is still there.

The people at Union City got tired of seeing him loafing around, and not wishing to have him arrested for vagrancy, elected him mayor – salary nothing a year. Then he made everybody mad and they hit him again by re-electing him mayor this year.

In the meantime – some two or three years after Union City started – he became half owner and editor of the Union City Times. That was a wide-awake and flourishing newspaper. It had two paid subscribers and about fifty on the free list. The two paid ones ordered their papers stopped after reading the editorials in the first issue under the new management. All those on the free list stuck by the editor and kept taking the paper. We have forgotten just what did become of that paper, but it is gone.

Some folks have been mean enough to say that he was making a special huckleberry "moonshine" that would make a man slap his grandma, and that when the berry crop failed around the swamp, he was put out of business. He answers that by saying that cane "skimmings" make a meaner booze than huckleberries, and that the cane crop is always good in south Georgia. He says furthermore that he visits in south Georgia every once in a while – since they elected a new sheriff – which is evidence enough (so he says) that they did not run him out.

He was appointed to serve on the various war work committees, but as the rainy weather had caused him to get away behind with his fishing, he didn't set the woods on fire by rustling funds for Uncle Sam. He has the reputation of knowing all the good fishing places in Campbell and surrounding counties.

Jake Patton says this fellow can eat more watermelon than any other fellow who ever hit the county. Pomp West says he will put him against any other two men in a peach-eating contest. Ed Nolan says he saw him eat six fried chickens at a picnic at Enon, while Bob Tatum says he can eat almost as many oysters as Bob – which is a lot of oysters. Invitations accepted at any time.

He claims to be the richest man in the county, being worth four million dollars and eleven cents, divided as follows: wife and three girls worth a million each, and eleven cents in cash. He also has the reputation of being the biggest liar in Campbell County, since Tom King moved to Coweta.