

Another of the regular crew members hollered for Hugh to come help straighten out the next crisis. He again answered the call. As expected, something is always going wrong around a saw-mill. Again Hugh was called upon. He dutifully answered and believed he had things under control when once again a crew member asked him to go over and assist with the "off-bearing" of slabs.

Finally, Hugh realized things were getting far out of control. Suddenly, he stopped and gathered some of the regular help around him.

"Listen," he said, "I know I am good at this business...I have been around here helping with just about anything and everything that has gone wrong...and I know I am good, but I'll just be damned if I can run this saw-mill by myself!"

When Herchel and his carpet crew are busy, they don't have much time for a lot of conversation. They absolutely do not stand on any ceremony when there is carpet to be laid. Bob Grogan could hardly believe the speed and skill which they exhibited in a recently installed job at his home. In the house by 7 a.m., moving furniture, and getting the new materials ready, cut, in place and fastened, nearly an entire home was completed by 3 p.m. the same day.

The same over here with a much smaller job of laying some indoor-out-door on a couple of porches. Three hours and the work was complete.

Skill and experience certainly count, but to paraphrase Hugh Langston, Herchel said, "I'm good, but damned if I can do all by myself!"

June 7, 1995

Events Of Past Still Linger

When W. T. (Mac) McClure had a Chevrolet Dealership on the property just above The News office and operated an Amoco service station on the back side, now Windsor Street, some memorable events took place on the land.

One thing I recall as a small boy, was a parachute jump. It must have been in the 1930s when the event took place. A team, consist-

ing of a man and woman, came to town with a big “hot air” balloon. Using Amoco gas furnished by Mac’s, the team manager inflated the big balloon with heated fumes. He enlisted help of several interested onlookers to hold tether ropes while the balloon was being readied for the trip.

The process of inflating the balloon took more than an hour. All the while a big crowd was gathering. I don’t recall any admission charge being made, but perhaps a free-will donation was accepted. Maybe someone had simply paid the “team” to perform. But as the balloon filled, there was usual speculation about what might happen. As it turned out, the parachutist was the lady member of the team. This was at a time in our history when only a few women wanted to participate in this kind of activity.

She wore a white pair of coveralls with a pilot’s helmet and goggles. However, she also had to help the ground crew of volunteers and the manager with the “gassing” process. More than once, the manager warned those holding the ropes to listen very carefully to his commands. He didn’t want someone to accidentally hold on the line and make an unscheduled ascension.

Finally, the balloon was filled, the chutist by now had a lot of black smut on the white coveralls. The parachute was attached to the balloon and the order to, release the ropes was given. Finally only about six volunteers were holding the balloon. With one swift motion, the big black balloon took off with a great whoosh! The lady “jumper” was swinging below. Everyone held a breath and watched the ascent for several minutes it seemed. I don’t know how high the big balloon travelled, but it was a bright sunny day, and this big balloon looked about the size of a silver dollar against the sky.

With daring and skill, the “lady jumper” knew exactly when to trigger the release. She came floating down from the sky, the big white chute above her as she dangled delicately. Kind of like Wallenda waking the Talullah Gorge, “it was just another day at work.” Or so it seemed.

She landed safely in a field not far from Anderson Avenue. No one was hurt and it was a “fun day” for a lot of people.

There were other events on these premises during the early part

of this century. Everything from baseball to the old timer medicine shows were staged here. I remember one medicine show where the "doc" claimed his remedy was so good you didn't even need to rub it on a foot with a corn. Simply apply it to the outside shoe leather. The power to penetrate would take it to the source of the problem and cure it, he proclaimed.

Mr. "Mac" McClure was a great friend and neighbor. Early in my life he rescued me with a broken down red wagon loaded with corn meal on the way home from the corn mill. I was about four years old when the wagon broke down. He saw the situation, picked me up along the wagon and corn meal and delivered me safely to my parents home on Bow Street.

June 14, 1995

Was "Black Cat" Afraid Of Anything?

Before he became more widely known, Tom Barton, was better known as "Black Cat." This is the one and same Doctor Tom Barton, successful president of Greenville Technical College. As an All-American football player for Clemson Tigers, he had the nickname of "Black Cat." How and why he was so tagged is not known to me. But practically everyone knew and liked "Black Cat" Barton. He was a very successful high school football coach. He and retired school superintendent, Roy B. Strickland, were a successful coaching team at Liberty High School and several other schools.

All of this is a bit of background information. While Tom and Roy were coaching together, they also attended graduate school at Peabody in Nashville, Tenn., during the off-season. Roy says this is a true version, so there is no reason to question the matter. It must have been during the late 1940s or early 50s, Roy and Tom roomed together in a dorm at Peabody. The room was several stories from the ground level, and had a screened window. Probably before air-conditioning was common in school dorms. Roy said he noticed "Black Cat" over near the window measuring the width and taking close examination of the dimensions.

"What're you doing?" Roy asked.

"I'm just checking this window...just in case I might start walking in my sleep...I don't want to step out of here and become a statistic down below," he replied.

Roy said he couldn't believe what he was seeing, but he later determined that "Black Cat" did have some real fears.

For example, he had some fear of darkness. He preferred not to be alone in the dark. Probably psychological "hang-up" that long ago disappeared, but there was no doubt about the resolve and competitive spirit "Black Cat" exhibited as an athlete and in his chosen profession.

Besides, he always had a great sense of humor. I've hardly seen anyone laugh harder than "Black Cat" one day more than 30 years ago at the golf course at Toccoa, GA, country club.

Why I happened to be there is another matter, since I was far from being a golfer. On a par three hole, I teed the ball up as though I knew exactly what I was doing. With care and caution I had seen others use, I measured the distance mentally, chose a club I thought would carry the green, and proceeded to address and strike the ball. With club contact on the ball, I kept watching the green to see it hit. However, it never came down until a few moments later. Somehow, I had cut the tee out from under the ball. It caused the ball to go sky high and exactly straight up. Within a few seconds it fell almost in the same spot where it was first teed.

This created a lot of laughter, including me, for I never pretended to be a serious golfer. "Black Cat" said he'd give a \$100 if I could repeat the performance. Of course, no way, since it was a miscue from the beginning. To this day, he recalls the moment and will usually get around to asking me, "Have you done any more of those 'trick shots' lately?"

A great guy, "Black Cat," and Coach Roy Strickland, too, who continues to serve very effectively on Oconee County Council.

June 21, 1995

“Is The Boll Weevil Bad?”

A small news item the other day noted the price of cotton is now more than \$1 per pound for the first time since the Civil War.

What I don't know about farming would fill many volumes. It has only been in recent years that I've been able to get a crop of wild onions to grow in the yard.

However, I remember very well the late 30s and early 40s when cotton was grown over many parts of Oconee and apparently offered a way for the farmers to earn a bit of cash.

In the fall, gins were busy everywhere as were people picking cotton. In many places, schools had a short summer six-week session in order to give children more time to help parents harvest a cotton crop in August and September.

During WWII, so many from farms had been called into service or defense work that volunteers from schools were recruited to help get cotton from the fields.

The South, in particular, depended heavily on growing cotton for many years. It was then, as now, a big gamble to farm on any scale. The threat of weather, no rain, too much rain, too cool, too hot, floods, drought, insects, beetles, weevils and especially boll weevil were a threat.

The old original country singers would sing about these things and tell some interesting stories in ballad. I can recall hearing songs about the boll weevil coming from Mexico...jus' lookin' for a home, etc.

And there was one I recall hearing Will Shaw, a black man who worked on my grandpa's farm in McCormick, sing as he plowed those rocky fields. It had to do with prices with lyrics noting, “with 10 cent cotton an' 40 cent meat...how in the world can a pore man eat?” There was a lot more than that, but the message was clear.

There is yet a great deal of cotton grown in this country, especially in places like Texas, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Arizona and California.

It seems kind of strange to see a city as big and populated as Phoenix with huge cotton fields and gins adjacent to metropolitan

shopping districts. This is ideal climate....hot and dry...with enough water through irrigation to make excellent cotton fibers.

No small farmers exist in this kind of business. It is all done on a big scale with modern machinery for planting and harvesting.

The truth is if you have enough funds to afford the machinery for a big farm these days, you probably don't need it. You can earn more with less risk by simply investing. It's another example of what has happened to the family farm and the trend continues. More production, more efficiency, less cost, more volume, higher profits is the name of the game.

But something of real value is diminished with family farms vanishing. A way of life that was hard and risky, as it still is, but one that surely produced many of America's finest people.

An Oconee farmer was having a really bad year with his cotton when someone asked, "Is the boll weevil bad this year?"

In almost a state of shock he replied, "Is the boll weevil bad?...why they're eatin' the leaves...puncturing the bolls...pullin' up the stalks and crappin' in the holes"

"And you want to know if the boll weevil is bad this year," he retorted.

July 5, 1995

George Was A Hypochondriac

Perhaps each of us suffer from mild hypochondria at some point. Fortunately, most of the time it isn't serious. A vivid imagination, a few physical symptoms, the power of suggestion by a friend or maybe just an observer, can trigger a rash of reaction by one who is inclined to believe physical disaster is eminent.

