

December 29, 1993

## **One Game He Wished He'd Seen**

Eddie Barker was once the publisher/owner of the Clayton (Ga.) Tribune. He was an excellent writer. For a number of years he wrote a column for The Atlanta Constitution. I made his acquaintance 30 or more years past. We visited a few times and exchanged stories about characters we'd known, some living and others passed.

Westminster was a popular town when the adjoining counties in Georgia and North Carolina were legally "dry." Folks from far and near would visit with our friend here, Ross Davis, who ran the "Chemistry Lab" on North Avenue. Barker was among those who felt led to Westminster during those "dry" spells. Also, his friend and mine, the late Marvin Gillespie, a great football competitor for the University of Georgia "Bulldogs," who operated a restaurant in Clayton always serving good country ham.

It was always a fun thing to meet and talk with Eddie and Marvin. Both had unusual stories to relate. Some I recall to this day. Barker had begun his journalism on the Sports Desk of Atlanta newspapers.

He was young in the business and did not understand some of the terminology. Sports Editor, Guy Tiller, was sitting in the "slot" with writers in a horseshoe shaped desk around him. One of the writers had a speech impediment. He stuttered. In the course of business, Editor Tiller grabbed a handful of copy from the teletype, shoved it in front of Barker and told him, "Get the shears and cut these stories apart!"

Barker said he didn't understand that scissors were called shears. He turned to Tiller and asked, "What did you say to do?"

Tiller was in no frame of mind for teaching. He replied as he emphatically removed his glasses, "Listen! I've already got one on this desk that can't talk...don't tell me they've sent me on that can't hear!"

Later, Barker said they sent him and a photographer to cover a very important high school football game. The town was located somewhere below Winder in Barrow County.

As the two made their way toward the Friday night game, they,

by chance or design, found themselves having a few cool ones at a local beer tavern.

The conversation and the cool “suds” took effect on the sports team. It soon was apparent that if the game was to be covered, they would have to start toward the stadium. For whatever reason, Barker said that he was able to convince the photographer to go ahead to the game. “Take some pictures, bring back a copy of the program and tell me what the final score is,” he admonished.

Sure enough, the photographer followed Barker’s simple directions. From the information supplied Barker then went to work

writing the story for publication and turned it in to Sports Editor Tiller.

The next day Tiller asked Barker to come into his private office. Sitting there in stunned amazement Tiller commented, “Barker, I’ve been covering sports for 25 years, high school, college and professional; I’ve seen them all, but after reading your story you turned in yesterday, this is one game I really wish I had gone to see for myself!”

January 5, 1994

### **Interesting Stories At County Seat**

The official county buildings are much nicer than they once were. Perhaps, there is something to be said for the efficiency with which many county offices operate. The setting is different and the appearance of a business atmosphere is usually present when one finds it a necessity to conduct affairs with any of our county offices in Walhalla.

The old court house which stood in front of the “rock building” across the street from offices on Short Street was the setting for many dramatic moments during court week. I can practically hear the famous Solicitor, Rufus Fant, pleading his case for the state and telling his fabled tale of “Little Mary.”

Then there were colorful attorneys like Harry Hughes and his associate, Pat Miley, who successfully defended many clients in the

old building. One especially effective lawyer was "Lawyer Mann" from Pickens County who often took cases that were tried in Oconee. He only had one arm.

The sheriffs of years past were quite colorful characters. Sam Hunnicutt would certainly be counted among them. He served for about four or five terms. If he ever wore a gun, it was a rare occasion. His associates, Seaborn Moss and Waddy P. Grant, were equally impressive peace officers in years past.

Before the present Law Enforcement Center was constructed, the old jail building stood where a parking lot is located across the street from the *Keowee Courier* building. In this structure, the upstairs portion of the building was living quarters where the sheriff lived. The downstairs part was the cell area where prisoners were housed.

Whether it was true or not, the story prevailed for many years. The late C.L. Smith, a deputy that served under five sheriffs in the county, always had an interesting story and he sometimes told this one.

Sam Hunnicutt, a bachelor, served as sheriff and, of course, made his home in the living quarters of the old jail. There was a kitchen and jailer quarters in the downstairs portion of the building where prisoners were held. Both male and sometimes female prisoners were detained here with the females being assigned to a special section.

According to the story, one morning as breakfast was being served, a female prisoner summoned the jailer and told him that she needed to talk with the Sheriff. Accordingly, Sheriff Sam was told of the request. He went back to the cell area where the woman was being held and the conversation overheard went something like this:

"Sheriff, you're going to have to get me a box of Kotex," she pleaded.

Sam, it was reported, either misunderstood the woman or for whatever reason answered, "Dadburn it, little lady, you're going to have to eat these here grits, eggs and corn flakes in this jail just like every other prisoner!"

Too, this was the same building where Charlie Collins, editor of

the *Keowee Courier*, told of the night a “lynching mob” gathered outside with the purpose of removing a prisoner accused of murder and sex crimes against two children. A deputy was able to protect the man by dressing him in a National Guard uniform and transporting him to another jail. He was later tried and executed in another state where the crimes supposedly were committed.

January 12, 1994

### **It Seemed Almost Like Another World**

When you're the age of 3, 4, or 5 a lot of things don't really matter. Or it didn't for me when I had a chance to visit with my Grandpa and Grandma Dunlap in McCormick County.

Exactly why my Grandpa sold a good farm on Coffee Road and moved to McCormick always baffled me. Especially later in life when I could see things differently. Oh, I know the reason, or at least I've been told that his plans were to go into the “chicken business” in a big way with a brother who was supposed to have joined the venture. For whatever reason, it never worked out. Perhaps it was the Depression of '29. Or it may have been something else. Anyway, he was located on a farm in the Bethany community about six miles east of the town of McCormick.

When I was privileged to visit there, especially in the summer for a few weeks, it was always a great adventure. At four or five years of age, a trip out of town, even to Seneca or Anderson, was a big deal. I well remember riding down there in a T-Model Ford and later in an A-Model with my Dad and Mother. It was an all day affair. Tires were not made very well for any vehicle. My dad always carried an armful of “monkey-grip” patching to take care of punctures. The roads past Anderson in Abbeville and Greenwood counties were partially dirt. If a heavy rain came, there was always the risk of being stuck. There were other hazards, too. Cattle were not always fenced in at farms along the way. I very well remember Dad hitting a hog that dashed out from a blind road and very nearly turned the old A-Model car over in a ditch. It was kinda like hitting a tree stump rather suddenly.

I became familiar with a lot of new names of people who lived in the area. Hollingsworths ran a wonderful country store. Then there were the Talberts, Seiglers, Shepherds, Dorns, Browns, Christians, McCrackens, Drennonns, and many other fine families. For a while I knew them and had a real appreciation for the experience.

It was not easy trying to scratch out a living among the flint rock and scrub pines in McCormick County. Not for anyone, but it was done and as I look back, rather amazingly well. My Grandpa grew his own corn for feed and meal, cotton and garden vegetables which were sometimes sold at the market and my Grandmother canned for winter months.

