

# WEST JEFFERSON IN DAYS GONE BY

By Charlie Miller

Series 58

**ALBERT CLARK:** Albert was born in 1856 and died on August 1, 1931. By 1890, he was the West Jefferson Night Watchman and stayed until he retired in 1924. He went by the name of “Bird” Clark, either because it was short for Albert or because he was like a Bird Dog; he always caught people who were breaking the law. There will be several stories about Bird Clark in this series.

\_\_\_\_ January 23, 1924 – Excerpts from a story concerning the retirement of ‘Bird’ Clark---Albert ‘Bird’ Clark, veteran night watchman of this village, retired from night duty on January 1st after 34 years of service. The date of his retirement, New Year’s Day, was also the 68th anniversary of his birth. He has served under the following Mayors: Wm. Stutson, George Gillivan, Henry Culp, Jacob McNeal, L. D. Hull, John T. Gregg, A. F. Green and H. G. Putnam. One of ‘Bird’s’ voluntary bits of service that have been faithfully carried out for so long that it was looked upon as part of his duty was acting as a “Community alarm clock.” For many years, he has called upon those who wished to be up at an early hour to go to work, catch a train, go squirrel hunting, or fishing at daybreak.

He has recovered many stolen automobiles and has arrested six motor car thieves, and 23 horse thieves have been captured by the officer. He has engaged in several gun battles and has preserved a treasured possession, a piece of metal from a suspender, which saved his life by stopping a bullet. ‘Bird’ was on the job every minute of the night, and it was almost impossible to get into town without him seeing you. Perhaps you would think you had him fooled, and then the next night, he would tell you how you went home and the time. We take off our hat to this ol’ boy, for he has been the town and the people’s most loyal servant for the past 34 years.

During this time the *West Jefferson News* was part of the *Madison Press* and was edited by Paul V. Miller, whose office was located in the Metropolitan Building, located on the southeast corner of Main and Walnut Streets.

\_\_\_\_ May 8, 1924 – The West Jefferson Senior Class of ‘24 will be having 33 members graduate. This is the largest number yet to graduate.

\_\_\_\_ May 15, 1924 – Gasoline is selling for 20 cents per gallon at the Headly-Maddux Garage.

July 7, 1924 – Over 4,000 people attended the 4th of July celebration in West Jeff, which boasted over 200 events. The celebration was under the auspices of the West Jefferson Commercial Club.

\_\_\_\_ July 10, 1924 – the Commercial Bank has the distinction of being the first bank in the county, and probably in the country, to receive a deposit by air mail. It was sent from Seattle, Washington, and required 24 cents postage.