

extra dash of alcohol was “sloshed” in the vat just for good measure to the consumer, but Hadacol took off like a bat outa hell.

There were tractor-trailer loads of the stuff moving up and down the main highway arteries of the South. There was promotion like no other patent medicine in recent history. At one point, the old Atlanta “Cracker” baseball stadium was rented for an event that featured Mickey Rooney, popular actor, and the price of admission was one or two box tops from Hadacol.

All kinds of jokes began to arrive along with various patent medicines. I recall Jack Dillard telling about some woman who was having trouble with her stomach. She testified before an audience that “Only after taking two bottles of Hadacol she was cured and will now put her stomach up against anyone’s.”

Another fellow, Jack reported, had a peg leg. Some problems were encountered and he decided to try Hadacol. After only two bottles, that peg leg grew a sprout!

Hadacol, as best I recall, was the property of one Senator LeBlanc, from Louisiana. He apparently knew the market stand, and for a healthy 20 million dollars (when it sho nuff counted) he sold Hadacol, lock, stock, and barrel. In a short while later, no one had heard of it or ever cared, it seemed.

I was discussing this phenomena with James R. Young and Bill Prevost in Anderson, when someone wondered about the name, Hadacol.

Mr. Young said someone suggested they Hadacol it something, so they just agreed on Hadacol.

June 12, 1996

Strength, Courage And Hope

James (Jimmy) DuPre, retired Supt. of Education and now a member of the County School Board, once remarked, “If I were in a difficult position in a distant place, needing help, not knowing which way to turn, or what to do, there is one person I could call upon and feel sure that he would do everything possible to help.” He was referring to Roy B. Strickland. I, too, share that point of

view, and know first hand, that this was one man you could depend on when the “going got tough.”

In recent months Roy has had health problems that may have already “done a lesser person in.” Not so with Roy. Not only has he and his family standing with him overcome tremendous odds, he continues his battle on a daily basis. Sometimes one hour at a time. Roy is a competitor in every sense of the word. He doesn’t entertain negative thoughts and ideas. He is quick to tell you he is “doing alright” no matter what. He’s that kind of man.

It would take many chapters to begin telling about the things Roy has been able to accomplish during his professional life. He has served in nearly every position a professional teacher, coach and educator experienced during the last 45 years or so. Generally, he has been successful in all endeavors. He has great compassion for the professional teacher that goes one-on-one with students each day. He had shown even more understanding and compassion for students themselves. Not a “yes man” to every little innovation that happens along., Roy has the courage to speak his mind, no matter what others may think of convictions. There are probably some who believe he has been a “thorn in the side” of the County School Board every time they present a budget. Think what you may, this man has been on both sides of the fence and knows the ropes as well as anyone. He is against excessive spending on administrative “crap” that has little or nothing to do with the student product. This is no secret and never has been. It’s just one example of where and how he has “hung tough” when a lot of fellow travelers weren’t hanging at all.

The political battles, as a member of County Council, have been many. New problems every day are presented to Roy, other members and the Supervisor. It isn’t always a win-win situation when the chips are down and decision time is at hand. Roy Strickland has been there whenever we needed him and has shown the kind of faith, courage and conviction needed to keep reality in perspective.

Not only has Roy worked in the educational field for much of his professional life, he has also earned a living as a steel worker, welder, a textile plant worker as well as several other jobs. This

kind of experience puts him in the most unusual position of being able to empathize with the average tax payer who shoulders much of the burden when budget matters arise. Those who are proud to have a man of this calibre sitting in a position of government.

It has been my personal privilege to have known Roy and the entire Strickland family from my earliest childhood. He and I have travelled some of the same roads together, made some of the same mistakes and enjoyed some of the same kinds of values. It was always interesting, challenging and exciting to be involved with the family of Dr. W. A. Strickland when I was growing up. There weren't many dull moments. Activity and action from playing games to going to school was the norm. It was a different time and one that I have always treasured. Seeing things happen is one thing, making things happen is another, wondering what happened is yet another. We seldom had to "wonder" during - the 30s and 40s. You were held accountable, ready or not, for your own actions...but at home and at school. It was a period when discipline still existed. Without some form of it, there can be little teaching, learning or anything else.