While he was not in the “chicken business” in a big way compared to the automated houses of today, my Grandpa did manage to grow and market chickens which must have provided some cash income. I’ve been reminded by aunts and uncles of one experience of cleaning out chicken droppings at one of the houses he had on the farm. Just as the job of scraping and sweeping the floor was about complete, a single chicken wandered in the open door. While I don’t recall the incident specifically, it was reported that I threatened the bird with sudden death if there was so much as a single “drop” made in the freshly cleaned house. It could have happened.

My Grandpa liked to wear overalls and a big, black felt hat. In the summer, just after lunch, he would get his big rocker and relax a bit under the oak trees in the front yard. He read the daily paper and other journals regularly. Sometimes he would just sit back and gaze out across the fields. I asked him a lot of questions.

One day he reminded me, while he was trying to rest a bit, “Jack, if you keep asking me questions, you’ll pretty soon be askin’ again if I know God’s Grandpa!”

It all seemed like another world back then. A really wonderful place!

January 19, 1994

## **Elections Ain't What They Use To Be**

Interesting--that's the only way I can describe some reactions to this column. Sometimes readers I haven't seen or heard from in years, contact me about things that have appeared here in print. It is almost always a friendly conversation and sometimes informative. Then, it's really a funny story that develops.

Last week, Seaborn Littleton, an 80 year old reader from Walhalla, gave me a call. Seaborn says he was named for the Deputy Seaborn Moss, who served under Sheriff Sam Hunnicutt. He added quite a bit of "flavor" to the column a couple of weeks ago in which Sam Hunnicutt was said to have informed a lady inmate that she would have to eat cornflakes in the Oconee county jail...just like all the other prisoners.

Seab Littleton says that election rules are a lot different today than in the past. He recalls a favorite story that circulated around the county seat when Sam was Sheriff. Of course, this was a report that disregarded all the laws and rules governing elections. Seab said that when it looked like it was going to be a "tight" race, Chief Deputy Seaborn Moss and Deputy Vess Shook would be dispatched to the local cemetery to get a list of "eligible" voters from the tombstones.

The way the story was told, an upcoming election was judged to be a really close one by "all the talk." It wasn't any time to be taking chances. The deputies were supposedly dispatched to the cemetery to get a list of names to be entered on the voting roll books. The mission was underway at night, According to Seab Littleton. It wasn't a type of operation that needed a lot of light. The two were said to be looking at tombstones with a flashlight. Seab Moss was holding the light and Vess Shook was supposed to be writing down names. According to Seaborn Littleton, Seab Moss came across a really long name on one of the tombstones and commented:

"Look here, Vess, this name's so long that we could divide it and list two instead of one!" he suggested.

Deputy Shook was incensed at the thought, and was said to respond:

“Hell, no! We’re not going to do any such thing. We’re going to run this thing straight if I have anything to do with it!”

This was certainly an unusual commentary on the way it might have been a way back when. Seab Littleton recalls a lot of humorous incidents that may or may not have facts as foundation for their being told down through the years.

Seab Littleton was rather well known throughout this area since he was an insurance account executive with Liberty Life and worked along with Reece Cleland in this area. He particularly recalls many of the legendary stories about “Foggy” Dickson. He knew “Foggy” personally and admired him as well as Deputy Seab Moss and Vess Shook along with Sheriff Hunnicutt.

He particularly recalled an incident at “Foggy’s.” It seems that one of “Foggy’s” bulls got out of the pasture. “Foggy” was trying to get one of his customers, who happened to be sitting on a stool “nursing” a cool “suds” to help catch the animal.

The patron was a little reluctant to turn loose the cold mug of beer to go out chasing a bull. He replied to “Foggy’s” request: “You mean, you want me to go out and help catch him NOW?”

“Foggy’s” reply was short and to the point, according to Littleton: “Hell, yes, I want you to help catch him NOW...he’s out NOW...ain’t he?”

January 26, 1994

### **Seab Told How “Foggy” Kept Cool**

Seaborn Littleton was a friend and acquaintance of “Foggy Dickson” years ago when “Foggy” ran a business in town and later below Westminster. His last “stand” was just off Greenfield Road, located on a small farm better known as the “Rinkey-Dink” Club. Twenty-seven acres to be more precise with a branch running through the property.

In the summer it got awfully hot in the little metal building which no longer stands. “Foggy” had his own water system which

consisted of a pipe that Jack Dillard had installed with a gravity flow from a spring located up on a hill above the place. This worked well for ‘Foggy’ was a big man. He liked to be comfortable in hot weather as well as anyone else. On some of the really hot days of summer he might “bend and elbow” with a cool “suds” as he sat outside under the shade trees.

It was, perhaps, on one of the more severe days that Seaborn Littleton recalled, when the temperature was more than a body could stand. Apparently, “Foggy” reached a point where he thought a heat stroke may be imminent. In the stress of the situation, he simply pulled off his overalls and positioned himself in a rocking chair right out in the middle of the branch that ran through the property.

Here he was, according to Seaborn, sitting in the rocker, quite nude with the cool branch water trickling over his feet. This was his way of beating the heat, but that wasn’t all.

His feet were cooling off quite comfortably with the clear branch water as he relaxed in the rocker, but his upper torso needed special attention.

According to Seaborn, “Foggy” had engaged a lovely young lady with exquisite credentials—an intelligent, sophisticated, educated person with a missionary agent—to help the “cooling process.” In her hand she had a big boiler pot that had evidently been borrowed from the kitchen. With it she was gently dipping the cool branch water and pouring it over “Foggy” with great care and cooling effect. It was a rare sight, according to Seab. One that he has never forgotten.

As reported here previously, Seab worked as an agent for Liberty Life Insurance Company as did Reece Cleland. Both were friends of “Foggy” and enjoyed visits with him at the “Rinkey-Drink” Club and his other places of business many years ago.

Seab said he also worked with Waymon DeFoor as an agent for Liberty Life Insurance Company as did Reece Cleland. Both were friends of “Foggy” and enjoyed visits with him at the “Rinkey-Dink” Club and his other places of business many years ago.

Seab said he also worked with Waymon DeFoor, also a Liberty Life agent who worked for the company at two different times.



Also with the Late J.R. Brown, perhaps one of the earliest agents the company employed in Oconee.

It was standard procedure, according to Seab, for Mr. Brown to take a fishing tackle box full of cash to the gate near Oconee Mill on Friday when the company paid employees. It was here he cashed customer checks and gave receipts for insurance premium payments. There was no bank in town, in the early days. Thus, it was a service to get the checks cashed and, of course, to the agent to collect.

Littleton said Mr. Brown had a remarkable memory. He could, without looking in his file, recall a customer's name, the number of policies he held, the type of policy, the page number in the receipt book and the amount of the premium due.

February 2, 1994

### **Celebration of Life Well Lived**

It was fitting that services for D.W. Stribling last week had emphasis upon his life rather than his death.

How refreshing it is to hear positive aspects of humanity as opposed to a negative world of ideas.

As one of the ministers conducting the celebration noted, this was no accident. The family long ago made preparations for this moment. This made it abundantly easy to present what had been carefully thought out and planned.

When one considers earthly departure, it surely is a moment for serious consideration...not at the physical service, but long before we reach the point of "crossing over."