It's been about 50 years past when I was a TB patient in the old buildings at Veterans Hospital in Oteen, N. C. This was one of the finest facilities to be found anywhere at that time. WWII had just ended and the government was making a real effort to take care of those afflicted with whatever. Not only did the government supply highly qualified medical personnel, but also a second-to-none educational therapy department, occupational therapy and plenty of

volunteers to assist with everything from entertainment to personal care. It was an experience, not necessarily to be desired, but one extremely demanding...and a learning opportunity.

There was no exact cure for the TB “bug” at that time. Streptomycin was in experimental stages and later proved very helpful in treatment. There was also research carried on that later proved to be a blessing for those who had no hope except total bed-rest and perhaps radical surgical procedure. At last, there was effective drugs that could be taken orally which eventually turned the old TB hospital into a primary care center for cancer and heart disease patients.

Some of the ward rooms in “A” building held five beds. If you looked like you may live a while, was able to eat some, use bathroom facilities down the hall, you were placed in this environment. I was placed in a room on “A-2” with four others...three WWI vets and one WWII vet. Patients Murphy, Gentry and Houchens were the three WWI vets. Scott Dobson from Maryland was the other WWII member.

Just across from me on the ward, George Houchens, a plasterer by trade, from the Washington, DC, area, was trying to “take the cure.” Or was he, really?

It turned out after several weeks and months of total bed-rest in this area, George Houchens apparently didn’t have very much wrong with him physically that the medical staff could pinpoint by X-ray, sputum or metabolism tests. Yet, he insisted he had problems, even to the point of refusing a few days “leave” that most of us would have been willing to sacrifice a limb for.

He would often wake up in the morning feeling great, but the burden of believing he may just “pass on” at any moment would soon overtake his better judgement. Perhaps, he was beyond psychological repair, but didn’t appear to be otherwise.

George would often awaken feeling great...so it seemed, and then, as only a test, I would say something like, “George, do you feel OK?...you look pale to me...better get back to bed before you drop dead out here in the floor.” In truly a joking mood. After a few minutes George would head for the latrine look himself over in the

mirror and then to Dr. G.C. Godwin's office. Only after Dr. Godwin assured him for the zillionth time that he was OK, would he return to his ward room bed.

George was truly convinced by himself that disaster was just around the corner. But he was still strong years after. I've often wondered what if anything, did catch him.

July 12, 1995

Hartwell Lake Before Boat Ramps

When water from Hartwell Lake began backing up the Tugaloo River more than 30 years ago, not many people from these parts were familiar with boat ramps as we know them now.

Before Choestoe ramp and Mullins Ford, most of those launching used the end of Dr. Johns Road where it entered the water near the old Knox home place.

This was a popular spot for water sports, picnics, boating and fishing. A man called "Captain Senn" ran a little weekend fish house in what appeared to be an old store building near the end of Dr. Johns Road. One the weekend, the cooking crew would fire up the range and grills and serve customers with catfish, hushpuppies, cole slaw and all the things that go with a southern fish supper. It was great. Also, one of the cooks, Hoyt Harbin, was a musician. When the cooking was done, he gathered some fellow pickers and singers around to entertain with real country music.

Captain Senn claimed to be in charge, but his wife seemed to be doing most of the work around the business. He was particularly good at talking. He said he was retired from the South Carolina State Patrol, SLED, and several other prominent organizations. No one seemed to care whether his claimed credentials were real or fiction, he was friendly and had a lot of interesting stories to tell any one who had time to listen.

A man by the name of Ernest Truman Owens also assisted in the fish camp operation. He, too was never at a loss of words. Dean Breazeale always liked to recall the story E. T. Owens told about a

snake that swallowed more than a dozen eggs, was captured and the eggs recovered. Sometimes E. T. would roll up his overalls and go for a swim at the end of the road as it gradually sloped in the water. It was here, one day, when he was swimming that Frankie Morehead, who was swimming too, gave Ernest Truman a big scare.

Frankie had observed Truman very carefully, heard some of the interesting stories, and watched him in the water. He had cut a small stick from the bank as he watched Truman playing in the water. Without being noticed Frankie dived under with the little forked stick in his hand. As he came up to E. T., he simply punched him on the leg with the little forked stick. Ernest Truman Owens responded immediately. Soon he was screaming, "Snake bit!" and heading for the bank. Within a few minutes he was on the bank examining the two little red marks on his leg, getting an expert opinion from Captain Senn who promptly advised his wife to bring some kerosene, turpentine, and anything else from the house that they weren't drinking. Applying this type of first aid seemed to calm E.T., but he abandoned his summer swimming outing that day.

Tom Morehead and all his sons, Allen, DeWayne and Frankie were all expert swimmers and water skiers. They taught many youngsters how to "get up" on the skis for the first time. It was here, also, that Tom and I were going to put on a little demonstration one hot Sunday afternoon when something went wrong. The thing I remember most was losing a cigar, my little black straw hat, going down in the lake about 20 feet and out about 50 before recovering.

July 19, 1995

Old Friends And Pleasant Memories

It is my opinion that I have been privileged to grow up and live during some of the best years this nation has ever known. Part of that aging took place right here in Westminster on Riley Avenue when we lived next to the J. H. Hudson family.

Mr. Hudson (Jack) was the rural mail carrier on route three. My father was a city carrier. That is, he walked his entire route every

day. The two families had some common ground. But more than that, the Hudson boys, Lloyd and Bill, and their daughter, Veeda, were a few years older than I, but not so much that it mattered.

What brings much of this to mind was the fact that the WHS class of 1940 and their 55th reunion last week. Neighbor Bob Grogan learned that Lloyd Hudson, a classmate now living in St. Louis, MO, would be attending. He was excited about seeing this old friend for the first time in perhaps more than 30 years. While Lloyd said he had visited his brother, Bill, in Clemson, more recently, it was only this time that afforded a little extra time to visit a bit privately.

Lloyd had the nickname, "Sassafras," and worked at Moon's Drug Store when he was a youngster. This week, he revealed how the nickname came about. It seems, he admitted, that for some reason he had talked back rather sharply to one of his high school instructors, Mrs. Minnie Peden. That was not a good policy and she wasted no time admonishing him, "Young man, don't you dare sass me."

Lloyd said Furman Simpson overheard the remarks and from that day on during his school years at Westminster he was known as "Sassafras."

Lloyd made many friends as he worked his job at the drug store under "Doctor" Sam Moon, David Moon and Walter Sassard. A popular young man, he worked until he entered service for WWII. After returning home he worked at the store for a while but eventually was employed in the security system of several retail and wholesale drug houses. That's how he eventually found his way to Little Rock, Ark, and St. Louis, MO, where he retired. Amazingly, he hasn't changed a great deal in physical appearance. Trim and distinguished, only the grey hair has given in to the aging process.

A visit with Lloyd at Bill's home in Clemson was a refreshing experience for Bob Grogan, Nathan Nuckols and me last Saturday. Bill, his brother, is a retired Engineering Professor at Clemson where he had distinguished success in his profession. He was married to Marjorie Coe, now deceased, and they had four sons: Gary, now deceased, and two others who studied and now practice engineering. The youngest, Howard (Hayden) is part of the Greenville

radio station entertainment team of "Love and Hudson."

It was "old time" week at Bill Hudson's home when a few friends from the past gathered to exchange experiences and recall some of the more humorous episodes of growing up in Westminster. Again on Monday morning another short visit here as Grogan and Homer Hardy produced another ball of yarn.

Looking back it was Mr. Jack Hudson, who bought me my first typewriter from a pawn shop window in Anderson, during the late 1930s for \$24.50 (a heck of a lot of money at that time.) It was Bill, Lloyd and Veeda who taught me the touch system on the little Remington portable. What a great family, what friends and what fun it is to meet them once again. It could only happen here.

July 26, 1995

Sense Of Humor May Be Inherited

Writing last week about Mr. J. H (Jack) Hudson and remembering some of the "fun times" I had with the Hudson family as I was growing up, it came as no great surprise that one of his grandsons is a very successful radio entertainer and humorist.

Hayden or (Howard), his radio-name, Hudson, surely must have some of the qualities his grandfather, Jack, exhibited. Mr. Hudson was an avid reader and often studied the encyclopedia just for the fun of it. He also liked to tinker with the engines on his A-model Ford cars that he used to deliver mail.

Sometimes he would run into a complication that baffled him a bit. I recall one time when he had a carburetor off one of his four A-models. For some reason, it didn't do to suit him when he replaced it on the engine. After much patience and very tedious work handling the small jets and parts involved, he tried it one more time -- about the fifth -- and again it failed to meet his expectations. Very carefully, he removed the carburetor, tore it down to the essential parts, layed them out carefully on a cloth feed sack, folded each of the four corners of the sack up to the gathering point and the took action. Hauling back the sack, and parts, somewhat like a discus thrower, Mr. Hudson declared out loud, "This thing ain't worth a

pinch of duck..." as he tossed the whole works across the garden.

He always had an "ace in the hole" though. He was almost sure to have one of his favorite A-models up and ready to roll on his early morning mail delivery. If everything failed, he could always call in Prue Sims, his able and willing mechanic.

On a trip along his mail route, he ran into all kinds of unusual developments. Clint and Lizzie Barker ran a little country store near Coneross community in the 30s and 40s. As patrons along the route often did, they would meet the mailman at the box sometimes to buy stamps, mail a package, or maybe just for a short friendly conversation.

