ETTER PENNED TO JUDGE FRANK I. DUNCAN RECALLS EPISODE IN LIFE OF AUGUSTUS A. PIPER

Well Known Attorney Of County Seat Thirty-Nine Years Ago Packed His Grip For Jacksonville, Florida, Where He Intended To "Hang Out Shingle"—Gives Experiences On Trip.

Judge Frank I. Duncan has for several weeks past been sojourning at the home of his daughter, at Jacksonville, Florida, in the hope of regaining his health.

Some 39 years ago, Mr. Augustus A. Piper, now one of the oldest practitioners at the Baltimore County Bar, made a trip to Jacksonville with the idea of "hanging out his shingle" there.

For many long years Judge Dun-an and Mr. Piper have been close iends, and before the former went the bench they had adjoining fices in the old Piper Building, owson, where they probably spent e happiest years of their lives.

Mr. Piper recalls these good old imes and gives a very picturesque and humorous narrative of his trip to Jacksonville in a recent letter to Judge Duncan, which The Jeffersonian takes pleasure in publishing in full herewith:

Towson, Md., Jan. 12, 1924.

My Dear Judge:

Your Xmas card received and I was very glad to get it too.

The sentiment expressed in the verse thereon put me to thinking. Many pleasant and humorous incidentss which have occurred during the long years of our friendship came back to my memory. Think of our old gang! How we used to hold forth in the old Piper Building, viz: Mr. Conrey, Senator Allen, "Bob" Bussey, Senator Biddison, "Mannie" Herman, Jake T'manus, "Os" Yellott, you and myself. Do you remember? Gee! those were happy days, old boy! Were you with me at this time, you would no doubt say: "Gus, there is a tear in your eye; what is the matter?" My reply would be, "Yes, Frank, old al, I can't help it because those appy days gone forever." I am, owever, gratified to say our long iendship has not been sullied by e freaks of time and of nature, d I am sure it never will be while e are on this side of the Great Di-ide and able to kick. We are, how-ver, rapidly nearing the three-core-years-and-ten mile stone, but it has no terrors for me; and my understanding of your philosophy of life assures me that you feel the same way about it. It is my wish that the New Year will favor you with good health, strength, happi-ness and prosperity.

I hear you are shortly to go to acksonville, Florida. I am glad of at, for I feel the trip will do you much good.

By the way! Do you recall several ears ago when I was physically and mentally a wreck? You gave me this advice, word for word: "Gus, go to Atlantic City; stay a month, and try to get a grip on yourself again." I did as you advised and got a grip on myself again and ve held on to it to this day. I will ow give you some friendly advice, not that I think your physical condition is like mine was, quite the contrary: "Frank, go to Jacksonville and spend the remainder of the winter there, and get a grip on yourself again." If you do, I feel confident, you will get a grip on yourself again, and will feel as fine as you did in the days of the old gang. While in Jackson-ville beholding the beauties of the orange trees, the palms, the water lillies and the magnificent hotels, try to think of me. Do so especially when on Bay street, for the reasson that I made my home on that street long before the happy days of our old gang. I still have vivid recollections of my sojourn there, as you will learn later on.

Now, with your kind indulgence, I will give you a true story of my Jacksonville trip.— Before doing so I want to state that on my admission to the Bar, my head, like the heads of many new-born lawyers was perceptibly swollen with ego, and consequently there was little room in it for legal learning. Later on I learned to my sorrow, that legal learning and ego, like oil and water do not mix. My air castles, however, were already built and to my mind they glittered like great diamonds in the sky. No! Blackistone, Grotius, et. al. had nothing on me and feeling that fame and fortune awaited me in the Sunny South, the trip was accordingly planned. It was March 4th, 1885, Cleveland's inauguration day. Old Sol wore his brightest smiles; the wind was blowing a gale; the people throughout the U. S. were thinking of or looking toward Washington, D. C.; and I, on my way to Jacksonville, to take immediate posesssion of my fame and fortune.

I took passage on one of the steamboats of the Merchants and Miners' Line, at Pratt street, Baltimore, about 10 A. M. The boat was in charge of Captain Billups, who to m mind was one of the finest men I ever met. There was but one passenger besides myself aboard. While going down the Bay I thought the water was rather tame for the high winds, but it was not long in showing a quarrelsome disposition, and on reaching the Hatteras it had become a raving maniac; and seemed to be trying its darndest to bury all on board alive in the Hatteras grave yard, where thousands of souls had gone before. During the height of the storm it was impossible to stand in the boat without something to hold to. By and by, we got out of the storm's course and sailing was good until we reached the Gulf Stream, where we ran into a dense fog, which caused the Captain to lose his bearings, and when he found his bearings he was several miles below the mouth of the Savannah River. The boat was turned around and we finally entered the Savannah River, thence into Savannah Harbor, where our boat collided with another boat which was considerably damaged. When our boat was made fast to the wharf, and I was about to leave the boat the Captain said: "This is the worst trip I have had in, I think he said, forty years."

Now if you will pardon me, I will go back and gather up a link or two that I overlooked, which I think will furnish this narration with a bit of humor that it is justly deserving of:

My First Experience In Course Dinners And The Finger Bowls.