Obviously, D.W. Stribling, more than four score years ago, began preparing for the finality of it all. The thoughts, ideas, the discipline for study, learning and teaching became a part of his daily routine. It was as natural to him as breathing the breath of life. He cultivated not only the land, but the minds of those in his presence.

The celebration service in itself was simply the culmination of all the deeds and efforts that had been practiced and projected.

Tributes and recognition of a man who believed he could make a difference were well made. Never one to exhibit flamboyance, the poignant points were more humbly presented in terms easily understood and more likely to be remembered. One of Mr. Stribling's students, a man he highly regarded as an outstanding scholar, Charles Barrett, remarked that his influence was great and good. "He was a practical man who dealt with the real world with ideas that helped in countless ways," Charles noted.

Very few of us are privileged of make contributions that affect so many in a positive way down through generations. As this part of the country was struggling, along with the rest of the nation trying to break the throes of the great depression during the middle 1930's, this man, D.W. Stribling, had the vision, knowledge and determination to make things happen.

With his perception, organization and hard work, Blue Ridge Electric Co-op (REA) was organized. From a modest beginning with two employees in 1936, the organization now serves nearly 50,000 customers in so many different ways it could never have been imagined at the time of its inception.

Lives have been touched in a positive way. A lifelong dedicated teacher who served the school system for nearly 60 years, D.W. Stribling taught as much by example and deeds as opposed to lecture and theory. Any who were privileged to know him through civic, academic, business, agrarian, church activities or simply as a friend, understand.

A dedicated family man, Mr. Stribling's efforts have always been eloquently supported by his devoted wife, Mrs. Thelma, and daughter, Davey Jo, along with other family members.

It was my pleasure to have been exposed to D.W. Stribling. He was one who could "get the job done" if the job was worth doing in the first place. I feel especially privileged for the experience.

February 9, 1994

## Baseball Memories Abound

Any who were around here when textile baseball was played know the enthusiasm generated was great.

Nathan Nuckols, a retired mill executive, who lives near Mt. Airy Baptist Church, just off highway 81 out of Easley, has a real appreciation of the experience as he grew up here. He recalls having met Flint Rhem, one the baseball "greats" in the early part of this century at a chance encounter when he visited Loos Zimmerman during the early 1940s.

Last summer, he clipped an item from the Greenville News by Rudy Jones, which is self explanatory: "Former major-league pitcher Charles Flint Rhem will be one of two inductees into the Greater Greenville Baseball Hall of Fame, Sunday.

"Rhem, who was born in 1903 and died in 1969, played 12 seasons in the major leagues with St. Louis, Philadelphia, and Boston.

"In 294 games, Rhem had a 105-97 record with 536 strike-outs. He led the National League with 20 victories in 1926 and pitches in the 1926, 1928, 1930 and 1931 World Series.

"Before signing a pro contract, Rhem pitched for Clemson University. He also pitched in the textile leagues."

According to Thomas K. Perry's book, "Textile League Baseball," Flint pitched for Westminster Mill in 1922; Belton in 1923, and Brandon of Greenville, 1924.

He pitched for St. Louis, NL (1924 -1932, 1934, 1936); Philadelphia, NL (1932 - 1933) and Boston, NL (1934 - 1935.)

Nathan happened to meet Flint when he came to visit his friend and baseball teammate, A. L. (Loos) Zimmerman. As the recalled, Enoch Breazeale brought Flint to the Zimmerman home which stood where the present Oconee Savings building is located on Windsor Street. Nathan and Kenneth Carter happened to be at the home since "Kenny" had the job of collecting eggs at Mr. Zimmerman's chicken house. Both young boys were impressed with the physical presence of Flint and the lively conversation he and Loos had recalling the "olden days."

W. A. (Willie) Hawkins, also a former textile player with Oconee Mills "Mountaineers" said he remembers seeing Flint play in the textile leagues. "He could hold five baseballs in one hand," according to Hawkins, "and was the most talented baseball player and athlete I can recall seeing play the game."

Mr. Mabry came to Westminster as a teacher and a coach when M. B. Self was the school superintendent. He later became principal and served a number of years as superintendent of Westminster schools before moving to Inman. He continues to live in that area and has made recent visits to Westminster.

Nathan Nuckols said he recalls watching all kinds of baseball teams perform, college, textile and professionals, but there has never been a pitcher that had a "Wind-up" and delivery as neat as Bill Robinson when he played for the Oconee "Mountaineers." It was almost like "poetry in motion."

February 16, 1994

### **The "Handiest" House In Town!**

It isn't difficult to get Seab Littleton to talk...and tell an unusual story. He spent many years in the county and is especially knowledgeable of the Walhalla area. His brother, late "Buster" Littleton, was a character in his own right. I've heard many stories the late J. Walter Duckworth repeated that involved the escapades of "Buster."

Seab says that "Buster" was about nine years older than he is...and would be near 90 if he were alive today. At one point, Seab recalls, his mother left "Buster" to baby-sit Seab while she had some errands to run. He says he wasn't old enough to remember any of the details, since he was a baby "in diapers" at the time. When he was old enough to hear the story, he said his mother came home from whatever chores had caused her to leave little Seab in the tender loving care of his brother, "Buster," and quickly noticed that Seab was missing.

"Where is the baby?" she inquired of "Buster."

"Oh," he said, "I had to throw him away," he answered.

"Throw him away! What do you mean? Where is he? I want to

know where he is right now!" the mother exhorted.

"You don't want him Mama," Buster replied, "He is in such a mess no one would want him, so I just dumped him outside the garden fence!"

The excited mother retrieved little Seab and indeed demonstrated to brother "Buster" that simply tossing a "messed up" baby over the garden fence was not necessarily the only solution.

Seab said that "Buster" often related a story of saving "Seab" from drowning one time, but would never tell about the time he threw him out in the garden.

Seab also recalled one of the "handiest" homes in Walhalla. It is now gone from its original lot and another home stands in its place on the west end of Main Street.

According to the recent memory of Seab, an old German settler lived in the modest home. He was especially noted for growing grapes and in turn saw that they were transformed into tasty wine. His wife passed away and eventually the old man needed help. He had one daughter who came back to help her father through his final days. At this point in history Seab ran a little store not far from the home.

Finally, the old man moved on to the Great Vineyard in the sky, and the daughter continued to live in the home-place. She decided she needed some plumbing in the home-place. She called on a well-known plumber of the day, King Dillard, to do the honors. In her home, according to Seab, she had installed only one piece of modern plumbing.

Seab, while working at his nearby store, sometimes delivered small orders to assist his customers. On this trip to the home, he was invited in to view the new plumbing installation.

The singular, but very important item, was nothing less than a modern commode, according to Seab, and it was located in a most unusual place.

The home had rooms on either side of wide hallway and a kitchen set away from the end of the hall. There, alongside the big, heavy wood-stove range, sat the newly installed bathroom commode. In fact, Seab said, it must have surely been the "handiest"

house in town. One could sit on the “throne” and attend to cooking matters at the same time...no problems!

Who knows, this design may have been ahead of its time?

March 2, 1994

### **The Ides Of March Remembered**

A lively conversation with Mrs. D. W. (Thelma) Stribling is sure to evoke interesting thoughts. After all, this lady was a teacher in public schools for many years. Once a teacher always a teacher, is my observation. Who else could have stirred one to consider the “Ides of March?”

