

April 19, 1989

Joe Rogers In The Oconee Mill Supply Room Again

For many years Joe Rogers worked in the supply room of Beacon Manufacturing's Oconee Mill. I'm sure his experiences there were many and varied. He tried to retire a few years ago, but like a lot of folks who plan to "hang it up," Joe has found it is better to try to keep hanging on.

The other day Joe was back in the supply room – on a temporary basis, he explained. The company is in the process of placing the many thousands of parts and supplies on a computer system and they called Joe back to the job to assist with the entries.

Since his retirement Joe has manufactured some beautiful clocks...some of them grandfather styles that he assembles and sometimes merchandises. Also, he has produced a number of custom made electrical models that are suited to special needs...such as Clemson "Tiger" models or Georgia "Bulldog" clocks. They are quite attractive, and he says he found a ready market for many of the models.

It sure did look like "old times" to see Joe down in the supply room at Beacon, taking stock in one of the inventory bins. One could almost hear Walter Duckworth and Roddy King coming through the doorway singing one of their old time favorite hymns or maybe a L&M cigarette jingle they had heard on the radio or TV.

Randy Strickland -- A New Face In An Old Place

While visiting the Oconee Mill supply room, it was interesting to learn that Randy Strickland is now one of the "prime movers" in that part of the Beacon plant's operation. Randy is the youngest son of Roy and June Strickland. He has been with the company since graduation from high school and has worked with Roy Ward in this department. Sooner or later nearly everyone that works with the Beacon organization surely must have some business with the supply room. It is through there that all the parts and supplies are channeled for distribution to the various departments.

It would not be fitting to mention the former supply room supervisors without thinking of Tommy Lyons. Tommy, for many years, headed this department. He also was the bus driver for the old Oconee Mountaineers baseball team when they played games "on the road."

Tommy probably has as many fond recollections of the baseball trips as anyone in this area. He along with the entire community, supported the Oconee Mountaineers baseball team. And they were "really tough" competitors. They often won the textile league pennants and championship playoff games.

Back when the "Mountaineers" were going strong...as was textile baseball in this part of the country, one can almost see the famed Bill Robinson winding up on the pitcher's mound, or maybe Pete McGuffin, or "Lefty" Carithers. At first base there was always dependable "Foots" Gilden, with Roy "Red" Simpson on second, "Granny" Hawkins at Shortstop, Willie Hawkins at third or outfield, Ed Hawkins either at third or outfield, A.V. Seymour, catcher, others could have been very easily in the line-up O.E. "Junior" Smith, Bob Gettys, Tommy Thompson, Bob Grogan, "Pokey" Hawkins. It was hard for an opposing team to hit a baseball through the Old Mountaineers without a Hawkins catching it. Too, there were famed managers such as Ben Sharp and Bob Grogan as well as official score keepers like Clarence Satterfield and "Fate" McCarley who assisted with the logistics and bookkeeping.

Those were some of the players back in the "good ole days" when textile baseball here was much better than most of the major league stuff you see now. And the pay? Well, these guys just loved the game and were willing to play and earn pay with a job on one of the mill shifts, in most cases. The outrageous salaries now earned that average nearly \$600,000 per year would have never been dreamed of...during the wildest moments.

Two of the players at the old Oconee Mountaineer field went on to the major leagues...or maybe there were more...but two of them who come to mind were Marvin Rackley who played for the Brooklyn Dodgers and Neil Chrisley who played for several major league teams. The Chrisley family supplied a number of good ball

players. They were brought into the territory by the late T. Henry Wood when he became plant manager of Oconee Mill.

Those truly were some of the "good ole days" when the batters tried to knock the ball out of right field because it was handy and they liked to see the shingles falling off Gorden McQueen's house and hear King Dillard and Rob Simpson giving the opposition their best grade of vocal "hell" from the first base sidelines.

Another who remembers many of these folks and played along with them was the now retired Deputy Sheriff Rae Cain. He was always interested in the games and remembers how all the stores in town would close when the "Mountaineers" had a big home game. The stadium was full, to running over nearly every time they hit the field. Ah, yes. It's really good to just remember when...!

November 15, 1989

"Foggy" Dickson Kept An Interesting Business

No doubt several interesting chapters could be easily written by those who remember the late Herman W. "Foggy" Dickson.