It is my privilege to know and see courage, strength and hope first hand every time I have a chat with Roy Strickland. To me, he has a quality that is seldom seen or experienced in this fast moving world. If he is your friend, he is that, no matter what the problem. It is with this kind of firm conviction that he carries on his daily battle for his health and the business he looks after for you and me.

June 26, 1996

Unexpected Event At A Wake

Cecil T. Sandifer, founder of Sandifer Funeral Home in Westminster, has seen some unusual things during his tenure. He came to this area in the early 1950s. His first business location was in a home on Retreat Street that was converted into the first Sandifer Funeral Home. It was tough going into any kind of business at this time. The funeral business was no exception. However, Cecil, his wife, Frances, and their increasing family just "hung

tough” when the going was a lot less than easy.

At one point in this struggle there was an extremely long period of good health among citizens of this area. There just wasn't anyone dying and thus the business for undertaking was slow to none. Cecil did not waiver, kept his cool, delivered excellent service whenever he was called and simply made things work when it was difficult. It was a difficult challenge he accepted and stepped up to meet with enthusiasm and determination.

The Sandifer Funeral Home institution is perhaps one of the best anywhere. It has grown and prospered through work and service from not only Cecil, but also family members who have stepped forward to keep the traditional service at a high and ethical level.

As with most any business, there are sometimes unexpected developments. It is no discredit or negative reflection on anyone. You must understand there can be moments of despair when reviewed later in the atmosphere of calmness, interesting facts emerge.

This was the way it happened to the young mortician, or so it was related.

During one of wars following WWII or the so-called “police action” that still sent American troops into combat, one of the area's finest paid the supreme price for his country. It may have been during the Korean War, or maybe another, but the fact remains, this fine citizen gave everything he had. It was a sad and solemn occasion, but the body was returned home for final rites.

The corpse was shipped in a “body bag” enclosed in a really heavy U. S. government casket. The father of the fallen service man was understandably concerned as to whether or not this was really his son. Only by opening the box and observing was this fact determined. Then it was the custom for the casket and remains to be carried home for the final visit where friends and neighbors could come by and offer condolences. This, in itself, was no unusual procedure in this part of the country.

As was the case in many rural areas in the 1950s and later, there was no electricity in the house. Lamps were used to light the rooms of many homes and were conveniently placed throughout. One of Cecil's longtime assistants, Jimmy Elliott, was helping faithfully

with this assignment as was Max Glymph, who also assisted with some services.

This little dirt road leading to the cabin was narrow and rough. It was a father's final request that his fallen son be brought home and placed in the front room. It was a determined Sandifer and his assistants that tackled the mission. The coffin was heavy. It was much heavier than the usual because of GI requirements. The house was more fragile than the undertaking establishment had imagined.

After a long and sensitive struggle, the coffin was finally placed in position. Jimmy Elliott was stationed at one end and Max Glymph at the other.

Each was holding a lamp for relatives and visitors who came to pay their respects or to allow any who wished to pass in procession. The crowds gathered and the wake was in full motion when the old house began to shift with the unusual burden of extra weight.

Finally, the floor could bear no more. The timbers gave way and there was little or no notice in advance. Pandemonium set in, and the end where Jimmy Elliott was stationed went directly to the ground level, which was several feet below.

Cecil says he can't understand it til this day, but when he looked down in the hole, Elliott was standing and continued to hold the burning lamp. He said Max Glymph was located several hundred feet from the house at a road.

July 10, 1996

Events Again Recalled

Someone asked the other day if I still wrote a column. The answer is yes and no. Ideas and recall sometimes are tough to generate. Writing should be fun for the most part. If you feel as if you don't have anything to communicate perhaps it best not to force the issue. In these good ole summertime days, I find a lot of interesting things outside. It's a wonderful time to simply enjoy any outdoor pleasure. It's still fun to see a column in print, but I am not bound by any pressure to produce. So be it, I'll continue to offer something along the way whenever the "spirit" moves me if there is any interest.