Mrs. Stribling, while bedfast much of the time due to a broken hip, is nonetheless a bright and shining example of how one may use mental strength to overcome physical adversity.

In recalling some of her days teaching at Westminster, she said it was always a pleasant adventure to read Shakespeare to students and get them involved in learning more. One student, in particular, Rae Cain, became quite interested in some of the adventures of Brutus, Julius Caesar, Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet and other works of this Classical Great.

For many years, Rae has always made it a point to call Mrs. Stribling near the 15th of March. According to one dictionary, the 15th of March is the “Ides of March,” or may also be May, July or October or the 13th day of any other month in the ancient Roman calendar. Broadly explained it is “this day and the seven days preceding it.”

Whatever the technical reason, it is amazing to know that this point was so impressive that a student in one of Mrs. Stribling’s classes many years past has never forgotten.

Things have changed so dramatically in the classroom it’s amazing that teachers are able to carry on their duties with all the rules and regulations that prohibit a strong disciplinary program.

There are many problems today that didn’t exist just a few years ago, Mrs. Stribling lamented. Young people today are exposed to more dangerous potential possibilities everywhere. The news is

loaded with tragic results every day. Mrs. Stribling agrees that many of the causes have to be placed in deteriorating home structures across the nation. In many there are no guiding examples to emulate. One cannot simply lay the blame of social ills at the feet of institutions. The root cause is more likely to begin at home and extend to our schools, churches or whoever is trying to cope with uninspired young people.

It wasn't always this way. Teachers once had the authority to teach and had the guiding hands of caring parents to back them up at home.

Beatrice (Singleton) Mason, wife of Otis, said recently that she took Latin in high school under Mrs. Stribling and recalls how thorough she taught the course. Do the schools offer Latin these days? I'm only asking the question, since this supposedly "dead" language is the very much "alive" root system of some many words we use.

What a refreshing visit with this distinguished lady! Always a positive thinker with quick wit and humor, she has certainly made a contribution to many who were privileged to have her instruction.

An interesting fact: Mrs. Stribling, before marriage, was Thelma Braselton of Braselton, GA. She said this unique town sprung from the efforts of three hard-working brothers that began the business selling from the wooden crate containing a piano had been shipped to a customer. "They were tough and ran a tight ship," according to Mrs. Stribling.

Apparently successful, the entire town was sold a few years past to a movie star, Kim Bassinger, originally from Athens, GA, for a reputed twenty million dollars.

Mrs. Stribling said only the "old home place" was kept.

March 9, 1994

### **Stories From Court House Coffee Shop**

The late Ray Alexander, a blind man, who for several years, operated the coffee shop in the basement of the court house in Walhalla, cultivated many friends and customers.

Ray loved to hear stories “Ole Timers” would tell. There were regular customers who visited about the same time each day and nearly always sat at the same table. Jule Thode was a special friend of Ray as was R. C. “Russ” Carter, III, former Probate Judge of Oconee County. “Russ” has been confined for several years at Pinnacle Care nursing home near Seneca. He has endured many months of solitary confinement with Parkinson’s disease, but the last time I saw him, his thinking was completely clear, though he is well into the 80s.

One of the favorite stories Ray always like to hear was the experience “Russ” reportedly had at Helen’s Barn in Highlands, N. C.

Helen’s Barn was a favorite place for young folks and those who were “young at heart” to gather for square and round dancing in the 30s, 40s, and perhaps into the 50s. The facility was named for the owner, Mrs. Helen Wright, I believe, who happened, also, to be the mother of Mrs. Albert (Maxie) Duke.

Especially during the summer months when the “Yankees” from Florida and elsewhere gathered in the cool mountain air of Highlands, Helen’s Barn was usually crowded with toe-tappers and nimble-footed dancers. Or, at least those who thought they were well qualified. It was usually a fun-filled visit to Helen’s Barn.

However, on this one special night, according to the story, there was a bit of dissension among the ranks. Whatever the cause may never be known, and probably doesn’t matter. There was, in the mist, a group of visitors from nearby Franklin, N. C., which reportedly included one of the Angel brothers. The Angels were noted in the field of medicine and surgery and the city of Franklin has a hospital which probably sprang from the earlier Angel Clinic.

Dr. Ed Angel, according to a native of Franklin, Mr. Carl Green, was a kind of “high strung” individual, but an excellent surgeon. He may have been one of the visitors to Helen’s Barn on this fateful night.

The story was that somehow a fight broke out on the dance floor and it was about to turn into a mini-free-for-all. There was pushing and shoving mixed in with name calling and all the things that seem to just spontaneously explode during such a melee.



“Russ,” according to the story, very much wanted the situation to calm down so the dancing could continue. He began trying to be the “peace maker” on the crowded floor where things were very much out of control, to say the least.

It happened that Ed Angel had his back turned to the area from which “Russ” advanced to the floor. In what he hoped would be a peace-making plea, “Russ” simply tapped Ed on the shoulder with one hand. Ed did not respond as expected. Instead of turning to see who it was, he thought he was being “set up” for a Sunday punch. He quickly, on impulse, without reservation, landed a “haymaker” right on the jaw of “Russ.”

“What did you do then?” Ray Alexander asked.

Very deliberately, “Russ,” with distinct command of the English language replied, “I very calmly walked to the back door and spat out two teeth!”

This would invariably cause Ray and anyone else in the coffee shop to break out in raucous laughter.

March 16, 1994

### **Never The Same Again At Toccoa Airport**

Last week, one of Stephens County’s outstanding citizens made his final departure. The distinguished and highly respected Edward S. Gilmer was called to a higher level by a Higher Power. It is my opinion that he was prepared for the trip and is, perhaps at this moment, looking down at the rest of us. Smiling, laughing or just observing as some youngster gets his or her first close-up aircraft experience. The Toccoa (GA) Airport is what it is today because of the insistence and wisdom of Ed Gilmer and tireless hours of hard work, dedication and love he heaped on it. And all those associated with it.

We, who live in South Carolina, have shared in this facility down through the years. Long before Oconee County had a landing strip near Clemson, there were many strong ties with our neighbors in Toccoa. This became more pronounced when R. G. LeTourneau built a steel plant there and used some of his heavy earth-moving

equipment to level off the first dirt strip which is now runways 9 and 27.

The bond continues and has been made possible in a large measure by the efforts of Ed Gilmer and his influence since the facility was turned over to county government. To be sure there have been rough times in the roller coaster economy as he served as Chairman of the Airport Commission for more than 40 years. Anything worthwhile is seldom easy. It wasn't, but Ed had a way of making it look easy.

A one-man dynamo, an ambassador of good will, a keen businessman, a deep thinker, a devoted and dedicated family man, a kind and considerate human being who always had time for any less fortunate, Ed embodied all of these. He shared his ability to communicate with his business associates in a calm, but deliberate role as a leader. He was successful because he promoted success in a practical way.

There were no strangers to Ed. If he was at the airport, he greeted one and all with the same degree of enthusiasm. You were always welcomed in a friendly, sincere fashion whatever the circumstances. It was an art perfected and would be a better world if it were contagious.