Mr. Hudson knew his customers and often did favors for them far beyond his job or call of duty. The Barkers were interesting and industrious workers. They "hustled" all the time, in the fields, garden or store. It was their custom, at the time, to keep most of the change used at the store in a lard bucket which they transported from the house to the store as needed. On this particular day, Lizzie was involved in conversation with Mr. Hudson and sat the lard bucket full of change on the running board of his A-model.

When the conversation, ended, Mr. Hudson drove away with the bucket on the running board, since he didn't see it from the driver's position.

Soon she realized the error, but the car was gone. The bucket spilled from the running board, but most of the change was recovered along the roadside, according to the report.

Somewhere along his route at one time there was a fellow named Bub Holder. So the story goes. He wa a black man and didn't have much mail coming to his rural box, but he was aware of everything that did arrive. After several months of delivering whatever he had for Bub, Mr. Hudson was one day met at the box by his patron. He had a slight problem, so the story goes: "Mr. Jack," he explained, "Everybody around here knows my name is Bub Holder, but here lately I've been gettin' somebody else's mail. Nearly all of it has been addressed to Box Holder, and you knows my name is Bub!"

Mr. Hudson promised to correct the problem and drove on.

August 2, 1995

A Golf Course With Sand Greens

Watching the British Open played at St. Andrews Old Course, the birthplace of Golf in Scotland, was TV worth seeing a few days ago. That is, if you're a golf fan.

One of the interesting aspects of that course is the fact that seven of the 18 greens are doubled. That is one huge green serves two fairways instead of the more conventional one fairway, one green concept.

It baffled the best of the pros with the well-placed traps and obstacles. The fact that John Daly, an American, also a recovering alcoholic, was able to prevail after being tied in regular play by a 65 foot putt by an Italian pro, was a high accomplishment.

At one time, there was a site near Oconee Mill that featured a nine hole golf course. I'm not sure when it was established, probably in the 1930s, but it was in place until the early 40s. A unique feature of this course, as I recall, was the fact it had sand greens. It is the only place I ever remember seeing sand greens. There were probably many others, but this was the only one I can recall.

The sand was packed and maintained a smooth putting surface. Located in what was called the "mill pasture," I think this course was probably built when Mr. J. M. Bruner was mill plant superintendent. Maybe he was assisted by Albert Willis, also a mill manager as well as one of the early Oconee Mountaineers baseball team coaches.

Some of those I can remember who played this unique course was Mr. J. M. Henderson, a shoemaker, and the grandfather of Nathan Nuckols; Mr. M. B. Self, school superintendent; Mr. Tom Mabry, coach, principal and teacher at Westminster High; and of course, Mr. Bruner and Albert Willis.

My first experience at seeing the course and sand greens came about when I was pressed into duty as a caddy for Joe Dillard and Frank Shirley, Jr. Hardly big enough to manage the bags and clubs, they insisted I could do the job. I tried, and somehow lasted the nine holes they played. I was surprised when they payed me about 25 or 30 cents for the service. Fortunately, back then there was only three

or four clubs in the small bag, and one of the most important jobs of caddy was to watch the ball to keep from losing it in the rough.

Both Shirley and Dillard attended school at Georgia Tech. Joe Dillard later served on the faculty there after WWII, and also at M.I.T., before he was employed with Westinghouse's nuclear projects all over the world. Unfortunately, Frank Shirley, Jr., was one of the casualties of World War II. He was serving aboard the Lexington when it was hit during the battle of the Coral Sea. Shirley's father, Frank, Sr., also served as one of Oconee County's supervisors and once lived in the house that was last occupied by Dr. H. R. Kuemmerer. Frank, Sr., was also one of the early golfers on the mill course featuring sand greens. It was probably his clubs that Frank, Jr., borrowed the day I was a caddy.

Westminster has had some interesting golfers who could do justice to the game. Scoring is important but playing the game at the Oconee Country Club has been a favorite challenge for a lot of folks. A regular match every weekend for many years featured Arthur King, Harold Hull, Glen Cox, and Leonard Chrisley or Frank Mitchell. T. Henry Wood, also an avid golfer, and one of the primary forces in building the Oconee course, had a great hand in its inception. Hubert Cashin, Bob Grogan, Dean Breazeale, Homer Hardy, Johnny Jones, Clark Wilmot, Jim Hunt, Tommy Aaron, Steve and Tony Grogan, Roy Strickland and Jimmy Dean Strickland, are just a few who have stroked the ball at Oconee. No small wonder Dunlop located a golf ball plant in our midst.

August 9, 1995

More Golf Stories Emerge

Rae Cain, retired peace officer and former Chief of Police in Westminster, had some thoughts about the column recently concerning the sand greens in the pasture behind Oconee Mill.

Rae called to remind all that I had left out one important player who knew a lot about that old golf course. He referred to Lafayette (Fate) McCarley. He also thought the original course may have been constructed during the middle to late 1920s. Rae said that

“Fate” was a regular player on the 9-hole course with sand greens, and was very good with the clubs. It was also part of “Fate’s” interest in the game to recruit caddies when he and others were ready to play. Rae said that Mr. J. M. Bruner, plant manager of the mill, had a big bag with more clubs than most other players. In fact, it was so big and heavy that many of the caddies who knew about it, would try to avoid carrying it, if possible.

“Fate” knew where to find caddies most of the time when the weather was good. He only had to whistle or holler down to the baseball field to line up some help.

“Fate” is still around and fairly active considering he recently had his picture in *The News* at age 93, sitting in the barber chair of Levis King, who recently renewed his barber license at the young age of 91. Both are going strong, considering how much history they’ve witnessed in this town and county.

Another thing Rae mentioned was the greens, sand that is, had to be protected from cows that were in the pastures where the golf course was built. There were fenced areas to keep the cows away for obvious reasons.

Also, the going rate for a caddy back then was 15 cents for nine holes, but if the player wanted to make two rounds, the caddy was paid 25 cents. Just how that bit of economic juggling happened is anyone’s guess. It was a period in our country when anyone was considered fortunate to earn even a quarter. They were hard to come by, and most any capable youngster would jump at the opportunity to make a few nickels.

Rae pointed out the sand greens also presented some problems that grass greens did not. For example, a golfer upon reaching the green would try to read the lay of the green for putting. Sometimes, in a rather slight-of-hand manner, a golfer could “accidentally” drag his club back toward the ball. This, of course, left a very slight indentation in the sand. Sometimes just enough to insure the ball was on a perfect track when putted toward the cup.

This pasture was more than a golf course for many families who lived near the mill and were employed there. This pasture was a place where any employee could have room to grow a garden in the

spring or raise hogs in an area set aside for that purpose. Also, some kept cows in a barn area and had fresh milk daily, direct to the consumer.

At one point, the boilers in the mill were fired with wood. The company bought wood, stockpiled it and used it from a corner of this pasture.

Willie Hawkins said many homes burn fire wood for fuel. He and his brother, Granville ("Granny") Hawkins to fit the stove and fireplace. I was a welcomed opportunity to earn a little money when it was very scarce.

If those pastures could talk, no doubt there would be enough information to write several chapters in an interesting book.

August 16, 1995

Long On Money, Short On Time

James R. Young, journalist, world traveller, turned 92 years young the other day. A resident of Anderson, he continues to be mentally alert though a bit slower physically. There's not many dull moments around Mr. Young, especially when he recalls events of the past 50 or 60 years.

He worked for some of the giants of journalism including William Randolph Hearst and E. W. Scripps. As a Secretary and Bursar, at one time, to E. W. Scripps, he sailed with him aboard his yacht, Sohio, and in fact, was with "The Ole Man" when he died. Young, accordingly notified his home and corporate office and was advised to arrange to bury him at sea. This was his wish.

Young explained that there was no metal aboard the yacht to fashion a coffin. The yacht pulled into port at a nearby town on the African coast. The only metal in the village, he explained, was a few pieces of galvanized roofing on some of the huts. By bribing and paying heavily for enough to fashion a coffin, a makeshift box was crafted from some metal roofing. A fitting ceremony was held aboard the yacht, and Scripps returned to the water he loved as he gently slid over the side.

Mr. Young said life was always interesting around Scripps. He

was full of adventure and sometimes made strange requests. Young carried currency and rather large amounts of gold in foreign ports where gold was the only acceptable medium of exchange. It was not unusual to have \$250,000 in currency at a time. That much would equal probably two or three million today.

Scripps never questioned or wanted to know what an item cost when he ordered Young to buy something. He had a favorite saying, according to Young, "Don't tell me how much it will cost...I don't want to know and don't care as long as you can pay for it...I'm long on money and short on time."

Don't try to tell James R. Young the U.S. should not have dropped A-bombs on Japan. While working for William Randolph Hearst in Tokyo prior to Pearl Harbor, Young was imprisoned by the Japanese for writing a story that involved movement of a large number of bicycles. The Japanese considered this classified information and arrested him. He spent several months in a prison while his wife, Marjorie, also a journalist for Hearst, implored all the authorities to release him.