"Foggy" operated a business in Westminster during the late 1930s, '40s and early 1950s. He first operated a restaurant in a building across the street from what is now Sandifer Funeral Home, later occupied by Julian H. Pruitt. Out front he had a sign that read, "Dine and Dance with 'Foggy' Here on Earth." This was long before space exploration was a reality. Perhaps, he was ahead of his time. Later on "Foggy" moved into a building which is now occupied by Barrett's Used Furniture...just down the street from his old location on East Main.

Later on, his final location was below town about 3 miles just off the old Greenfield School Road...down on the farm...better know as the "Rinky-Dink" club.

At one point in time, "Foggy" had a number of animals located near his business. He loved all kinds of animals and kept a wide variety. Somewhere along the way, he acquired a nice young pig. Using his imagination a bit, "Foggy" bought a harness for the pig - one like little dogs sometimes wore. He tied his harnessed pig just

outside his business where there was all kinds of customer traffic.

One day, and unfamiliar “Yankee” customer came walking up to the entrance and noticed the animal. He was amazed, and probably more so, because he had never seen a pig...especially one wearing a harness. He immediately went inside and commented to “Foggy,”... “Geez, Mister, I’ve seen a lot of things, but that is the strangest looking doggie I think I’ve ever seen; just exactly what kind of doggie is that?”

Of course, “Foggy” just about cracked up with laughter and probably gave the man a really sophisticated name of a breed that was either real or imaginary.

At one point, “Foggy” came into possession of an alligator...a gift brought to him by Volley “Sea Daddy” Hanks from Florida. He was living on the farm at the “Rinky-Dink” club at that time, so he conveniently placed the ‘gator in an old bathtub located under the cedar trees in the yard. One of the customers was sitting amongst the trees sipping a cool beer, after already having partook of probably too many. He wandered over to the tub, saw the alligator therein and thought he had gone into d.t.’s. He picked up a 2 by 4 and proceeded to kill the monster. “Foggy” took a real dim view of this action and proceeded to eject the customer from the premises with a whole lot less than complimentary language.

Do you remember when?

Lee “Bozie” Lyles lived down on the ranch at the “rinky-dink” club and was an assistant to “Foggy” in keeping up with the chores about the place. He helped feed the farm animals, take care of customers, and just about anything else that was needing to be done. As long as many of the old timers could remember “Bozie” had trouble with his stomach. But he always managed to eat, and there was always plenty of food wherever “Foggy” lived or operated a business. One day “Bozie” said that his stomach was causing him a lot of trouble...and he took Vim Herb by the bottles. (Some say that it was kind of habit forming since it contained about 40 percent alcohol by volume).

Jack Dillard happened to be in the place at the time and had just

brought some new Sergeant's Worm Pills to "Foggy" for his beagle dogs. Jack immediately began to look into "Bozie's" stomach problem and instinctively recommended that he take at least two of the worm pills which "Bozie" did without question or hesitation. Later on, he reported that he got almost instant relief from whatever was causing the stomach problem.

"Foggy" was one of the most colorful characters to pass this way in recent history. He was generally friendly and well-liked by many people but he could also be firm in his resolution to hold his own. A graduate of the old Westminster High School, he is perhaps one of the few students who was able to earn a varsity letter for five straight years as center on the old "Yellow Jacket" football team...then coached by Tom Mabry. He weighed about 300 plus pounds in his later years and at one time during WWII he hired a taxi to carry him to Atlanta, GA., and then hired another to follow that one just in case it broke down. He believed in "getting the job done."

November 22, 1989

That's The Way It Was...At "Foggy's"

Last week, I mentioned a few event that happened down at "Foggy's" farm -- better known as the "Rinky-Dink" Club. Most of these events occurred some 40 to 50 years ago, but I was impressed, especially in the more recent years, at the unusual and often humorous happenings down there.

At one point in time, a Mr. Ed Burnside lived above Westminster in the Holly Springs section off Highway 76. Mr. Burnside was the only distinct man I remember who was said to be a veteran of the Spanish-American war. He reportedly fought right along with the troops when Teddy Roosevelt was president and they "stormed" San Juan Hill.