There were no "bad" airplanes or really "bad" people who had a genuine appreciation for them, the way Ed saw it. Just different, perhaps, but sharing a common interest. He loved 'em all, from the tiniest little single engine to the monsters.

In his capacity as a leader in the community, he became closely acquainted some truly great people of this country. From the rich and powerful he often prevailed to bring resources to the area. His influence for good has been felt by many who never knew or understood how things happened as they did. He did not seek publicly...only results.

A close friend for many years, F. D. (Red) Hartwell, of Winder, Ga., said, "Ed Gilmer was truly a peace-maker; he could not stand to be at odds with each other; he would take it upon himself to find a solution and make it work."

One thing for sure, the pleasant and often humorous stories that

were spun around the hangars at Toccoa will never be the same again. A quick sense of humor, Ed knew how important laughter is and had a real appreciation for unusual, funny anecdotes. He made a visit to the Toccoa Airport worthwhile.

Ed Gilmer was one of the really great people I have been privileged to know.

March 23, 1994

### **Drinking For A Living Is Hard Work**

Every now 'n then I feel the urge to write a few things about the urge to drink. And I don't mean coffee, soft drinks or milk shakes. I'm talking about sure enough something with "kick" to it. Maybe 80 proof or better.

It's not that I'm trying to save the world from booze. I tried that a long time ago. My system didn't work too well. What I vainly attempted to do was to try to drink up all the hard liquor and beer myself so no one else would have to contend with it. Little did I realize the forces of mass production were stacked against me. I lost, though I made a sizeable dent in the stockpile. The capital forces of supply may have noticed when abstinence took hold, but there were so many new candidates standing in line the effect may have been as though one spoonful of sand was removed from the beach.

It is not my position or desire to condemn anyone who cares to indulge. I do not believe all who drink are automatically hell bound. I cannot point a finger at anyone and honestly say that it is morally right or wrong to indulge. It is a personal matter for each. The decision is up to the individual. What may be fine for some may be poison for others. There are some severe results when one becomes addicted to alcohol, food, or any of a thousand vices at our disposal.

When one chooses to limit abilities, faculties, friends and family by overindulgence, a price will be extracted. If you dance, you'll have to pay the fiddler. Make no mistake about it. You may find you are working for "the wages of sin" and the scale is not what you had in mind.

How do I know these things? Simple, I worked at trying to be reasonable and sensible in drinking habits for many years. It finally brought me to my knees in the depths of mental agony. There was no satisfaction physically or mentally, only anguish and desperation. As my friend, Tom Morehead once reminded me, "If you have to sit on your hands to keep people from thinking you're waving at them, you've got a drinking problem."

It doesn't take a genius to figure out that if you have a problem, drinking or otherwise, there will be a point where your course will change. Either for better or worse. Again, it is a personal decision only you can make.

No one sets out to make a full-fledged, dedicated drunk. That is not the way it happens. It is acceptable to participate in most quarters of society. There is no stigma as such, but there are dire consequences for those who are allergic to booze. For one who has crossed over that invisible line of responsibility, the net results can be agonizing for an entire family as well as the individual. It won't be "fun" anymore, and talkin' about being sick and tired of being sick and tired, you ain't seen nothin' yet!

For those who do exercise reason in whatever is consumed, food or drink, you are fortunate. You may not be consumed. For about 10 or 15 percent of the population that can only control by abstinence, it is your decision. It may be helpful to seek advice and counsel or an organization dedicated to your special need, but the only decision that counts is the one you make within. Not what someone else urges or wants for you, but just exactly what you tell yourself. That's all that counts.

Drinking for a living is hard work and the pay ain't what you'd like to have for retirement.

March 30, 1994

### **"Goat" Man And "Goat" Woman Characters**

Goats have always been interesting animals. Their ability to climb and walk safely on elevated levels is fascinating. The expression a goat exudes in an eye to eye confrontation with a human can

cause you to have second thoughts about our status as a race. They are sometimes funny, clever, mischievous, or maybe offensive otherwise. Hardly is there a dull moment where goats are gathered. Something is about to happen if it hasn't already.

Not so many years past there was a man who came through this part of the country known as the "Goat" Man. As I recall, he had several goats that pulled a small wagon. The wagon was loaded with the "Goatmaster's" worldly goods, camping and cooking utensils and other paraphernalia. The "Goat" Man, whose real name I never knew, would tour the country with his family of goats pulling the little wagon. The pace was obviously slow, but the old bearded fellow didn't need to be in a hurry anyway. He would stop along with his family of goats. He had printed pictures of himself with the goats and wagon that he would obligingly provide, for a small fee, to anyone interested. This was his only obvious means of support. He didn't require much money to support his life-style. It was fairly simple, and his travels carried him to many parts of the Southeast.

I've heard reports of people seeing the "Goat" Man in nearly every state in the South. Willie Hawkins said he would see him sometimes in Marietta, Ga. Others say they had seen him in parts of Florida and North Carolina. He moved about freely, and perhaps long ago was elevated to that "Big Herd" in the Sky. No one has reported seeing him in recent years.

Too, it hasn't been so many years past when there was the woman most around here knew as the "Goat" Woman. Her name, in fact, was Estelle Cox Moore, and the nickname, "Goat" Woman was simply used to quickly identify her more easily. Estelle had moved to this part of the county from the Newry area. It was not her desire to move to Brasstown Creek area, but rather a forced issue, according to her. Estelle came by the newspaper office frequently. She was always pleading for help in some way to regain a considerable number of goats she believed were unjustly taken from her care. It all happened when she was "Moved" by law enforcement officers who were charged with due process.

"They've stolen my darlings and I don't know what they've done with them" she would complain. "You've just got to help me get

them back!" We, of course, had several goat experts in our midst who would always try to direct her to someone who might help. Often she would talk with then Chief of Police, Gary Brock, or neighboring businessman, Roscoe Wilson, or Herman W. "Foggy" Dickson. She was at one point directed to contact Speaker of the House of S. C., Sol. Blatt and the Bishop of Barnwell County the politically powerful Senator Edgar Brown. Both obligingly answered letters and promised to do what they could about getting some "goat" justice.

Estelle, or the "Goat" Woman, was not without singular distinction. She claimed to be the niece of the famous football coach, John Heisman, for whom a world-famous trophy is awarded each year. Heisman had been a coach at Clemson for a short time before moving to Ga. Tech. For his title and fame nationwide, he was never more widely known in these parts than Estelle. Especially when she was leaving no stones unturned in her relentless search for her beloved goats.

These were truly unusual and interesting people with a particular affinity for goats.

April 6, 1994

### **Healing Power Of Goat Milk And Other Stories**

Mrs. W. C. Felder read the story on goats last week and recalled an interesting personal experience. When Celeste, daughter, was a little girl, she developed a terrible allergy. The physician who attended suggested she be fed a diet of goat milk. The nearest source the Felders could find at the time was from a former mail carrier by the name of Price.

Mr. B. Price, who lived on the corner of Isundega and Windsor, in the home later occupied by the Hiott Sanders family, had a goat and was able to supply milk. Amazingly, in three or four weeks the allergy cleared. The symptoms left, but it was believed that a steady diet of goat milk should be continued.