He was finally released after much diplomatic intervention and a great deal of help from Hearst and his organization. In Japan, at that time, there was no jury trial. A prisoner was hauled before three Japanese judges who decide his fate. In Young's experience, at the court, he noticed one of the judges wore Greek fraternal letters of his old fraternity. Lambda Chi, I think, is the one, where Young as a student at Johns Hopkins University School of Business, was a member. This was indeed a break for him. His attorney established some common ground with this individual. The Japanese judge had been educated in the U.S. and luckily was a member of the same order. It was a key turning point in obtaining his release from prison.

When he returned to the U.S., he wrote about his experiences in a book, "Behind The Rising Sun," which was eventually made into a movie that featured James Cagney as the star representing Mr. Young. Those days were never dull back then, nor are they now when he so vividly recalls some of his experiences.

August 23, 1995

Ed Gilmer Would Love That Trip

Some "Wag" once remarked, "if God had intended for man to fly, He would have given him wings!" Perhaps. Maybe that's why he gave us the ability and talent needed to build wings, so he could, indeed, fly. Who knows? One thing's for sure, I believe if there's an airport in heaven, Ed Gilmer has landed there and is now circling the earth with a pair of celestial wings observing the futility of human kind.

Since he departed this earthly scene, the Toccoa, GA, airport will never be the same. Ed not only brought energy and talent to bear fruits of progress, but also a keen sense of humor. He was a one-man dynamo, a self-winding, one-man-chamber of commerce, who had a lot of fun with his fellow man. His range of acquaintances were from plain and simple to erudite and sophisticated. He loved them all. Strong in determination, yet kind in disposition, he seemed to always be having fun.

Ed especially liked anyone who liked airplanes. Any kind of plane. He would go far beyond the call of duty to assist anyone remotely interested in an airplane or the airport. Just how many youngsters got their first airplane ride with Ed at the throttle would amaze many if the facts were known. He kept a low profile on things like that and many other kindnesses he demonstrated down through the years. His memory and legacy live on each time I visit the airport. He was so much a part of it.

What this article started out to be was an accounting of at least one or more trips I made with Ed Gilmer to a little airstrip in Texas. Seguin, to be more precise. A nice area about 40 miles from San Antonio.

It was there where skilled craftsmen and engineers did modifications on Piper Apache aircraft. Not really a very big place, it was one where special designs and improvements were developed for the early model twin engine aircraft.

Ed had a special Apache with some of the Geronimo modes that had been developed at Seguin. He decided to place two new 180 h.p. engines on his plane, replacing two that had service left, but

were 160 h.p. My old Piper Apache needed the engines he was removing, so we struck a deal. Off we flew to Texas to make the exchange.

Mrs. Gilmer packed a really nice lunch for us. Complete with sandwiches, cookies, cold drinks and a lot of other special good things to eat. Everything was going well as we took off from Toccoa in my 1959 Apache. No special problems developed as we climbed out and up. The weather was great. You could see forever in most places along the route. We stopped at one point in Mississippi for a short break and fuel. Not long after leaving that point, we climbed up to about 7,000 feet and were about to cross the Mississippi River. Ed reached back for a big bag of potato chips Mr. Gilmer had packed. Suddenly the bag began to expand. The difference in atmospheric pressure was obvious. Suddenly there was a big pop. Potato chips went all over the cockpit. Ed didn't mind that so much, but as we were crossing the big river, he tried to tune the ancient ADF instrument. It didn't work too good either. All of the sudden there was another pop and a puff of smoke; we turned it off. There was no fire after that.

We arrived with all the pieces on the old bird and had an "on board" physics experiment along the way. Ed always recalled how it looked like it was "snowing potato chips."

Dining at the ole San Francisco Steak House in San Antonio, Texas was a lot of fun. Not only did they have delicious food but entertainment featured music from way back when the west was settled, complete with girls swinging out and above the diner on special built rigs suspended from the ceiling. Perhaps as it was on the Barbary Coast when the west was really wild. Great fun and good food.

Today Ed's son, Tommy Gilmer, heads Tugaloo Gas business that was founded by his grandfather and operated by Ed until his passing. Ed had Tommy flying airplanes not long after he was walking good. About a week or so past, Tommy Gilmer and Jim Hunt took a trip to Oklahoma City in Tommy's Aerostar, a rather fast Piper. From Toccoa to Oklahoma City in less than 4 hours in a propeller driven aircraft, ain't too shabby. It was a welcomed

change of pace for Jim Hunt who has several thousand hours logged in jets with US Air. Tommy is getting a new paint job on the Aerostar. Ed would like that, to make that trip back out to Oklahoma City to pick up the "bird" with the new exterior. He never ceased to be excited about things like that.

September 6, 1995

Flashbacks From the Past

Seeing the famous arch on TV as part of the program Saturday as the University of Georgia played the University of South Carolina in Athens, rekindles a few memories.

Dean John Drewry constantly reminded students in the Journalism School that this was, indeed, the oldest (1785) state chartered university in the U.S.A. Whatever that is worth, I've never been exactly sure, but it sounded good when Dean Drewry rolled it out in his Griffin, GA, drawl. He knew how to get attention and keep it for his lectures.

Perhaps just as memorable, on the corner across from the arch was the Varsity, a favorite eating and gathering place for students. While the Varsity was not an Athens original idea, it was well accepted. According to legend, the Varsity originally was established in Atlanta, near Georgia Tech. The story was that this was a result of a student who was supposedly enrolled at Tech during the 30s or 40s. Instead of applying himself to the academic rigors of college, he felt a need for more enterprising adventure. He began taking orders and delivering sandwiches for hungry students. Students are always hungry.

He had a natural market for his food...thus then began in Atlanta and finally a branch developed on the corner across from the arch in Athens.

Food is always a popular item around football games, and there's still a lot of places to eat just across the street from the arch. During the 40s, Coach Wally Butts had a favorite eating spot near the Varsity called the Huddle. It was a basement establishment that also had good food and drink and great atmosphere. You could easily forget any stress with a short break at the Huddle. There were

many such good places to eat...Poss's Bar-B-Q, the Co-Ed and lots of others.

Just behind the arch is one of the older administrative buildings on the Georgia campus. Here the campus bell stood and when the "Bulldogs" won a football game, the freshmen would take turns ringing the bell on throughout the night. It was tradition.

Some classes were conducted in these older buildings during the 1940s. Space of any kind was a premium. Some returning G.I.s from WWII were forced to sleep in makeshift quarters all over the area. A university with space for about 3500 students suddenly had about 5000 G.I.s looking for a place to eat, sleep and study, as well as the 3500.

On the second level of one of these old buildings, Prof. John Meadows taught from his famous book Contemporary Georgia. A required course that had vital statistics about the state, Dr. Meadows thought a lot of his book which he held over his heart, sort of like a Bible, when he was lecturing. One student almost ran the old Professor crazy the quarter I took his course. Gifted with the art of ventriloquism, a pharmacy student would constantly tantalize Dr. Meadows with sounds and voice that he could make appear from most any direction. At one point Meadows became so exasperated he yelled, "One of these days I'm going to find out who that is disrupting this class and I'm going to throw him out this window with my bare hands." He never did.

Nearby, the old Psychology building stood and here too, was a professor obsessed with hating radio commercials. Just mention a radio commercial and all other class instruction became history for that hour. It was fun and a lot different from some of the more demanding work.

September 13, 1995

Old school house memories

The sky was clear while a gentle breeze stirred ever-so-slightly last Thursday. It was not too hot nor too cold. Just one of those perfect, near-the-end of summer days with a slight hint of fall in the air.

Theron Gilden drove up in front of the old Westminster High School building in an immaculate 1963 Ford Thunderbird convertible.

His meeting me there was a pre-arranged event. His class of 1955 was having a class reunion on Saturday. Some members thought it would be interesting to take a tour of the old high school building. It was within my authority to show him in and at the same time explain the building did not appear as he probably last recalled seeing it.

Any building is hard to protect against vandalism, particularly old school buildings. This is no exception. While the late Dr. H.R. Kuemmerer tried very hard to keep and maintain the premises in a reasonable way, the job was challenging. Break-ins occurred, windows were smashed, obscenities splashed about here and there, pigeons moved into some deteriorating areas. Some signs supposedly used by gang members or devil-worshiping cults appeared in a few places. Evidence of entry, have been quite common. While there is nothing of much value in terms of monetary gain within the walls, it is difficult to continually try to maintain the structure.

Explaining the situation to Theron, he simply overlooked all the flaws that have been inflicted over the years. He was too excited to just get through the doors and walk down the halls one more time. Each room had a special meaning to him. Quickly, he identified each of the old classrooms and associated it with a teacher.

“Right over there in that corner,” he pointed out in one classroom, “I got the darnedest ‘whippin’ I ever had in my life from Mrs. Enoch Breazeale,” he explained. “She had me bend over a desk and applied the board of education,” he laughingly recalled. Whatever the offense was, he didn’t explain, but somehow I got the notion he believed the action was fully justified. This was at a time when teachers were not only authorized, but encouraged, to maintain classroom discipline with whatever means necessary. I understood and so did Theron.

Theron operates his own tax consulting and preparation business in the Seneca (Bounty Land) area. He is a successful businessman and a computer expert, the son of the late “Footsie” and Florrie Dillard Gilden. “Footsie” was a very famous first baseman for the

Oconee Mill Mountaineer baseball team for many years. While his ability to run was somewhat limited, he could usually hit the ball so far or out of the park the running was no big deal.