When newspapers were a singular major force in communication in this country, during the earlier part of the century, William Allen White was said to be one of the great influences with his words and wisdom in the Emporia, Kansas Gazette. He had a flexible policy about writing. Particularly, he protected the editorial pages with utmost care. There were days when he filled all the columns to overflowing, even to other space. Then there were days when his reports barely covered two inches of space. His philosophy was simple. If you don't have anything to say don't waste a lot of time, effort and space saying it. On the other hand, do not have prescribed boundaries if there is a real need to "lay it on the line."

Repeating "Laying It On The Line" reminds me of a column the late John Allen Reynolds wrote in *The News* for several years. John had a lot of natural talent that would manifest itself in strange ways. He had the knack for being able to meet anyone on most any intellectual level and carry on a reasonable conversation. He almost always dressed immaculately. He was "smooth" in conversation and very convincing when the need arose. His experience was wide and varied. At one point, early in his political career, he was elected to the House of Representatives where it was reported he was the youngest member ever elected. He was said to be only 21 years old.

At one time, John was thought to be a baseball pitcher. Somehow, he became involved with the Oconee Mountaineers team at Beacon. Willie Hawkins said John's pitching didn't measure up at one of his games. Willie said his brother, "Granny" had engaged John to pitch. According to Willie, after about two innings, about the only thing happening was John was delivering a healthy batting practice for the opponents. According to Willie, he simply called the team together and asked "Granny," if he had any more bright ideas.

John was versatile. Not only did he play baseball, but wound up somewhere in Texas where it was reported he served as deputy sheriff. He was involved in many jobs where he became a part of a gospel singing group or quartet. He could play a piano by "ear" and was nearly a natural comedian. At one point, he took up preaching, but at the same time was "given to drink," that sort of ran contradictory to his preaching. He did, however, have a great command of

the English language and knew the Holy Scriptures rather well. At least he was impressive to those like me who weren't too keen on quoting Bible verses anyway.

One of the most famous columns John ever wrote in "Laying It On The Line," was a story about a "girl from the golden west." It was circulated far and wide. The late Glen Cox, who ran the cafe on Oconee Mill, said he read every word John wrote and the story -- either real or imaginary -- about the "girl from the golden west" was the epitome of his journalistic career.

John was unusual, to say the least. Always interesting, if not always entirely truthful about some of his "paperwork," he was the kind of person who was easy to like. Obviously, he led a most unusual life, though some of his habits kept him busy straightening out mistakes he had made involving money.

At one time James G. Brown, who was serving as Editor of The News had a going conversation with John who was supposedly selling advertising for the paper. The matter came up about being married. Brown asked John, "How many times have you been married?"

John placed one finger on his forehead and looked up toward the Heavens as if in deep thought. Finally, he answered Brown: "Three times that I remember."

July 24, 1996

Some Snakes May Make You Hurt Yourself

Most of us have seen those TV nature programs explaining how and why most snakes are supposedly harmless. That may be true, but there are some capable of making you hurt yourself, if you're not careful. Two that come to mind are a bull snake and a coachwhip. Neither are supposed to be poisonous from a bite, however, both can present as imposing encounter.

John Chandler, who lived down on Lake Hartwell, near Mullins Ford ramp, earlier this year came face to face with a big coachwhip while he and a coworker were cutting grass. John is not partial to any kind of snake. He says he has an inherit fear of all of them.

This big coachwhip was no exception, and he didn't waste any time getting his shotgun to the scene to eliminate the snake. It proved to be one of the biggest I've seen in these parts recently. While I didn't actually measure the serpent, it surely must have been between 8 and 10 feet in length and weighed several pounds. Its girth in the heavier part was easily as big as a grown man's upper arm. While its tail tapered down in a pencil size shape, it had the dark grey color and resembled the woven part of an old fashioned buggy whip. Thus, the common name down here in the South is coachwhip.

I've heard of several instances where these snakes will run from you up to a point. That point is when you stop. Supposedly, then the coachwhip will begin chasing the former chassee.

Coach Tom Jordan, who likes to fish and hunt, says he has heard of several cases where the snake turned on the predator and gave chase.