The Felders finally located a goat of their own and were able to supply their needs. Mrs. Felder says they had a number of interesting experiences with the goat, but were fully convinced of the heal-

ing power of goat milk in this allergy case.

The O. A. Barbers lived in a house near the house of Mr. and Mrs. B. Molgro England off Mountain View Street in the 1930s. Mr. Barber was an employee of Duke Power Co., at the time and worked along with Mr. W. F. (Bill) Crenshaw, who headed Duke's office here. For some reason, as I recall my parents telling the story, the Barbers acquired a goat, or two of them.

Mrs. Barber was directed to drink goat milk for some health problem. Everything went along pretty good most of the time, but the Barber's goats kept doing little things around the house such as eating clothes from the clothes line, and reportedly eating such things as tin cans. Or whatever. One day these goat were heard stomping around on the back porch of the Barber's home. Mrs. Barber went out to see what was happening and found the goats eating some of her flowering pot plants. She took a really dim view of this situation and preceded to run the goats off the porch. She finally escaped by jumping off the high end of the porch and goats in hot pursuit! As soon as Mr. Barber came home, they were removed from the premises. Never to return.

The late Jim McAllister, a talented writer for the Greenville News had an interesting goat story in his book, "Down Yonder in the Carolinas." Titled, "Ain't No Flies on Bebe," he wrote;

"Bebe is a goat. But there ain't no flies on Bebe."

"That Bebe can do most anything. Go rabbit hunting with the dogs; ride in a car like regular folks; eat chicken for dinner, eat spaghetti with hot peppers; drink tea and crush up ice for good measure."

"Yeah, Bebe is a load,"

"Mary Ann and Pat Henson of Rt. 2, Easley, saw Bebe at the Anderson Jockey Lot and bought him for \$15. What a bargain! What a steal!

"Since then they've bought two other goats, Lobo and Cindy, but they're just goats. They don't have any of Bebe's special talents or zest for living. They have demonstrated no desire to ride in an automobile. You can't keep Bebe out of a car. Even the car of strangers. You have to watch him," says Mary Ann, "because he'll jump right

in any open car door and it's the devil to drag him out."

"He's kinda crazy," she goes on. "He's amazing to watch, he's so funny. When we go to visit my husband's parents for Sunday dinner Bebe sometimes goes with us. He just thinks it's his right to go."

"Bebe doesn't have all that much to do with other goats. He travels around with humans and sleeps with the dogs. The dogs are his special friends. When Pat goes rabbit hunting with the dogs, Bebe goes along. When they jump a rabbit, Bebe is hot on the trail right along side the dogs."

"You're not going to leave that Bebe behind. He's one of the gang. If you don't give him a place, then he'll take a place."

April 13, 1994

### **Henry R. Kuemmerer, Doctor And Friend**

For some reason, many of us prefer to deal with death at a distance. We like to think of it as something that happens every day, but seldom strikes our close friends and family. Usually, it is much closer to us than we care to admit. We were once again reminded suddenly last week that life is a fleeting and temporary experience when Dr. Henry R. Kuemmerer suddenly passed.

Almost since he came to Westminster to practice medicine with Dr. E. L. Shuler at Westminster Medical Clinic, nearly 30 years ago, we have been friends. Not only a personal friend, Dr. Kuemmerer was considered a valued citizen and physician to the entire town and area. His experience here with Dr. Shuler, was an excellent venture. They were a great team. I've heard Dr. Kuemmerer say on more than one occasion how much he had learned from the association with Dr. Shuler. The two were extremely compatible and complimented each other. When Dr. Shuler found it necessary to retire from practice Dr. Kuemmerer was well prepared to carry on a great family medical tradition. It just doesn't seem right that it should end so abruptly.

It is not a question of not having many good and qualified physicians in our area. Dr. Billy Campbell has an office on Main Street in Westminster and a family practice. We are sure that he is capable



of doing whatever he can to help as many as he can. We all have some human limitations, and while there are others in the county, many prefer to have a hometown doctor. That may change, of necessity, for some.

There may be others who locate here, but none can replace the personality of Henry R. Kuemmerer. He was never pretentious about who he was and where he came from. Raised above Walhalla on a little farm where his mother was left to rear a family of nine, he was the youngest son, about 3 years old when his father passed away. Struggle and adversity taught hard lessons that he never forgot. His mother was a strong influence in his life as she exercised whatever authority needed to keep this family fed, clothed and in school.

The entire Kuemmerer family were blessed to have a caring mother to hold them together during many crisis. While an apparent congenital heart disorder has eliminated all except three sisters, this family has been successful. Each took advantage of any opportunity and excelled. Henry worked, studied, payed his own way through Clemson, worked as a research chemist for five years, saved his money and payed his own way through medical school. It was not an easy road. He never looked for things to be easy. He worked with great care and diligence and was never easily swayed. A given ability to reason, remember and apply common sense, he was a natural for a great family doctor. He loved his work and cared for his patients, giving one and all 100 percent of his expertise. It mattered not whether it was a personal friend or a stranger, if Dr. Kuemmerer treated you, you could be assured to receive the benefit of every ounce of training and knowledge he had.

He had especially great compassion for older people. He loved them and took great pleasure in helping them. He did not look down on anyone or up to anyone. Specifically, he looked everyone in the eye as an equal. An honest man with principals, he did many good deeds known only to him. Dr. Kuemmerer was a man with strong convictions and a keen sense of humor. He had his own little idiosyncrasies, but his motives were honorable. He was dedicated to his profession, patients and friends. The town and area has lost a truly

great citizen, and we've lost a very close and admired friend. Surely, he must be resting peacefully now.

April 20, 1994

### **Getting The Job Done Ain't Always Easy**

More than once in recent months I've pointed out to my wife the determined, hard working, not-afraid-of-any-job efforts of Jill Shuman. Jill and her husband, Sam, moved here from the Atlanta area. They bought and renovated the Sam Reeder building. Cutting the building into attractive shop spaces, they also opened a deli in back. Too, they've put in a lot of hours and effort in improving city and surrounding property.

It has given me a great deal of pleasure to point out to Aline how skillfully Jill can use a shovel, hammer, wheel barrow, post hole diggers, or just whatever needs to be done. She is an excellent example of equal opportunity. I've never been opposed to anyone doing the jobs that need to be done, regardless of sex. While my suggestions haven't yet fell on fertile ground, Jill continues to be an outstanding example of one way to get the job done.

While she does plenty of the manual labor, the deli restaurant is also an important part of their effort. J. Henry's is becoming a popular place to eat among friends in a most unique atmosphere. The food and service are good. It isn't hard to predict this local establishment will be successful because the owners are willing to put a "shoulder to the wheel" to make it happen!

### **Another Good Citizen Passes**

Last week at precisely the same time one of the town's two doctors was being buried, another outstanding citizen "crossed over the river." Frank Williams, a good and dependable businessman here for many years, was suddenly swept from our midst.

There are many good people in this town and area who have made determined efforts to assist their fellowman. Frank Williams was one of them who made it a constant habit to help any and all whenever he could. It stands out clearly in my memory how diffi-

cult I found the economic climate when I began publishing The Westminster News in February 1953. It was not easy, nor did I expect it to be, but having received a lot of encouragement up and down the street, I was suddenly shocked to learn how difficult it was to sell advertising.