Other members of that class included "Junie" Cromer, now Rev. "Junie" Cromer who delivered the Sunday message at the Westminster Baptist Church where his father, Rev. Willie Cromer, served for more than 20 years. Following his father's profession, he has been a successful minister. Two others in this class were Celeste Felder, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W.C. Felder. The late Mr. Felder operated the Tugaloo Tribune here for years and later Felder Printing Company. Barbara Hardy Waters, I believe, was also a member of this class. Barbara for many years has been associated with the Oconee County Health Department. She and husband, Bobby Waters, live near the Oak Grove community. Celeste and her husband and family live in the Stone Mountain area, near Atlanta.

September 20, 1995

Coming Down Retreat Street, etc.

Seeing a real estate sign in front of the former Sam Reeder home on Retreat street stirs memories.

Mr. Reeder served as Mayor of Westminster several terms. I'm not old enough to remember when he first was elected, but he served several as Mayor and probably several as council member and maybe on the powerful Commission of Public Works.

Besides being active politically, civic-wise and other wise, Mr. Reeder also ran a business at the corner of Retreat and Main. He had a grocery and mercantile business where he was active almost to the day he died. He lived to be ninety plus years old.

At one point, Mr. Reeder owned a Hudson automobile. These cars were not the most popular cars on the market, but those who owned them liked them. They were not "lemons" as a general rule, but lacked marketing and dealership resources of bigger manufacturers. Mr. Reeder had one of the older Hudson cars to begin with and later traded for a 'streamline' model "Hudson Hornet" when

they first became available after WWII.

It was this later model, the more or less “souped-up” Hudson “Hornet” that many recall. Each day as surely as the sun came up, Mr. Reeder went to work during the weekdays. He had the sleek Hudson parked in his driveway and he would back out, heading for his business down on the corner of Main. It didn’t seem to bother him a great deal if there was traffic or anything else in the road. When it was time to go to work, you could depend on “Mr. Sam” being at the wheel of the Hudson heading for town.

While some knew it, Mr. Reeder had some impairment of vision. He could only see with one eye. However, this did not seem to be a factor as far as he was concerned. Just about the time he reached the “downhill” drop off from Augusta street, he would begin steering the “Hornet” toward the left lane. This was due to the fact his business was located on the left side of Retreat as he travelled north.

There was a traffic light at Retreat and Windsor street during some of the years he drove the “Hornet,” but again, this was only a minor inconvenience for “Mr. Sam” most of the time. Surely, a Higher Power looked out for him many times as she has for most of us, but a couple of times there were close calls.

One accident there involved “Mr. Sam” and the local police car. I never knew what the ruling of the court was in this case, but Mr. Reeder was not one to admit to faulty driving. He probably prevailed. Another accident caused extensive damage, but again no serious injuries. The old “Hornet” took good care of him. Too, I recall one trip that on business for the Red Cross, or some civic activity. When Frank got back to the News office on Main street after a ride with “Mr. Sam” out the Toccoa Highway, you’d have thought he was out taking a few practice rounds at Daytona.

Recent occupants of the Reeder home have just about totally reworked the home and premises before having to move away to be closer to work in Greenville. It is on the market, so the sign says. I often wonder what happened to the screened back porch where Eli Carter said Mr. Reeder slept during winter and summer months. He had curtains he pulled over the screen in cold wintertime. He must

have done something right, in addition to surviving his driving, he lived to an active life past 90 years. No small accomplishment.

September 27, 1995

Visit with Otis Waxes Nostalgic

Otis Mason of Isundega Street hasn't enjoyed good health for several years. For the past two or so he has hardly moved from his house. His ability to stand and walk is greatly impaired. He remains at home confined to his bed much of the time. His faithful wife, Beatrice, manages to help him up and down from his bed, give him his medication and generally care for him. Too, there is some assistance from Home Health Care, but the bulk of the work load falls on "Bea."

Time, hard work, wear and tear of living to be near 83 years old, exacts a price health wise. Otis has had an interesting life because he chose to make it that way.

A gifted man in mechanical arts, he began studying some techniques as he assisted Reuben Haley at his saw mill operation below town on the Oakway road. The work was hard and the lessons learned there stood with him down through the years. A man who could solve problems, large and small, devise or improvise, no challenge was pushed aside. Otis could and would persevere until the task was completed.

At one time he and Frank Cashin operated a "Fix-it" shop on East Main street, next door to where the Papa's Pizza place now stands. Both had returned from service....Frank from the Army and Otis from the Navy Seabees. It was sort of an in-between occupation while most service personnel returning from WWII were trying to determine a "way to go."

Later he worked for several big construction companies with contracts at the "bomb" plant in Aiken and many other places across the Southeast. His work also was needed in construction of the Oconee Nuclear Station on keowee river when Duke Power began that project.

It has been a lifetime of travel, adventure and hard work for Otis Mason much of the time. Not all of it was an agonizing process, for the man truly likes to solve problems. He had some interesting hobbies. At one time, Otis restored an old Stanley Steamer automobile, complete with a gas fired boiler. This was no small chore, for many of the parts he had to make from scratch.

Then there was a 1912 Maxwell car he restored and put into good running condition. One like, comedian Jack Benny used as part of his joke routine on radio and television. Then there was a 1902 Sears car that looked more like a buggy than a motor vehicle. Otis put it to running and drove it in several parades around the county.

In the late 40s or early 50s several movies were being filmed in the area. One featured Susan Hayworth, a star by anyone's standards. Otis was called upon for technical help and advice when the movie, "I'd Climb The Highest Mountain" was filmed in Northeast Georgia. His restored Maxwell appears in that picture as he drove Susan to the church in one of the scenes. The church is a little picturesque sanctuary located near Helen, GA., nestled in a shady cove near the old "Indian Mounds" just north of the old Sautee store.

Always interested in self-playing pianos, Otis built one that performed amazingly well. Not only did it feature self-playing piano rolls, but he also attached about 15 other instruments that were incorporated in the musical system. It was a work of art that few could have accomplished.

Too, I saw the results of Otis taking a tiny picture of a mechanical drawing of a carburetor from a 33 h.p. Fairbanks Morse upright, one cylinder engine and fashion a working carburetor from a blank piece of metal. Through a blown-up version of the photo, he was able to establish a system that works. the engine was used to power the old Johns' corn mill after the water-power wheel was discontinued.

The man is considered a genius in many areas. We can only wish for him some kind of miracle to get him back on his feet again.

October 4, 1995

Now, That's Sho' Nuff Poor!

Frank Howard, great legendary Clemson coach, was not only successful in his chosen profession, but was a gifted speaker as well. Before his failing health he was invited to speak to many distinguished groups. He was never pretensive. Beneath that "good ole country boy" style there was an astute scholar. He knew the way in and the way out. With a down-home gift of gab, he would render listeners spellbound with his homespun yarn. As a country boy from Barlow Bend, Alabama, he played on the same team with "Bear" Bryant at the University of Alabama. And was named to the All-American roster. He was serious about the game when he played it and later as he coached. At the same time, he managed a sense of humor that would capture the toughest audience.

C.L. Smith, late SLED agent from Westminster, was a great friend of Coach Howard and was an active member of the "coffee club" that once gathered each morning at the Clemson Holiday Inn. While C.L. could probably match Howard in some ways, their experiences were somewhat different. C.L. was serious about his work, too, but he also found humor in part of it. He had the ability to remember details and embellish them as the need arose. He and coach Howard were complimentary in many ways.

Several times I had the pleasure of sitting in on a "coffee club" meeting and hearing the "Masters" at work. One particular meeting got around to discussing family background of "pure poverty" as they discussed their early days.

In fact, most had come from very modest beginnings. This was almost universally true of those born near the early part of the century. Coach Howard came from a farming background and used his talent to gain an education at Alabama where he excelled on the field of play and in the classroom. As one after another described some of the dire situations that challenged them growing up with less material goods, it finally came around to Howard.

He slowly drawled his bit of wisdom about the situation down home on a farm in Alabama: "Boys," he mused, "Things was so tough for us down at Barlow Bend that when 'maw' came to the

kitchen door to throw the dog a bone, he had to signal for a fair catch!" No one topped that one. Not even C.L. Smith who was seldom at a loss for words.

There may be coffee clubs, but never again will there be one as full of wit and wisdom as the "good ole boys" who gathered at the Holiday Inn each morning.

It's difficult to think of Clemson and the legendary players who have contributed so much through the years without recalling one alumnus who was a "Tiger" faithful fan forever. Clayborn Davis was a real Clemson booster from day one. He had graduated in Engineering and worked for Shell Oil company until he moved back to Oconee and opened his own service station business. A really interesting character in his own right, Clayborn never wavered in his support for the "Tigers."

It was always great fun to hear his predictions and observations as the football team played. Another great friend of Coach Howard and the "Tigers" was M.D. Cleveland. Always a dependable supporter, Marshal was "for 'em" whether winning or losing.

October 18, 1995

It Was Lip-Smackin' Good...Until

Arthur Klugh is manager of Nations Securities office in Anderson. He's been around a few years and likes to recall some of his friends and experiences in Oconee County.

"Did you ever know T. Henry Wood?" he asked.