One of the most interesting cases in point happened several years ago at the Oconee Country Club. Both golfers involved in this incident have moved on to that Great Fairway in the Sky, but both were well-known, over the county. Glen Cox, and his brother-in-law, Arthur King, were playing the game one day during the summer snake season. Someone noticed a big snake going down one of the fairways. Cox, driving the cart, with Arthur sitting beside him, began to give chase. Arthur reached in back of the cart, picked up one of the iron clubs and told Glen to get close to the snake and he would strike him with the iron. Cox took off and the snake began to run from the pursuing cart. Finally, they were getting closer and Arthur raised the club to strike. The snake, a long coachwhip, reared up and literally "stood" on its tail. At that moment it appeared the snake struck a note of fear and respect. Cox turned the golf cart away from the chase and headed back toward the clubhouse. No damage was done, but the snake chasing the golfers in a car presented an unusual circumstance.

Coach Jordan told another snake story that involved either his dad or an uncle. According to Tom, whenever this individual came upon a snake, he would have someone, if available, to pin down the head of the snake, hold him tight, and then he would proceed to grab the

tail of the snake. With a good hold of the tail end, he would direct his assistant to turn loose the head end. At that precise moment, he would snap the snake in a whip-like fashion that supposedly would decapitate the serpent. It was a quick and merciful death.

However, Tom related one exception to this activity. It seems there was a rather long snake captured and the "snake head popper" was all set to "do his thing." He ordered the release of the snake's head and he suddenly brought the serpent backward over his shoulder to get the whip-like popping action. Little did he realize there was a tree limb or bush behind him.

As he sought to bring the snake back over his shoulder for the final "pop" of his head, it somehow got tangled in a limb and instead of going forward it actually wrapped around the neck of the snake "popper." To say this caused great excitement would be an understatement. Tom said that the snake was almost torn apart with the man's bare hands. Whether or not he ever resumed the activity again was not mentioned. If so, it may be assumed that he always looked behind him before starting whipping action with a snake in hand.

Recently, Jim Hunt and Coach Jordan encountered a snake in the water at the lake. In the water, Jim said the snake appeared to be about 10 feet long and very poisonous. When they captured him, the length figure was revised to something like 2 feet. Funny how they shrink like that.

October 2, 1996

Has It Been That Long?

Wendell Tidwell, Jr. new General Manager and Editor of The Westminster News, strikes me as a typical country newspaperman. He's really not "new" here anymore. He's been on the job several months and has moved with his wife to Westminster. It was my privilege to meet him and learn a bit about him recently. I was impressed, not only with conversation, but with obvious changes he has been making in format and otherwise.

Somehow I have the feeling this gentleman is trying very hard to do the best possible job with what he has to work with. That is a true professional. No one can ask for any greater effort. My only wish for his is success in this endeavor. He needs and merits the support of the community. Truly, if any publication belongs to the people in this great country, surely the hometown weekly must rank right up there among the top.

When I glanced at a recent masthead and saw The News is now in its 42nd year, I began asking myself, "Has it been that long ago?" It doesn't seem so, but it's been a long time. The older one becomes, the more recent events is likely to be cast aside in favor of remembering past history. It has been my privilege to draw upon the past and try to relate it to the present, especially to older citizens and even some great ones.

If Mr. Tidwell wanted to find a good place to live, perhaps he has arrived. Notice, I did not say that this is a necessarily an easy place make a living. Rather, a great place to live, and a good living can be made with due diligence.

Visiting the newspaper office was pleasant in more ways than one. Tim Duncan reminded me that he has been on the job there 40 years. The stories he has related, along with some of the other characters at the paper, could fill several volumes.

Somehow, one story Tim told about a corn patch near his home years ago just above the Chauga River in the Holly Springs community stuck with me.

His uncle, Burt Duncan was visiting him. In front of Tim's home was a beautiful corn patch. A visiting minister, Rev. Verner Landreth, it was reported, stopped by for conversation. He noticed the nice corn patch and remarked to Burt and Tim that it was just exactly right for pulling fresh roasting ears. He intimated that a mess of corn would be appreciated. Not he least bit bashful, it was either Tim or Burt, maybe both, said they had no objections to the preacher gathering corn.