Frank Williams and his brother, Raymond, had opened a business and were among the first to advertise in this publication. Consistently, I came to count them among regular customers. Not only did they offer a measure of economic help but words of encouragement that meant a great deal to a struggling printer who really didn't know much about anything. Frank had challenges of his own, but he always had time to listen and offer some measure of help.

Not so many months before I "hung up" my part of the business Frank came by one day with an old copy of an audit of the city budget that he had kept. We had served on city council together at one point. The old audit, sometime in the late 50s or early 60s, showed our town was operating on a budget of slightly more than \$10,000 per year. That did not include funds from our more "mon-eyed" counterpart, The Commission of Public Works."

Frank Williams was a great citizen who made many contributions to this town and area. He will be missed by many.

April 27, 1994

### **One Man's Junk Is Another's Treasure**

Sometimes it isn't easy trying to bring a few thoughts together for a simple weekly newspaper column. Those who do it with great skill every day have my respect. I've never pretended to have skills in this area of journalism, though sometimes it is fun to just keep trying.

This week, for example, there is no compelling subject. As I look about this room where I have my "old fashioned" IBM typewriter, I see a few objects that call to question my judgement. For example, there is a rather ornate, shiny looking brass fixture. It was purchased at a yard sale in Toccoa, Ga., several years ago. Molly

Martin, wife of the Fixed Base Operator at the airport told me about a big sale or yard sale. It was either a moving sale or yard sale. Whatever, something led me to the scene. The family, a retired Colonel's wife was "cleaning out" some things. The man of the house was not present, thus her judgement prevailed at the moment. This unusual object had been "lugged" around many stops and she was tired of hauling it. Supposedly it originated from some part of Turkey where the family had once been stationed.

My curiosity was aroused.

"What is it?" I inquired.

"I'm not positively sure," she explained, "but I've been told that this item was used to cook food."

"Supposedly, it worked something like a grill with heated material placed in it and cooking utensils or food was cooked over the flame or heat."

This may or may not be true, but no one has offered a better explanation. Nearly all who have seen it want to know what it is, and I've continued giving the answer given me. However, there is a slightly humorous twist she added. I asked what kind of fuel was used to fire the so called grill.

"Dried camel dung," was the answer she gave.

Who knows, I may have one of the authentic camel dung cookers in the Southeast or perhaps in the United States. One big problem. As yet, we don't have a camel to furnish fuel. So we aren't likely to have a cookout featuring this system.

There are things like an old wagon axle jack that caught my attention several years ago. It was made of wood entirely and was unique in that the handle that levered the load with a ratchet arrangement was designed so that once it lifted the wagon axle and passed dead center it would stay in place without further effort. If you had the job of changing a wagon wheel while going West on the Oregon Trail, this would come in mighty handy. Every home should have one. If, for no other reason, to remind us how really soft and easy we have everything today.

The list goes on. I treasure an old oxen yoke that once belonged to Rob Bolt. I remember when he would drive two steers, Pete and

Joe, to town from his farm. They wore this yoke. It has real meaning. Rob Bolt was one of the great ones I recall, who spoke clearly and with enough volume to be easily understood two blocks away. He once told of having a bad trading experience: "I learned something" he said, "An' I'll promise you, the same bear ain't gonna scratch me twice!"

May 4, 1994

### **Search For Doctor(s) Begins**

What happens when your hometown runs low on doctors?

Folks here may not have the answer immediately, but at least they are organizing an effort.

First of all, there is more demand everywhere than there is supply of medical doctors. Thus, they, who are available, have the sole responsibility and final decision as to what kind of practice is desired and specifically where to locate.

Westminster is fortunate to have one M.D., in Dr. Billy Campbell. Dr. Campbell, in addressing a group of political and civic leaders, this week said that he would welcome another physician to help with the load.

He indicated a building near his office on Main Street could be made available to an interested physician. He expressed a desire to see one or more new doctors locate here and work in cooperation—as in a clinic, perhaps—so the patient care could be maintained while the physicians, too, might have a few hours to themselves.

It makes sense to have "help" in any kind of family practice. The stress is considerable. The amount of pay is almost beside the point if there is "no time off" to be with family or friends. This thought was expressed at the meeting headed by Mayor Ted Phillips and attended by the Oconee County Delegation, Oconee Hospital Director Ham Hudson, and Mr. Watkins, a representative from the medical University of South Carolina.

Cecil Sandifer asked what the town or committee could do to attract another doctor? Mr. Watkins stated the fact that interested citizens were meeting is a good first step. There must be some kind

of commitment to assist with supplying a new physician with suitable building. Too, there is a need to supply some kind of salary guarantee for a beginning practice. Mr. Watkins indicated a commitment of \$80,000 to \$100,000 per year guarantee is not unusual by standards today. Many are offering more than that, he pointed out. Too, he explained, in most situations where the physician is working aggressively, the contract guarantee is a moot point. Many earn more than that with a normal practice. But to attract a new doctor, trying to get established, it may take a few months to get everything moving along. There were indications the state and perhaps the hospital could be of assistance with the initial guarantee requirement since all have a vested interest.

Jerry Smith, local pharmacist, was named chairman of the group that is trying to get some action. No doubt he needs the support of one and all who are interested in this vital part of the community.

The question of whether the building used by the late Dr. Kuemmerer at Westminster Medical Clinic could be made available was briefly discussed. It was expressed by some that there would need to be renovation and equipment changes should this location be considered.

Dr. Campbell said it didn't matter specifically to him as to who owned any available building for a potential candidate, but was offering the next door building to his offices to anyone who may wish to tie in with his present family practice.

Those attending this meeting Monday night included Johnny and Marilyn Jones, Senator (now Judge) Alex McCauley, House members Lindsey Graham and Thomas Alexander, Marshall Abbott, Allen Perkins, Joel Thrift, Mayor Ted Phillips, Ham Hudson and Mr. Watkins from the MUSC.

It ain't gonna be easy, folks, attracting new doctors. It appears there is a real need for some kind of firm commitment from the total community if experience of others counts.

It can be done if enough are willing and able to make it happen.

May 11, 1994

## **Class Of '44 Readies For 50th Reunion**

Can it be that 50 years have slithered by so quickly since the class of '44 graduated from Westminster High? What happened to all the dreams and aspirations of that distinctive class whose motto was "In Ourselves Our Future Lies?"

Surely there were successes and failures. There has been joy and tears of sorrow. There has been life lived abundantly along with trials and tribulations.

There are those still with us who have defied all logic and reason as survivors; many dear ones have departed for the hereafter. Only a Higher Power knows the reason why. After all, who are we to question guidance and direction from Divine Providence?

One of the sponsors of the class of '44, Mrs. Sara Johns, said that this was one of the best classes she ever taught. We'll accept that opinion and on the other hand, she was one of the best teachers any school could have been privileged to have. There were others, too. We were more than fortunate to have direction from instructors who really cared about each student.

The experience during those years prior to graduation night on May 15, 1994, will never be equalled again in the history of this great country. Caught in the middle of WWII, many in the class were directly involved in the final effort. All, in some way, made a sacrifice or effort to help the country toward a successful conclusion. It was a time when the United States was truly united. There was no room for protest; only dedicated effort to "get the job done" was acceptable.