"Of course," I replied. "Anyone in this area in the late 30s or 40s probably knew Mr. Wood."

T. Henry came to Oconee County from Calhoun Falls and was plant manager of Oconee mills during a period of time when it began to grow from a modest yarn mill to a very competitive plant producing finished Beacon blankets.

T. Henry was a promoter from "the old school," as he remarked in later years when he was running for State Senate seat from Oconee.

Arthur Klugh had a story about being a member of the "Whitewater Fishing Club" in Oconee county where T. Henry and Julian Pruitt were also members.

I vaguely recall the "Whitewater Club." It was located in the famous Whitewater Falls area of Oconee where it joins the North Carolina border. Several sportsmen, particularly fishermen, from Anderson, Oconee and perhaps, Pickens County, were members and supporters. The group built a little cabin in the area where trout fishing was especially good. Probably, they used the cabin facility for hunting when the fishing season ended. It was fairly well equipped, according to Klugh.

It was customary, according to Klugh, to appoint a cook for the sportsmen who came to meet and participate in the activities. On one special fishing expedition, members put in a good day working the lines for trout. They came back to the cabin to shower, change from their fishing gear, relax, perhaps have a drink and eat some offerings of the day.

On this one outing, members were especially impressed with a new appetizer being offered prior to the main meal. Klugh said everyone was in a good mood as they sipped a "cool one" and munched on a special bit of meat on a cracker. The whole group was impressed with this tasty appetizer and were busy goblin' them up just about as fast as they were served.

No one seemed to know what the "special appetizer" was, most didn't care. They were enjoying the tasty food, and didn't ask too many questions.

Finally, someone being served, was curious about the "new dish" being served. The cook, whose name Klugh didn't recall, was reluctant to discuss his secret food preparation. Finally, someone prevailed and he announced the special dish...nothing less than good rattlesnake meat!

All went well up to that point of reaction, Klugh recalled. Some were heaving the stuff while others became angry and was threatening the cook.

One fellow really became so upset about the matter to the point he was physically threatening to whip the cook's post anterior and

had to be restrained by other members.

It was one outing Klugh said he'd never forget.

October 25, 1995

He Didn't Speak the Language...if!

The founding fathers of this country must be turning back-flips in their graves by now. Especially when some public issues arise...such as the adoption of an official language. Recent reports are there is strong objection to adopting "English" as the official language of the USA.

There has always been pockets of ethnic areas in our larger cities where the primary language spoken was that of forbearers. At the same time, most of the signs and public communication in the country has been in English terms. It has, for generations, been the prevailing way most Americans learn and communicate. To make it "official" stirs areas where little or no attempt has been made to adopt it. For example, one report was the highway department in the state of California offers the drivers test in 43 different languages. Probably it doesn't matter that much since it is in California, but it should.

It is my feeling, if anyone makes his way into this country by whatever means possible, legal or otherwise, then it should also be his or her business to learn the chief means of communication that prevails, English. That is especially true if there is, expectation to participate in our daily affairs of business or commerce.

We, nor the taxpayers of any state, should be compelled to render a special language service to those who care not to participate in the prevailing system. This could get into a maze of complications and already has in some states. An "official" adoption of English can at least set the record straight from a legal standpoint.

The matter of learning another language does present some interesting situations. For example, about 25 years ago, a textile man known to many throughout Oconee County, was originally from Switzerland. Someone remarked that the Swiss language is more like a spoken disease than a defined language. Andy Greuter,

the person referred to, was a skilled designer in the specialized field of warp knitted fabrics. He knew his business and came to Oconee County working with Cone Mill in Walhalla after that company had purchased Kenneth Mills and set up a knitting department.

Andy knew how to speak English rather well. In fact, he said it was taught in his country along with other languages to children when they first enter school. Andy spoke so elegantly, when necessary, that he married a local young lady, Peggy Lee, from Coffee Road, near Westminster. They have been living in Switzerland with their three boys for several years. Since we've had no contact for a couple of years, it is assumed they continue to live there where Andy operated his own plant which was originally established by his father.

Andy bought a car when he first came to this part of the country. He loved that car and drove it rather fast and sometimes sort of "wild." I was curious about his driving habit and asked him if he had a driver's license.

He looked at me with a rather questioning countenance and replied: "No, not yet." This puzzled me a bit, for I knew he made some rather long trips to Greenville and Spartanburg and had been driving several months.

"Have you been stopped," I asked. "Ya," he replied, "but when they ask me a lot of questions about my license, I show them a Swiss license, and speak to them in Swiss language."

"So far most of the officers just say, 'Aw heck, go on.'" Andy drove over here three years before he finally got his S.C. driver license. He didn't speak the language...if it was necessary.

November 1, 1995

A Glance Backward Now and Then

Looking at a clipping from an August 15, 1984, *Westminster News*, brings back interesting thoughts.

One story (with a picture) that I believe was written by Gary Crain, concerned the late Arvel Robinson. While the story identified him as "Orville", I think his real name was Arvel. However,

since the matter dealt with Robinson's prototype of a spacecraft, perhaps the handle, "Orville" was more in keeping with the spirit of the project.

No doubt about it, Arvel was an independent thinker. He was also one of the more skilled machinist/welders in the business. It looks rather sad and desolate to pass his place on Walhalla highway and see it completely shut down. Since his unfortunate death, there has been no business activity at the location.

The story with a "super speed space ship" developed at his shop. Robinson also was a minister of a church located next door to his Oconee General Repair shop. The sign outside read: FSOKJVB church. I once asked him exactly what these letters represented and he wrote for me on a piece of paper; "Father, Son, of King Jesus, Virgin Born." The photo, which Crain featured with his story, showed the frame outline of his spacecraft sitting on top of a steel mesh structure that was supposedly used as a "jail" for locking up any members of his church congregation if they became "unruly." Arvel believed in strict discipline.

Local police were called one time to investigate charges of Robinson locking up members, according to the story, and found two people locked inside the steel cage.

"You can't lock up people like that," said the police.

Arvel stopped for a moment and observed: "Well, they're in there, ain't they?"

The planned spacecraft was the result of a direct communication from The Lord according to the story. He was carrying out a Divine "calling" as it was revealed to him, plans for the spacecraft from a Higher Power.

The Framework of the craft was made of special prestressed aluminum. It was light and strong. A motor for the ship was being built by another individual Robinson didn't identify. However, he mentioned that it would be powered by a special "Bourke 400 which will be capable of reaching up to 60,000 rpm's."

He further explained, "The motor has been in existence for years and was used experimentally in aircraft. But, the motor was so powerful it would rip right off an airplane. In my model it will be

located in the center of the craft, so the force will be equally distributed.”

“Each curve or circle in the framework is exactly the same. The center curve that circles the craft horizontally is exactly the same as the vertical curves of the ship. This distributes the air equally around the spacecraft,” he explained.

Regarding high temperatures of space travel, Robinson said the outside would be covered with special layers of carbon, similar to tile used on the space shuttle.

As the story revealed, completion of the project was on “hold” as the builder was awaiting “further instructions from the Lord.”

The story and picture with it created a lot of attention when it was published. I have an idea that Arvel is “up there” somewhere going over the plans for this most unusual project.

November 8, 1995

Professional Pathologist or Pilot

Dr. James (Jim) Pruitt, Pathologist, and laboratory head at Oconee Memorial Hospital, could just as easily been a professional pilot. He, in fact, was offered a job as such with the old Piedmont Airlines. Piedmont was the successful part of a merger that brought Allegheny from Pittsburgh together to form US Air. Until recently US Air has seen some very rough economic times, but seems to be healing a bit at present.

His skill as either a professional medical man or an airline pilot would have been equally interesting. While he chose his primary stake in medicine, there is no doubt he would have been up to the challenge on the other course.

What brings this up at this time was a chance meeting recently with Dr. Pruitt. He loves flying airplanes and has developed a real skill he continues to practice. Exactly how long he has been flying his own craft is not known to me, but I would guess about 25 years or more.

By chance, I've made several interesting trips with Pruitt in his plane. Some I'll never forget. Interesting things just seemed to

have happened....some of the time.

I once asked Jim Hunt if he had ever seen a tornado form the air. He said he had observed them in the Midwest during the season, but tried to give 'em all the room he could for obvious reasons. However, he said that he saw one on his radar screen in the Miami area in recent times. On the screen it appeared as a "big coma" and commanded a lot of respect from the crew.

Well, I can recall a trip with Jim Pruitt to Conway, SC, many years ago during the early spring. Tornado warnings were issued by the weather service, so we were proceeding cautiously from Conway heading to Oconee airport. Just beyond Florence, probably about 15 miles or so, there appeared a row of thunderstorms on the horizon. They were moving in an easterly direction about 25 m.p.h. Suddenly there appeared two funned clouds, very pronounced, and two other, not so defined. We observed this phenomena with great interest and respect. In fact, we turned the aircraft 180 degrees and headed for the nearest port in Florence. While we were several miles from the main thrust of these storms, we barely got down and secured the craft when I saw a 55 gallon metal drum spin and go up in the air just like a kite in a March wind. At that moment, I was convinced we had made a wise choice in not "playing with Mother Nature." It was a moment that sticks clearly in memory.