He proceeded with the task and took home plenty of fresh corn from the garden. However, the two Duncans did not tell, nor did the preacher ask, whose corn patch he was raiding.

The Reverend assumed it belonged to either one or both of them since they were standing in or near it. The truth is, it was the property and corn patch of one M. J. Davis, a neighbor who lived nearby.

Only when the preacher mentioned from the church on Sunday that he had been enjoying a blessing of good fresh corn did the whole truth evolve.

Most of the Duncan Clan I've known were quick witted and always welcomed a story about some funny experience. It was with an extreme note of sadness that recently David Joe Duncan, founder of Oconee Machine and Tool, passed on and moved up to that Great Shop in the sky. He was certainly a most dedicated servant to the civic upbuilding of the community.

He excelled in a business that is tough to crack because he applied knowledge and perseverance to the task. At the same time, in true Duncan tradition, he kept a high level of humor, made friends quickly and never seemed to forget anything worthwhile.

Working in and around the weekly newspaper business and commercial printing required to make life a bit easier, affords opportunities to meet and know some of the most unusual people in the world. Westminster and surrounding areas has been extremely kind to me. I'll be eternally grateful for the experience.

I have the feeling Wendell Tidwell is beginning a journey he'll enjoy for the experience in addition to his past. Good luck!

October 16, 1996

Great Way to Keep Going

Zettie Dilworth of Walhalla once remarked, "If you have anything to do, you'd better get it done before you retire; after that you won't have time." There's an element of truth in his observation. Most of us get busy doing things after retirement, so there just isn't any way to handle all those self-designed plans. Just not enough hours in the day. Besides, priorities shift.

Ashton Hester, capable editor of the Keowee Courier, recalled connection James R. Young of Anderson had with the Courier. As publisher of The Safety Journal, Mr. Young had his paper printed on

the Courier web press. He was always a welcome visitor. I knew him rather well over a long period of time. Until his passing on September 24, 1996, it was my privilege to assist him, along with help from William D. (Bill) Prevost also of Anderson.

One of the surprising things about the amazing Mr. Young was his ability to stay active in his profession for such a long time. He was well into his 80's when he continued to drive to Westminster and Walhalla with his copy and pictures, ready to go to work and get the press rolling. It was not unusual for the press run to be 20,000 or more copies which he mailed to readers all over the country and some international destinations.

He loved the printed word and was involved in all the details of how a story was developed right up to the point of assisting him with actual mailing. I once asked him how he first became involved with newspaper work.

He explained when he was a small boy in Rushville, Ill., his father was a banker. The local weekly newspaper, The Rushville News, purchased a Linotype machine and needed financing. He said his father advanced the publisher \$1000 for the project and they became friends. As a youngster, he applied for a job at the paper and became a "printer's devil." That was a term widely used when hand set lead type prevailed. The fabulous Linotype was just making inroads to many small town papers. Mr. Young said he learned composition from a "California type case."

He lasted a long time in the business. He attended the University of Illinois in Champaign, for two years and transferred to John Hopkins in Baltimore where he graduated from the International Business School in 1925.

He also worked for the Baltimore Sun, a Hearst paper, where his uncle was publisher. He recalled having the privilege of being allowed to "sit in" on editorial board meetings in a corner of the room. He was not allowed to speak but was exposed to an unusual learning experience. He told of some of the habits of then popular columnist, acid-tongue H. L. Mencken, a staffer on the Sun.

The newspaper experience covered a wide territory. For 13 years he lived in Tokyo, Japan where he edited an English daily

owned by a German family. It was there he was jailed for several months after writing stories about bicycle movement and poison gas manufacturing just prior to Pearl Harbor.

His wife, Marjorie and William Randolph Hearst, were finally able to spring him from jail only a few months before Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese on Dec. 7, 1941. Too, he was at one time employed by E. W. Scripps, owner and founder of that newspaper chain which continues to be prevalent in journalism circles.

Having served as a personal secretary to Mr. Scripps, who loved sailing, it was Young's duties to bury "the old man" at sea when he expired just off the coast of Africa.