Mr. Burnside and "Foggy" were great friends and often visited with each other. "Uncle Ed" as he was affectionately called by many, sometimes came down and "sipped a few" at "Foggy's" place. At one of these visits down at the "Rinky-Dink" Club, he

mentioned the fact that he had been suffering with arthritis and had read somewhere that bee stings were supposed to be good treatment for the problem.

“Uncle Ed” and “Foggy” discussed this remedy at length while sitting on the back porch with several beagle pups playing around in the yard. “Foggy” said that he didn’t know about the therapeutic value of bee stings but he had three hives out there if anyone wanted to try them.

“Uncle Ed” found his way out to the hives and got down close to the bees that were busy working and it wasn’t long before he was literally covered -- both arms and hands -- but as good fortune smiled on him, not a single bee took it upon himself to sting him. He made his way back to the porch and was rather dejected by his inability to get bee stung.

“Bozie” Lyles was there observing and listening to this conversation.

After noting that the bees did not sting him, “Bozie” allowed that if bee stings were good for arthritis, then perhaps yellow jacket stings would be even better. After a short “staff meeting” there on the back porch, “Bozie” volunteered to show “Uncle Ed” where there was a very active nest of yellow jackets.

Ed followed “Bozie” out of where a terrace in one of the fields had been re-enforced with a wall built of field rocks. At the appointed place, “Bozie” showed “Uncle Ed” the nest, and sure enough, there were plenty of yellow jackets going in and out between two layers of rocks.

“Just get down there and blow some smoke from your pipe in that area,” “Bozie” instructed.

When he did, those yellow jackets came whizzing out of there just like fighter planes from a carrier looking for action.

In a split second they covered “Uncle Ed” and not only covered him, but followed him back to the house and promptly set in stinging the beagle pups. Everyone was howling...to say the least...and “Uncle Ed” was beginning to swell at a terrific rate.

It wasn’t long before some one recognized that “Uncle Ed” was not feeling well at all, and “Foggy” found him a ride to town. He

was reported to have visited Dr. Hall's office where it was later said that if he had not arrived when he did he had enough yellow jacket poison in his system to kill several people.

The moral of the story, if there is one, is to be sure you use bee stings to treat your arthritis if you are going that route, but be sure not to accept any substitutes.

November 29, 1989

You Never Know Any Limit To Honor

There have been many challenges presented during the last 36 years in business in Westminster. A few of them have been successfully terminated; many have not. But it's been a lot of fun trying to survive under the system...win, lose or draw.

However, a singular honor came my way recently that was surely unexpected. Through the tons of unsolicited mail one day there came an envelope that caught my attention. Perhaps it was because my name appeared in the window, printed in red ink, no less. Now I know what red ink is, and I know what it represents to an advertiser as well as to an accountant. But this was different.

Inside there was a most prestigious document...printed not only with red ink, but there was an elaborate border -- simulated engraving -- printed in brown ink and other material produced in black, along with a script signature. Hey, I must have done something great somewhere to be recognized thusly, but upon careful examination I discovered through some clever promotional item, I had somehow been awarded a "Certificate of Authorization" -- from the Mason Shoe Company, no less.

The impressive document read: "Certificate of Authorization ...This Certifies that Jack L. Hunt has been awarded dealer authorization by Mason Shoe Company"...signed by the president, Victor T. Mason. And it was complete with a gold seal stating that I was now a full fledged dealer, plus two nice little red and blue ribbons added just for class, I suppose.

Also included was a long letter explaining the program, etc., and pointed out that the company now offers 400 styles... sizes 4 to 16.

All of this just goes to show that if you really work hard in the printing business and newspaper business, and manage to stay out of jail most of the time, and don't kick little children and steal their candy, some day you may manage to become a bonafide shoe salesman.

That size 16 pointed out in the letter of enclosure reminded me of the story Otis Mason told about his friend, the late Reuben Haley. It seems that Reuben had, among his many talents, operated a corn mill in the Oakway community, when one day he was under a wagon with only his feet sticking out. Along came a customer with some corn meal to be ground. He was driving a buggy with a high-stepping horse, and quickly turned the corner at Reuben's corn mill. Before he knew it, he had simply run over the feet of Mr. Haley.