There was discipline in the classroom and respect for authority. There was a line of authority that reached from home to the classroom. Both were exacting and demanding. No room for serious debate about which rules were just or unjust. Listen carefully and do what you knew was expected. It was a great period in their history of this nation. Material gain took priority down the line from what was considered ethical and fair.

It was a period when most of us had few worries, for we really didn't know what we should worry about. Of the class of 98 stu-

dents in the Eighth Grade, 49 made it to that graduation. There were many who were forced to leave school for valid reasons, moving, etc. Those who were present and accounted for nearly 50 years ago were;

Morris Alexander\*, Bobbie Bond\*, Billy Brock\*, Helen Brock, Bobbie Browning\*, Ethel Burton, Lenore Butler\*, Aldine Carter, Paul Crenshaw, Miriam Cumulander, Lillie Mae Davis, Mae Evelyn Duncan\*, Sarah England, Ethel Elrod, Othella Freeman, Clarence Freeman\*, Elmina Franklin, Carl Garner\*, Julian Grubbs, Mary Gregory, Louisa Hall, Margie Haney, Edna Hilley, Jack Hunt, Ruth Knox, Richard Lay, Winnie Belle Lee, Annie Belle Lyles, Mary Jean Martin, Frances Mason, Virginia Mason, Frances McClain, Ruth Moore\*, Stella McGuire, Nathan Nuckols, Mary Adeline Oliver, Elizabeth Owens, Paul Powell, Estelle Ramey, Dorothy Rogers, Lois Sanders, Dorothy Spearman, Arthur Smith, Jr., Dorothy Smith, Sara Sims\*, Roy Strickland, Christine Turner, Bill Watkins and Doris Williams. (\*Deceased Members, Class of 1944 WHS).

May 18, 1994

### **What Really Happened At Oak Grove School**

Oak Grove school, the building, still standing, has been in the news in recent weeks. According to reports, the property should have reverted to original owners, when and it was not being officially used by the 4-H Clubs of Oconee or the school district.

This was clearly spelled out on a deed copy that Abner Barnett exhibited and was recorded. According to Abner, the original (present) building has not been actively used for several years. Weeds and brush have grown up to a point where it is impossible to enter the premises, much less the building. It is his opinion this property should be returned to the school district and the district should put it up for sale so that someone can get some use from the structure plus pay taxes on property that isn't presently in use.

Ab said the property that the 4-H Clubs use now is a six acre



tract that his father, former agriculture teacher in Oconee, deeded to the 4-H Clubs for their use with no stipulations in the deed. There is no question about this, according to Abner, who lives just across the road from both locations.

The old Oak Grove school building in question is one that is constructed of heavy duty concrete block.

According to Abner, and other reports we've heard in the past from various sources, this block building was constructed after the first wooden structure burned.

It is interesting, to say the least, as to what happened when the first wooden structure was destroyed by fire.

Abner said that the cause of the blaze was attributed to an uncle, Paul Barnett, and also to C. R. Hunt, my father, and former city mail carrier in Westminster.

Exactly what happened may never be clearly known, but Abner said that C. R. Hunt and Paul Barnett, both youngsters, were attending school in the old building. On a cold day, they entered the building and started a fire in the big, open fire place. According to Ab, there was no metal lentil over the fireplace. Instead, a heavy log had been used. It was believed this hot fire caught the log and eventually destroyed the whole building. Whether this was a fire that should not have been started or whether it was part of their job to build a fire prior to schoolroom classes is not clear. The fact is it was believed by many this was the actual cause of the destruction, and both Paul Barnett and Ralph Hunt were the culprits, intentional or not.

Abner said authorities were seriously considering putting both boys in Reform School, when his grandfather offered to make heavy cement blocks for a new building. He had a block manufacturing operation going on Colonel's Fork Creek where he did the work. My grandfather, Leo Hunt, furnished the labor to haul the block to the present site where the building yet stands. For some reason my dad never gave me details about the incident but I have heard the story before from several sources.

Incidentally, the same type blocks were used in the construction of the John Butler home on Retreat Street, the old warehouse building that stood where the present Masonic Lodge is being built on

Retreat, and also in the building at the corner of Windsor and Retreat currently being renovated by Kimberly Campbell.

Abner said he may have a picture of the old original building with all the "young 'uns" out front (B. F.). That is before the fire. It is certainly a source of interest, especially since the final disposition has not yet been decided.

May 25, 1994

### **Many Positive Indicators Noted**

Westminster has always been one of the greatest places on earth to live. It has also been one of the toughest places on earth to earn a living. There has been many subtle but positive changes. More opportunities are available than ever for those who want to learn and are willing to work to earn.

No one can justly say there is not opportunity here in this county for practically any trade or profession. Willingness to prepare and apply dedicated effort is as equally rewarding here as it is anywhere.

There are many good citizens who work hard, giving time and skill to promote the civic well being for all. Often quietly doing a job for no reward except doing what needs to be done. We are lucky to live in such a community.

Certainly there are the same problems here as there is in larger metropolitan areas, but the mostly rural setting of our towns has been helpful in keeping many criminal elements in check. We are not exempt from health problems found elsewhere, nor the need to promote the resources available for improving.

Up and down Main street, buildings have been renovated and changed into attractive shops and businesses. Apparently most of them are doing very well. This positive sign along with the continuing growth of business along the widened east main street is showing economic stability. People still like to do business where business is being done. It is not a trend likely to suddenly change.

The renovation and restoration of many of the older homes in the area has been a helpful trend. Most have been occupied and contin-

ue to be in demand. New building construction in developing areas has been reasonably strong, though not booming. Younger citizens seem to want to live here where churches and schools are available for some of the best basic training offered anywhere.

Not only is the availability of educational opportunities here, but higher, advanced colleges and universities are within easy reach. Resources afforded by the cultural, civic and business districts of Anderson, Greenville and Atlanta are only minutes away.

Travel from here to just about anywhere can be arranged quickly and yet we are not burdened with some of the more complex problems of the densely populated areas.

Beside these things, we are blessed with good, clean mountain streams and lakes. As yet, pollution, prevalent in many places, has been held in check, apparently. We must make sure that our natural resources are not sacrificed. We all depend upon our land and water for life itself.

Recreation is here for one and all to enjoy. We are fortunate to live in such a great place endowed with so many beautiful natural resources. The seasons, themselves, change just enough to let you appreciate each one. The truth is...with slower, more deliberate growth we are probably much better off...as opposed to sudden bursts of activity than can generate all kinds of stress.

If I thought for a minute there was a better place to be living right now...I'd be making plans. Right now, I don't know where that utopia could be.

June 1, 1994

### **It Was Almost Like "Cuckoo's Nest"**

No doubt many of you have seen the movie, "One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest" starring Jack Nicholson. It was a classic. One that brings back memories of experiences just after WWII as a tuberculosis patient in Navy and VA hospitals.

At that time in the middle of late 1940's, if you contracted TB, you either got better or died. There was little or no treatment. Bed-rest for 24 hours a day was the usual order. Sometimes an operation