We stayed on the ground until the weather improved and made it safely to the Oconee port. Later we learned these tornado clouds had hit in several places: Chester, Rock Hill and on into North Carolina.

On another trip to a little private strip on the other side of Mt. Mitchell and Grandfather Mt. in North Carolina, I recall having to spiral down about 7,000 feet between the hills in order to effect a safe landing. It was fun and a beautiful location with a trout stream running near the runway. This particular port had the advantage of having a church on one end of the runway and a graveyard at the other.

Spiraling upward about 8,000 feet in order to clear the mountains on departure, one could see cows grazing alongside lush green hills. It was a matter of choice and great fun along with the skilled

pilot, Dr. Jim Pruitt. He probably would have been a success in any of the professions that begin with a "P".

November 15, 1995

Someone You Know is Never Far Away

A visit recently to friendly dentist, Dr. David G. Johnson, brought back a few memories. Dr. Johnson observed that he had reached the age of 59 and one-half years and the thought of retirement had crossed his mind. How serious he was at the moment may be another matter, for there is a considerable number of patients who depend on him for expert dental care. That also goes for his efficient assistant, Debbie. After all, she has the authority to "get you in and out" for appointments.

Certainly when she's assisting with "cleaning" your teeth, it would be best not to offend her to the point where she may let an instrument "slip" at a critical moment.

Dr. Johnson attends ADA meetings wherever they happen to be. One of the latest was in Las Vegas. He said he didn't particularly care for gambling as a form of entertainment, but he was impressed with the way the casinos entice customers to keep that money falling into the coffers. "The personnel go out of their way to make everything convenient for a customer to keep on playing. Whatever service is needed is conveniently provided," he observed. Another thing is the very modest cost for hotel and restaurant accommodations. Those people want you to be comfortable and keep playing the games. In an effort to make their case more acceptable to the public, the term, "gambling" has been transformed to "gaming." That may sound better when you lose. You will probably do just that if you think "skill" will defeat a mechanical device (slot machine) that is pre-set to win for the house.

This is not intended to be an endorsement for or against gambling. Personally, I have found it a form of entertainment, but not a way to earn a living on a consistent basis. A fellow I once know in Athens, GA., had the "bug" really bad. He would bet on practically anything. Especially, he loved card or poker games. Sometimes the stakes would be high, but he gambled for the sake

of gambling. One day he might have “big bucks” in his pocket, the next day he may be floating loan for his next meal. He was addicted. Don’t know if he ever got “cured.”

Dr. Johnson has made many trips during the past 30 or more years to convention meetings and vacations. He recalled on time, many years past, he was enjoying a visit to one of the islands in the Bahamas. It was during the colder months here, while the balmy weather in the Caribbean islands was soothing to mind, body and soul.

Turning the corner around a little building, suddenly Dr. Johnson bumped into me. “Never in my wildest imagination did I think of seeing anyone from Westminster on that island,” he noted.

Sometimes you are not as far away from someone you know as you may think. I recall an experience in California during the mid-1940s. While standing in a Navy “chow line” about a mile long, I happened to notice a sailor step out of line for a moment. He was way up in front of me. I asked the fellow next in line to hold my place a few minutes. I walked up the long line until I came to the fellow who had stepped out. He was none other than Ike Teasley, a black friend I’d played with as a youngster and who, at one time, shined shoes in *King’s Barber Shop* in Westminster.

November 22, 1995

In The Rocket’s Red Glare

Theron Gilden has his own tax accounting business over in the Bounty Land community between Walhalla and Seneca. He’s been in business for himself for several years. Prior to that he was a “computer man” for Kendall, a textile plant just down the road from his present location.

Theron grew up in Westminster, son of “Footsie” Gilden, famous, hard-hitting First Baseman for the textile team of Beacon Manufacturing, the Oconee Mountaineers.

He has a lot of fond memories of his early childhood. In fact, he recalled his first experience with capitalism was when he began selling fireworks on a commission basis. Pete McGuffin, founder

and owner of Pete's Drive In at the intersection of Main and Windsor street, was his first boss. He explained during the Christmas holiday season Pete set him up in a little make-shift, slab constructed stand where he merchandised fireworks on a commission basis. It was a good way for a young kid to pick up some money. There weren't many ways for a youngster to earn money in the 1940s and 50s so any opportunity was seized.

Theron not only sold a lot of fireworks during the holiday season, but he had some experience in setting them off.

It was a time when there wasn't a lot of extra-curricular activities for youngsters. Many had to improvise or manufacture excitement. Most of the time it was harmless adventure.

One thing he recalled was the natural contour of the town's main street from in front of the former Felder Print Shop to the Depot area. A slight rise in the road from East to West on Main Street provided a perfect launching pad for a sky rocket. At that time, 1940s, the Westminster police station consisted of a little brick building located on the corner of the Depot property.

Theron says he doesn't recall who the police department consisted of at the time, but it could have been "Smokey" Smith, C.R. Duncan, Virgil Hardy, Bill Bloodworth, or perhaps others. All good officers, determined to keep the peace as best they could.

However, when Theron and some of his cohorts wanted a bit of excitement, they would carefully launch a big sky rocket down Main Street from the "natural pad" of the road. This, of course, would bring forth a response from local police in the little brick station house. Especially since the rocket would usually reach its climactic display at the Depot location. By the time police began their search for culprits, they would disappear beyond the railroad and behind buildings. It was a form of entertainment in an era when you created your own, for the most part.

Another fireworks trick that caused a lot of consternation for M.V. Brockman, owner and operator of the Broxy Theatre on Main was when youngsters would hide behind the big bank near the center of town underpass and launch cherry bombs with a slingshot toward the theatre. This, of course, was more dangerous than the

rockets red glare down Main Street.

Fortunately no one was ever reported injured. A loud, explosive report would “shake up” patrons at the theatre and along that section of Main Street.

November 29, 1995

In Search of a Cure

During the early 1940s there was no known medical cure for tuberculosis. Bed rest was the main treatment. That was seven days a week, 21 hours a day, with limited exercise to bathrooms and other hospital clinics. A lot of GIs returning from WWII had contracted the “bug” and were being treated in service hospitals and Veterans Administration hospitals.

Oteen, near Asheville, NC. was a veterans facility that dated back to World War I. Moore General Hospital in Swannanoa, NC. had been an army hospital of temporary status to treat wounded GIs from WWII. It was later converted to a Veterans Hospital facility and became a part of Oteen, only a few miles away. Both, at one time treated t.b. patients.

While these facilities were as good as any in the USA at that time, the “bug” continued to rage. There were surgeries and other treatments that gave limited relief, but no oral medications such as those available today to fight the bacteria infection that was usually located in the lungs.

It was believed, during the post WWI period, that fresh air was a helpful ingredient. With luck, those patients with cavitated areas would, through body chemistry, develop a calcifying process that would “close off” the infected area. The “bug” was then in an “arrested” state. The patient was considered “cured” if there was no positive sputum or other signs of infection for a reasonable amount of time.

World War I GIs who survived the screened in “sleeping porches” in search of fresh air the year around were lucky indeed. A lot of them didn’t make it. This theory was one of the early trial and error methods of treating the “bug.” It was generally discontinued

by the time GIs from WWII returned. Antibiotics, such as streptomycin, were early fighters against t.b. and were quite effective in many cases.

Having spent more than a few months in hospital facilities, I saw some die who, it appeared, had better than even odds of being "cured." Others, who sometimes seemed doomed to die, would somehow beat the odds. It was an unsure situation most of the time. Only after effective drugs were developed could a reasonable prediction be made.

The confinement to the hospital ward was a great disciplinarian. The "bug" made no class distinction among patients. It was equally unkind to all.

One GI from a coal mining area of West Virginia, tried the patience of a ward physician who had escaped Hitler's purge in Germany. A man of short stature, patients quickly named him, "Stumpy."

"Stumpy," the physician, came in one day to examine the W. VA, coal miner.

He placed his stethoscope on his back and said to the patient, "Say ninety-nine."

The patient responded, "Say Ninety-nine."

"Stumpy" said, "No, I am the doctor...you are the patient...say ninety-nine."

Patients response, "No, I am the doctor...you are the patient...say ninety-nine."

This procedure was repeated about three or four times.

Finally, "Stumpy" in his broken English said, " Well, if you are the doctor...then you can cure yourself."

He threw his stethoscope on the bed and stormed out of the room as the miner from West Virginia broke up in laughter.

December 6, 1995

Things Look Different From The Air

Earth's blemishes tend to disappear when you ascend high enough in an aircraft and get a good clear view of Mother Earth. It's

not that they disappear. It just seems as if the mosaic forms overshadow less tasteful patterns that emerge at earth's eye-level view.

All of this blending together causes problems for student pilots who are trying to learn a bit of navigation by dead reckoning. That is probably one reason an instructor was concerned the other day when one of his student pilots got lost on a return solo trip from Greenwood to Toccoa. It was not really a big deal. Everything was resolved in good fashion. Going from point A to point B in a small airplane as a student pilot can be challenging. Only experience will overcome the problems. More familiarity with the view and instruments will generally solve the problem.

Someone said there are two kinds of pilots: those who say they have never been lost and those who lie about it. If the truth be known not there's not many who at some point, have not been disoriented (lost) to some extent. Confused, many times, but not forever. The fact that you do not know exactly where you are every minute is not nearly so important as knowing how to know where the field is and assured that this is the right place.