The interesting experiences led to a book, "Behind The Rising Sun," which was later written into a movie version which started James Cagney. To say that Mr. Young and his wife, Marjorie, also a journalist, lived life to the fullest would almost be an understatement.

At the same time, his business acumen was not a small item. By frugile and steady investment over a long period, the Young's made some excellent decisions in buying good stocks, bonds and insurance.

Just a few days before his recent passing, I visited Mr. Young and had a great time listening to him laugh and tell of his experiences with Robert Ripley, founder of "Believe It Or Not" features. Marjorie had, at one point, been a researcher for Mr. Ripley.

They became friends and Mr. Young particularly liked to tell of Ripley inviting the "fat lady" from the P. T. Barnum circus at Madison Square Garden to attend a big birthday party. "They got her up to the penthouse on the freight elevator," he explained. A great guy; a good life!

October 23, 1996

Characters Recalled

There must be as many interesting people now as there ever was but somehow I don't meet them like I once did. Individuals that I knew many years ago seemed somehow different in strange and often humorous ways. Many of them I met when I was very young

and “hung out” at H. W. “Foggy” Dickson’s restaurant, beer hall, and grocery store combination.

At one point, “Foggy” had a sign painted in classic style by Mr. Oswald Cashin, It read, “Dine and Dance With Foggy...Here on Earth.” It hung from the building on East Main Street where Julian H. Pruitt once had a Ford auto dealership.

Mr. Cashin, local sign painter of the early part of this century, was an interesting man, he had travelled far and wide as a piano player with a circus band. He recalled the poetic cantor of many of the side show barkers. It was most interesting to hear the rhythmic lingo used to lure customers to the various side shows. “Uncle Ozzie,” as many called Mr. Cashin, also had experience as a seaman. Once he joined the Merchant Marine and shipped out to Europe carrying a load of lumber. Destination was Hamburg, Germany. It took several weeks - or maybe months - to make the journey, but once at dockside, “Uncle Ozzie” said he made his way to the nearest “watering hole.” Not being familiar with all the strange terms, someone suggested he try a drink known as “kimmel synapse.” Whatever that was, must have been very potent. “Ozzie” said that when he finally “came to himself” about three or four days later, the ship load of lumber had already been unloaded and the ship departed. This afforded an opportunity to wander about the country and learn some of the culture. As it was told to me, it took him about four months before he was able to sign on with another ship. His telling of this experience was a spell-binding story.

Then there was Lee “Bozie” Lyles, a fellow who worked with “Foggy” many years. “Bozie” could do most anything required in the kitchen end of the business, but for some reason he nearly always complained with his stomach. It was hard to determine exactly what his problem may have been, for “Bozie” drank a lot of patent medicine, Vim Herb, Hadacol, or other like tonics in a wholesale fashion. Some of those “tonics” had a high alcohol content.

It was likely there was enough alcohol in some that would probably make any hurt go away...at least for a while. One day “Bozie” was having a “spell” with his stomach when Jack Dillard came upon the scene. Listening to his complaints, Jack decided that there

must be a problem and treatment needed. On the shelf, he found some capsules that had been very effective, according to several diagnosticians observing. He extended some of them to "Bozie" who took them, according to "Dr. Dillard's" prescription and did get better. Or so it was reported.

A few days later he reportedly said he'd never felt better in his life. The "secret" capsules turned out to be worm medicine "Foggy" had for his beagle dogs. Who knows where you may find a cure?

Ida Everett, a black woman, often cleaned fresh chickens for "Foggy" when he ran a booming restaurant business. Often, Ida didn't want pay. Rather, the charge of killing and cleaning chickens were two Atlantic Ales or beers. Almost invariably when Ida would bring the fresh dressed chickens to "Foggy," he would examine them and ask, "Ida, where are the livers and gizzards from the chickens?"

Ida would always answer something like this, "Mr. Foggy, don't you know these modern chickens don't have no livers and gizzards?"