Now, for those that remember...Reuben Haley was not a small man. Perhaps, he was about 6'6" tall or near, and he weighed in at about 275 or more.

After the customer had stopped the buggy, Mr. Haley extracted himself from under the wagon he was working on and faced his customer who quickly told him that he had brought some corn to be ground.

As it was told to me, Mr. Haley said, "Before we go into the grinding, let me point out that during World War I, I had the distinction of having the biggest feet in the United States Army... a size 16 or maybe more, now my question to you, sir, is this, 'Are not my feet big enough for you to see them, or is your vision that badly impaired?'"

Otis said the whole thing was amusing, to say the least, except, perhaps to Reuben.

December 6, 1989

Lester Vaden Had An Unusual Approach

The late Lester Vaden was an interesting man. He had a good sense of humor and often had some innovative solutions to nagging problems. At one time just after World War II, there was a school

being operated for veterans and Lester enrolled. Just what he studied is not clear, but he attended and received some kind of government check in the process. The program was conducted under the GI Bill of Rights.

For some reason, Lester dropped out of the program, but he continued to receive the checks. Thus, he went ahead and cashed it and spent it in his usual manner. Later, it was determined that he had been reportedly overpaid, and the government dispatched a man to collect the overpayment. This according to James G. Brown, who was then the director of the program, eventually led to all kinds of "registered mail" and "threatening" communication in an effort to collect the overpayment.

Finally the government man dispatched to collect, came to Lester's home. After hearing his plea for returning the payment, Lester simply asked the man to wait just a moment. He did, and in a few minutes Lester emerged from a back room with a brown paper sack, and addressed the man kinda like this: "I don't have the money that you suggest that I owe; I have heard this story for so long now an I'm tired of this harassment; I have all my worldly goods in this brown sack here; I don't have a family depending on me for anything, so now if I must 'pay the price' by going to jail, then I am ready for that." He then proceeded to go out to the curb where the man had parked his car, opened the door, climbed in and told the government agent, "Let's go."

Needless to point out, the government man was shaken and quite shocked at this sudden development. He begged Lester to get out and tried to convince him that he had not come there to take him to jail. But Lester insisted, "I've heard all this stuff for as long as I can, so if you are convinced that I owe you...I don't have the money to pay you, and I'm ready to serve my jail term."

After much pleading the government agent finally reached an agreement with Lester. "If you will get out of my car, I promise that no one will contact you about this matter ever again."

It was settled.

It Was Burning Me, Too!

Lester had another interesting experience in Ferdinand Anderson's barber shop. The buildings then were about where Dickson's Used Car lot is on East Main Street. On occasion, "Ferd" was given to drink. And it was sometimes questionable as to his ability to perform efficiently in the barbering profession.

Lester went in one morning for a shave in "Ferd's" barber shop. As was the procedure, "Ferd" was wetting a towel with steaming hot water. When it appeared "just right" he picked it up and quickly laid it on his customer's face.

"Damn," he exclaimed, "What are you trying to do, 'Ferd,' scald me?"

Quite calmly, "Ferd" explained, "Lester, it was burning me and I had to do something with it!"

A Near Impossible Task!

One of the first "Caretakers" down at "Foggy" Dickson's Rinky-Dink club farm was the late Lewis Morehead. Lewis took care of the livestock, etc., and did just about any job that "Foggy" requested.

At one point, Lewis was instructed to build a fence around a small pasture area. Supposedly, the board fence was to keep the several goats contained on the premises.

"Foggy" took a great deal of interest in all kinds of animals and wanted to make sure the goats stayed at home. He went down to check on the progress being made as to the fence construction...just at he turned the corner in his A-Model Ford truck, he saw Lewis nailing boards onto the posts. But just directly behind Lewis, two nice goats had conveniently climbed to the top board and was carefully walking along the edge looking over Lewis' shoulder while he nailed.

A fact of life: It's darn near impossible to fence in a goat.

December 13, 1989

Not really Out-of-Step!

Harry Duke remembers many points of interest about people from this area that may have special meaning to the older timers -- or those perhaps interested in some of the colorful past characters of Westminster.

In reading about Reuben Haley in this column recently, Harry recalled that Reuben was not only noted for his unusually large size in the U.S. Army during WW I, but also reported that Reuben (shoe size 16 plus) also had a problem keeping in step during close-order drill practice with his company.