The dining room on our boat was a beauty; the dining table was oblong in shape, the table linen spotless. The waiter was polite and attentive. Our first meal was luncheon. The Captain sat at the head of the table; the other passenger sat on his right and I on his left. Luncheon was served in courses—the most sumptuous meal I ever sat down to up to that time. Say, old boy! I certainly felt panicky for I knew nothing of course dinners nor the high-falutin ways of the Patricians, for I was a Plebian. As the hundred and one courses were being served, I imagined I had a case of "brain storm," which affected me more than my experience in going through the Hatteras. I conceived the idea of playing a watching and waiting game, meanwhile holding the Captain in conversation, so that I could keep tab on his movements; and so when he moved I follow suit. I took good care to be always one half course behind the Captain, in order to keep my ignorance of table etiquette in the background. When the dishes of the last course had been cleared away, the dignified waiter strutted up to the table with glass bowls partly filled with water and placed them before us. I gasped for breath, for I felt so queer; I was speechlesss, but I clung to my watching and waiting game of diplomacy; I eyed the Captain's every action, somewhat like a cat watching a mouse, but he made no move that threw any light on the mystery—the glass bowl, and it seemed to me that he understood my dilema. Occasionally looked across the table at the other passenger, but his facial expression did me no good. While all this was going on I never for a moment lost sight of that hydra-headed monster, even though I felt luny, but in my lucid intervals I thought something must soon happen—and something did happen. Here is what happened. The Captain slowly but daintily dipped the thumb and fore-finger of his right hand into the water in the glass bowl, then put them to his moustache—so did I—and he toyed with it for an instant—so did I—and behold! the mystery was solved. I then understood. I had learned my lesson well, but paid "damn" well for it too. Normalcy came back to me, and it came quick. Thus I soliloquized that my entree into the society of Southern aristocracy was asssured.

Since my finger bowl experience as above narrated, I have often wished I could get a line on the finger bowl experience of such Plebians as Abe Lincoln, Garfield and Grover Cleveland.

I will now go on with my story where I left off a while ago.

On leaving the boat at Savannah I found Captain Billups very much depressed, due I think, to his unfortunate trip, but he gave me a hearty good-bye and wished me all the prosperity imaginable.

I then boarded the train for Jacksonville. The country between Savannah and Jacksonville did not appeal to me at all. The soil is sandy and partly covered with scrub oak, scrub pines and sedge grasss; otherwise the vegetation was meager. The country generally reminded me of the lands between Camden and Atlantic City. I also noticed lots of scraggy cattle along the railroad. Our train met with a little accident by running over one of these, which delayed us for a short while. When we started off, I noticed several negroes dragging the carcasss toward a shanty.

When we were nearing Jacksonville a newsboy boarded our train carrying a bundle of Jacksonville papers; I got one of the papers and

(Continued on Page 10)

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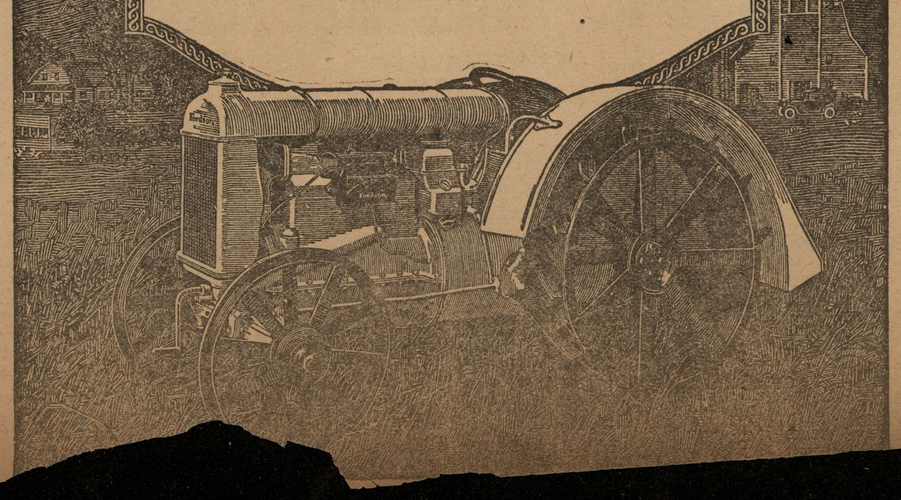

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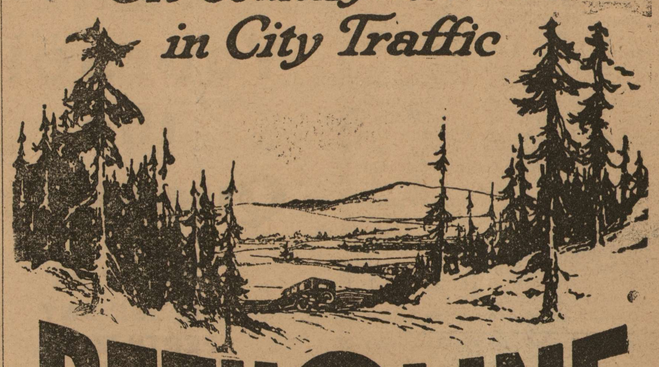

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