It hasn't been so many years ago when an airline pilot landed a 737 jet at Augusta, Ga.'s Daniel Field instead of metropolitan Bush Field. There is a big difference. Fortunately, no one was injured, and the plane was actually flown out of Daniel.

Fred Clark, an instructor at Toccoa airport several years past, told of a plane that landed in Athens, Ga., one day with two experienced pilots on board. Fred said they go out, looked around a bit, and walked over to the FBO's office where someone greeted them.

"What's the name of this place?" one asked.

"This is Athens," the attendant replied.

"Athens, what?" was the next question.

It didn't take a genius to discern there was some confusion here.

Allen Morehead, Pat Donovan and I once made a sort of emergency trip to Augusta, GA in a plane which belonged to a pilot based in Toccoa. The owner insisted on making the trip, too and actually flew the plane from Toccoa to Daniel Field in Augusta. It was late in the afternoon when we left Toccoa, and before we could make the return trip, it was almost dark.

The plane's owner, a licensed pilot, always had some problem with finding his way, but was usually on the safe side, even if lost. returning at night presented a few other problems that daylight with good visibility does not present. Setting the heading back toward Toccoa was not a big problem. With the owner in the co-pilot's right seat, he continually believed we were not on course. While he moved nearly every navigational instrument on board except the magnetic compass, he declare at least five or six times we were lost. No one argued with him, but we held the course in spite of all the rhetoric.

Finally Toccoa beacon came in view as a tiny little light. Even as we were landing safely back home, the owner of the plane was firmly convinced we were landing at the wrong place.

One thing about it, though, he was forever consistent.

December 20, 1995

Civil War Trials and Tribulations

This country has known no war as devastating to so many as the Civil War. It touched virtually every citizen in some way. The death of more than 650,000 was extremely great, especially since the country was far less populated in the 1860s. The following story was written by my great Grandmother on my father's side of the family. It is especially meaningful to me since I recall having seen her on two or three visits to her home along with my father. It is self-explanatory and reproduced here as it was in *The Winder (GA) News*, October 29, 1976 in a special edition produced there:

Editor's note: (Mrs. J.M. Johnson of Winder wrote this letter to Mrs. W.H. Felton, first woman U.S. Senator, in 1905 as the result of a request by Mrs. Felton for stories about soldiers' wives and widows who lived during the Civil War. It is part of the history being compiled by the Barrow County Historical Society in an effort to print a volume recounting the county's past.)

"When the war first broke out, I had just turned into my 16th year. Our family consisted of father, mother, my four brothers and myself. I was the oldest child.

In October 1862, father left to join the Virginia Army at Lynchburg. Shortly after, he was exposed to smallpox and was placed in a detention hospital, and there he died.

Oh! It was awful! We were not allowed to go to him and he had to die there alone among strangers.

The next call for recruits took my eldest brother. He was shot dead by Sherman's advance guard between Atlanta and Macon.

It seemed more than we could bear, but, of course, we were obliged to bear it. Our condition was simply dreadful, with no one to lean upon, mother never well and broken down completely with her sorrows. All our kinspeople had gone to the army, and there was no one to hire to make a crop.

Indeed, there were but two men left in our settlement, one crippled blacksmith, the other a doctor, both entirely useless towards making a crop to live upon. As we had to live of course we had to work.

I and two small brothers undertook to make a crop. We planted a little cotton to make our own clothes and some corn, syrup cane, and potatoes to eat. We also raised a little indigo to color the cloth for our Sunday clothes. We had no clothes of any kind, save as we carded, spun and wove the cloth.

We made a fine crop too, although I and the little boys plowed and made it. We were at work near the river the day Atlanta fell in the enemy's hands. We heard the cannons roar all day long.

No one can describe my feelings during that long hot sultry day as we barefooted ones toiled in the field under a broiling sun! We expected the Yankees to raid all over the country. Some five or six hundred of them came by one afternoon. A terrible fright it was to see them, but the scare was the greatest damage they did to us that time.

They met two of our men in front of our house, shot one of them, but did not kill him. Our soldiers were close behind them. Next morning they captured and killed nearly all of the raiders at Price's bridge, about three miles above us, on Mulberry River. I certainly never put over such a night as that in my life.

My brothers had taken off our horses to hide them, and stayed out all night. My mother, baby brother and myself were all alone, too frightened to sleep so we sat in the dark and listened. Surely I never heard the katydids go on as they did that night. It seemed as if morning light would never come.

A little after midnight, good old Doctor Goass came to see what had happened to us, if we had been hurt, etc. It frightened us nearly to death when he called to us in the darkness.

He told us to hide any little valuables, trinkets and anything we prized, as the Yankees were taking everything in sight. So mother and I gathered what we could, put them in a little box, and I started out to hide them, with the box under my arm, and a mattock on my shoulder.

I took the plantation road toward the river. The woods were thick on each side. I can never describe my feelings, a barefoot girl, at 3 o'clock in the morning, hunting a place to bury that box.

I came to a big log heap, not far from a fence, so I crawled over the logs, regardless of snakes, and began to dig the hole. I seemed to be afraid of nothing, but Yankees. Before I had the box buried, I was horrified at hearing a terrible racket down the road. I could think of nothing but Yankee raiders, and I almost fainted with pure fright.

I flattened my poor self down on the ground like a bat. I never was large, and I guess I was smaller than ever before then. On they came and I shivered with dread.

It proved to be a drove of hogs my brother had driven away to save and they were rushing home to find something to eat. I could do nothing more that night after these varied experiences.

For three years, we rarely had a biscuit to eat. We burned hickory wood to get lye to use in cooking. When we had a pie, the crust was of corn meal, and the sweetening homemade sorghum syrup.

For coffee we used rye, cornmeal, bran, okra and parched potatoes, just as we could manage to get them. We made our salt by digging up smokehouse dirt and putting it in a box, ran water through it and boiled and strained it for a little salt.

As for clothing, we had none, unless we manufactured the cloth at

home. I have worked hard in the field all day, at night worked hard spinning, knitting and sewing to keep the family in clothes. I have my old spinning wheel yet. It has no value except as curiosity.

I hope no other person had such a hard time as I had in those days. I learned to split straw and plait hats. I gave five dollars to get the first one made to learn myself how to shape the hat. After I dyed the plaited straw and put it together, I lacked trimming.

Finally I sewed together some scraps of velvet, picked out the red and black feathers from a rooster's neck and trimmed up what we all thought was quite a respectable dress hat.

After the war ended there was nobody to come home and help us make a living. We simply had to work on the best we could. Of course, I had my soldier sweetheart. In the winter of 1865, we were married.

He served four long years in the army, first with Morgan, then with Sixteenth Georgia. Exposure ruined his health. He was never stout any more.

Seven little children have been given us. I lost the first, a blue eyed darling, at three years of age. It was great trial. But it was nothing compared to standing beside my married daughter's dying bed when she left me a little infant to rear, only three weeks old.

Then my cup of sorrow overflowed. It was a sad New Year's Day to me. I travelled five miles in a buggy with the little babe in my lap, the ground frozen so hard the wheels did not make a track.

I have her yet, nearly 14-years-old, and she is real smart; can play the organ and piano and pick 245 pounds of cotton in a day. (Ed. note: the babe is now Mrs. Claudie Harris.)

In addition to her, I have three girls of my own. They can cut and make their own clothes, and are not too proud to pick or chop cotton either, if necessary. At night they can play and sing like they were never tired.

I have two noble boys. One lives on the farm, caring for his parents and sisters, raises everything at home to live on. The other is an engineer at the Atlanta Terminal Station, and has an interesting family.

I am proud that my children have had better advantages than myself, and I am so thankful to have these good children to care for me in my old age. They are a blessing to me, and I enjoy life every day that I live.

My trials were great, but I have a hope to eternal rest in the 'sweet by and by'."

January 10, 1996

It's Snow Snake Season Again!

Back when folks were dinin' and dancin' at the ole Rink-A-Dink Club off the Greenfield road, near Westminster, there just wasn't much indoor plumbin' available.

As a matter of fact, there was a lot of things that don't matter that much to folks visiting down there. It was a building constructed of sheet metal, five - v tin placed horizontal on a concrete slab.

It suited the owner and operator, Herman W. "Foggy" Dickson, and most of his friends and customers who visited him.

Only thing was, on a cold and frosty mornin' things got sort of chilly down there. When the temperature fell, "Foggy" would call on Lee "Bozzie" Lyles, his erstwhile assistant, to throw on some more coal or wood in the big space heater.

There had been some weather sort of like the kind we've had here lately, cold, icy, and smattering of snow thrown in. It was winter. Some danced to keep warm. Some drank a popular brand of antifreeze. Others ate, drank coffee, or just wrapped up in the atmosphere.

On this particular night, it was droppin' down to the bitter cold range. It was gettin' late in the evening, and things began to slow up some. "Foggy" just sat patiently on his perch, observed and waited on any customers wanting service. All those gathered seemed to be enjoying the fun and witty comments that popped up every now and then.

Finally, one of the ladies doing some of the dancin' stopped and moved over to near where "Foggy" was seated.

"Mr. Dickson," she inquired, "Do you have a rest room down