Reuben, who was well over 6 feet tall, perhaps 275 pounds or more in weight (not fat, but more muscle than anything else) had a real problem in drilling. His average step was about two or more than the average soldier of that time. Thus, he stayed out-of-step most of the time when trying to drill along with his comrades in service. According to Harry, Reuben was given the privilege of drilling "outside" the company ranks...along with the non-commissioned officers who normally took up command position just adjacent to, but not included in, the regular columns. This, was the way of solving that problem...the Army way. No doubt the armed forces of that era knew that they had a good man on their side and certainly didn't want the matter of close-order-drill to exclude him from the team. He apparently served his country well with pride and dignity and wasn't really "out-of-step" at all in the final analysis.

There Was More Diversified Industry

There has been a number of smaller plants and industry in the Westminster area that few now can remember. Otis Mason told the other day a story relayed to him by Molgro England of a Mr. Baker who once operated a rather unusual business at one time in Westminster. Located somewhere along about were the late Dr. Simpson lived on Mountain View Street, there was a shop that specialized in making wagon and buggy wheel parts. The outside part of the wheels were made up of two pieces of hardwood, perhaps

hickory. Mr. Baker had a process whereby he could heat with steam the strips of wood and press them into the desired shape and size required for the outside perimeter of a wagon or buggy wheel. Apparently this business boomed in Westminster until automobiles and trucks became more into use.

Another business once located somewhere in the city limits of Westminster was a bottling plant. Harry Duke said there may be some bottles (certainly collector items now) that were once a product of his plant.

Too, at one time during this century there was a hospital located within the city limits of Westminster. The late Dr. W. A. Strickland reportedly practiced there along with some others: perhaps a Dr. Walker and/or perhaps Dr. Johns, and maybe the late Dr. Simpson. The hospital was said to be located near the Long Creek Highway intersection where 76 meets 123.

Harold Hull, several years ago brought a stock certificate by *The News* office that had been issued in connection with the hospital. It was issued to his father and signed by the late John Bruner. Whatever happened to this venture is not known. Also there was once a stone yard located in the area near where Black's Tire Service is now on East Main Street. According to Harry Duke, the late Mr. Appey Johns, the father of city council lady, Mrs. Lois McCarley, was indeed a skilled stone cutter and could fashion intricate designs in marble. This was a skill that was once in great demand by citizens of this area.

While there are many more people in the town and area than in the past, it seems in the past there was more diversification in stores and businesses.

In the 1930's, for example, there was more retail business on Main Street than there is at present. Many of the older buildings being used now primarily for storage were once attractive retail stores. On the weekends, when most of the shopping and trading was done, it was hard to get a parking space... for automobiles and wagons were plentiful. There was several watering troughs along Main Street and places to hitch mules and horses for many of the folks trading here had not yet come around to using motor vehicles at that time.

Not Always The "Good Ole Days"

While it is fun to remember the past, it is more likely that we recall the more interesting and "fun" things than the less pleasant experiences.

Life was not always "pure and simple" and it is perhaps a sign of older age to recall the past more fondly than it sometimes was during the early part of this century. But there was a slower pace in living; people had more personal contact with people...visiting more often...especially during the holiday seasons. However, many were without modern toilet facilities...or running water...or electricity...or good transportation...or good roads, bridges...and other creature comforts that we nearly take for granted during this time period.

Wonder what the generation 50 years from now will think about this system in place here today? Here's hoping we last that long and don't wind up like bacteria in a cesspool...by destroying ourselves with our excesses in living.

December 20, 1989

Jess Freeman Used The Power Of Suggestion

During the 1930's things were rather tough for the average citizen trying to "scratch out" a living in Westminster as well as other places. Trying to recover from the "big depression" left some lasting scars, but there were always moments of humor. It is this that perhaps kept tough folks going when the going got tough.

Ray Cain called the other day and was laughing about some of the things he recalled. There was the incident involving the late Mr. Jess Freeman who operated a grocery store on East Main Street...again along about where Dickson's Used Car lot now stands. (Across the street in front of where King Dillard lived.)

Ray said that during the periods of time when Oconee Mill was running "wide open" -- that is 5 (10 hour) workdays plus 5 hours on Saturday -- a 55 hour week for about \$10 total pay -- Mr. Freeman would take orders for groceries and Ray's father often traded with Mr. Freeman.

Grocery stores were different back then. The owners would take down the customer's order, and then proceed to fill the order from the shelves. The supermarket concept had not yet become a reality as we know it today.

Mr. Bert Cain would place his order with Mr. Freeman and during the good times -- that is a full 55-hour work schedule -- after each item Mr. Cain would list on his weekly grocery order, Mr. Freeman would gratefully reply, "Now what next, Bert?" And perhaps he would generate a bit more business from the account by suggesting something that may have been forgotten or left off the list.

Then, when business at the mill sort of tapered off, and there were periods of "curtailing," business fluctuated directly in ratio and proportion to many of his customers who were employed at the plant. In an effort to keep the bill from climbing too high -- and perhaps running the risk of having to carry over a balance on next week's account - he would suggest after each item the customer requested, "Now, don't you think that will be all this time, Bert?"

No doubt about it, Mr. Freeman was a psychologist who kept his business under control with the power of suggestion.

It should be noted, too, that many families during that period of time survived quite well on a weekly income of \$10 or even less. That amount of money during the 1930s represented quite a bit of purchasing power. Folks knew how to manage what they had...since it was necessary for survival.

W.J. England's Store Goes Back In Time

England's store on Main Street, Westminster, is perhaps the oldest store of its kind still operated -- at least part-time. The owner, W. J. England has left the store just about intact from the way it was during the early part of the 1900s. W.J. does open it up every now and then and continues to sell a good many items of current need, but many of the things in the store are really "collector items." A few of them are sold occasionally, but many are standing on the shelves and counters just as they might have 50 years ago.

It is interesting, that a store of this kind has existed this long and

continues. It was first operated by his late father, Mr. Luke England, and later by sons Molgro and W.J. Molgro sold his part out to brother W.J., and had successfully operated and implemented business just down the street on Windsor where his son, "Snooks" continues to manage the business along with his father.

The old England Store was much more than a place where folks bought all kinds of groceries and other supplies such as seeds, farm and building supplies and for a long time various and sundry items that were railroad salvage. Mr. England had a contract with the railroad to buy salvage or damaged goods from the railroad between Charlotte, N.C. and Atlanta, GA.

The likes of the legendary Silas Butts and lawyer Dick Pitts often held council meetings around the big "pot belly" stove as all the important news and political issues of the day were "hashed over."

At one time, the Columbia State newspaper sent a reporter up to England's Store to do an interview with Silas Butts. The article later appeared in the magazine section of the paper.

The various odors from the old time stores is a thing that older citizens may recall. Since many staple grocery items were shipped in barrels, you could tell by the pungent smell when you passed by the candy counters, the fruit counters and certainly the old coffee grinder where the barrel of fresh coffee beans were ground. Too, many of the old stores of this kind sold mid-wife kits for those attending to child birthing and there were coffins on sale, too, for the dearly departed.

Also, Brogan shoes, overalls, lamps, kerosene oil, wicks, farm tools, farm plows and just about anything the average home in the county would need for existence.

I can remember that my father bought an entire bedroom suite for my mother from Mr. Luke England that consisted of a double bed, dresser, and chest of drawers, made of quality wood, inlaid with walnut, for a total sum of \$45. This evidently, was part of the salvage business carried on at that time, but was a bargain then and would be even a greater bargain today if only the original purchase could be located.

December 27, 1989

Hospital Location Is Identified

The hospital that was located in Westminster during the early part of this century has been identified by readers. Ms. Muriel Johns, daughter of the late Dr. J. A. Johns, for whom the well-known "Dr. Johns Road" is named, called to say that the hospital was near the intersection of highways 123 and 76. That is the Toccoa, GA and Long Creek highways. Muriel said that her father and Dr. W. A. Strickland were principal stockholders (or owners) of the hospital which stood in the vicinity of the home formerly occupied by the late Ms. Katie Abbott.

Also Muriel mentioned that Ms. Isabelle ("Belle") Cowan was the head nurse at this facility. Just how long the hospital operated is not known, but apparently the Oconee County Medical Board at that time was given an option to take the facility over for operation but never did, thus it closed its doors after a brief existence.

Muriel also said that her father practiced surgery as well as general medicine and had, in fact, been an instructor in anatomy at what is now Emory University Medical School in Atlanta where Dr. Strickland attended and was one of his students. Too, she said that her grandfather had been a "horse and buggy" doctor in this county.

In his latter years of retirement Dr. J. A. Johns was often seen in the hardware store where Russell Duvall now operates on Main Street. His son, Kenneth Johns was the founder and owner of Johns' Hardware along with other enterprises in the area. Dr. Johns often visited the store, sat around the old "pot bellied" stove near the center of the building and practiced the fine art of whittling or wood carving. Muriel says she has several items her father had carved including a miniature violin.

Also calling to identify the location of the hospital in Westminster was Mrs. Lucille Spencer who remembered the building and some history about it.

Bridge Is Being Replaced On “Dr. Johns” Road

The old bridge now being removed on “Dr. Johns” Road is near being replaced by a new structure. Muriel Johns, who continues to live at the homeplace on the hill just above the bridge, said the old structure was once a span on the present highway 123. Just exactly where is not known. However, many will remember that, where the present highway 123 now runs between Westminster and Toccoa, was formerly the railroad bed of the Southern Railway system before it was moved to its present location. In fact, homes in the vicinity of the Ed Tannery home at Madison are yet standing and occupied were once the homes of railroad employees, especially maintenance supervisory or “Captains” as they were more prominently known during the times when rail cars and crews would leave early in the morning to replace rails and cross-ties. “Captain” Ben Maxwell was one of the last remaining to live in this area. But there had been many others -- including “Captain” Lawrence, the father of Mary Lawrence Mason, a retiree from the local post office.

Also, the depots along this route were rather famous and popular points when the railroad was the primary source of transportation and freight. One of the few remaining depots burned a few years ago in the vicinity of what is now the “Deercourt” section on the Georgia side of highway 123 near a Gulf station and convenience store...about 2 or 3 miles across the state line.

Modern Chickens “Not Fully Equipped”

“Foggy” Dickson operated a combination restaurant and grocery store business at the two places where he was located in Westminster. He was famous throughout a wide area for serving delicious chicken salad and roast beef sandwiches. “Foggy” usually fixed sandwiches as if he intended eating them himself. Thus they were huge in comparison to present servings by most restaurants.

To assist in keeping plenty of fresh chickens killed and dressed, “Foggy” sometimes enlisted the help of Ida Evatt, a black woman who lived near his location on East Main Street. When Ida deliv-

ered fresh-killed and dressed chickens to “Foggy” he would invariably check them carefully and would often remark to Ida, “Hey, Ida, where are the gizzards and livers from these chickens?”

Ida would usually reply, “Mr. ‘Foggy,’ these modern chickens don’t have no ‘lizzards and gizzards.’”

Her pay for doing the work was some money and two bottles of Atlantic ale. Everybody seemed happy with the arrangement.

January 3, 1990

“Foggy” Was Glad To Accommodate Strangers

The stories we have heard and some that have been written here-in concerning “Foggy” Dickson have attracted quite a bit of attention...from a number of interested readers.

Charlie Barrett was amused the other day about the experience one fellow had in “Foggy’s” Restaurant and Grocery store when it was in the building now occupied by Barrett’s Used Furniture on East Main Street.

Those who remembered, know that “Foggy” was not a small man. He tipped the scales at well over 300 and perhaps even 400 pounds. He loved to eat and did so with great relish, although this fact may have contributed to his early demise. Nevertheless, he ate and he automatically assumed that anyone ordering food in his restaurant was equally hungry.

During this period, the counter in “Foggy’s” place was made of beautiful pine boards that had been sanded, polished and varnished to a high gloss. They also ran parallel to the iron stools that most customer used in front of the restaurant part of the business.

At one point in time, “Foggy” had a small ice box just about seat-high on the working side of the counter, near the gas stove and grill. He used this box for a seat because it was convenient and suited his need.

During one of the periods when he was in a “celebrating” mood and was consuming a moderate amount of liquid antidepressant, a stranger came through the door and seated himself on a stool just in front of “Foggy” and the pine counter.