November 6, 1996

'Hawk' Memories

Willie A. Hawkins left this earthly scene last week perhaps to join that great textile baseball team "in the sky." He lived a reasonably long time, about 84 years plus, many of his early years in Westminster. He was known as "Willie," to family members as "Bill" and to others as "Hawk." It didn't really seem to matter to him which name was used.

In many ways, he was a unique person. First of all, he never owned a car. At least in latter years. At one point in his young adulthood, he said he owned one and drove it for a while, but found it to be too expensive for his needs.

He was never married, always worked hard and believed in saving his money. He loved to walk and did so frequently. If the distance was out of town, he often stood by the road and some friend or driver who knew him would give him a lift. He always seemed to get to whatever point of destination was intended.

For about 37 years he worked at Lockheed's plant in Marietta, Ga. But he always came back to visit here and moved here for a while after his retirement. In recent years he moved to Georgia, first to Toccoa, and later to a retirement home in Tiger and on to a nursing home when his health was failing.

The Hawkins family lived and worked at Oconee Mill in the early part of this century. All of them played a big part in textile baseball when it was going strong in the 1930s and 40s. Styles and Daisy Hawkins had seven boys and one daughter reared near the mill. Many of the boys played for the Oconee "Mountaineers" baseball team and were usually part of the starting line-up when the team hit the field.

Dr. T. G. Hall use to remark that it was difficult to hit a baseball at Oconee Mill park without a Hawkins there to catch it. Clarence "Pokey" Hawkins, the youngest of the clan, has continued to work at the Beacon plant, and is the only one left in the immediate area.

He, too, was active on the teams when textile baseball here seemed much better than many of the major league teams seen lately. It was a wonderful era back then when players played because they loved the game and wanted to play it the way it was originally intended.

Many of these teams and players are mentioned in the book, "Textile League Baseball," by Thomas K. Perry. It covers South Carolina's Mill Teams from 1880 through 1955.

Willie picked up some words of wisdom along life's way that he often threw in conversation. Sometimes he would make a comparison to a life experience as it related to baseball.

"It's like catching a baseball in a game," he remarked, "You've go to know what you're going to do with it before you catch it."

When some crazy would make the news, he quoted, "It's like they use to say at Lockheed: there's a lot of loose nuts and bolts out there."

Brek Barker, friend of Willie from Clayton, Ga. often visited him and loved to hear the early baseball stories Willie remembered.

He was particularly fond of one where a game was supposedly won when a third base coach threw a peeled Irish potato to a player, fooling him into thinking it was a baseball and allowing a win-

ning run to score.

Willie said the umpires for that game searched the rule book and could find no evidence of where it was against the rules to throw an Irish potato into the infield. At least at that time.

It should be noted that Willie said he spent his first night in Marietta, Ga., in the National Confederate Cemetery. He said he only had 96¢ in money. A guard at the cemetery let him spend his first night there, and told him to be careful about lighting any cigarettes.

It was a warm summer night, and when the morning came, he was directed by the guard to a boarding house on the square where the lady admitted him because he had a job at Lockheed. He spent many years there and loved to eat at the Krystal, an early fast food cafe, long before McDonalds.

He loved to drink coffee and eat biscuits and sausage. He especially liked hotdogs from "Skin's": where he said they knew how to make them the way "Foggy" Dickson and Lil Melton use to make 'em here in the 30s.

He also recalled Ferd Anderson, local barber, who once placed an extremely hot towel on Lester Vaden, as he prepared to shave him. He said Lester remarked as he grabbed the hot towel and slung it, "Damn, Ferd, you're scalding me," he exclaimed.

Ferd very calmly remarked, "Yeah, it was hot, Les; I had to do something with it."

November 27, 1996

Politics Remembered

It is out of character for me to carry a briefcase. However, last week was an exception. I had a lot of material that had to be transported to a meeting, thus a briefcase suited the need. On top of that I had to stop by The News office for some copies with briefcase in hand. Adding to the suspense was the fact I was also wearing a suit and necktie. Also somewhat out of my usual attire.

Tim Duncan, longtime employee at The Westminster News, noticed everything. He said I reminded him of the late Ira Gilstrap

who was a perpetual political candidate in Oconee. He ran and ran and ran and was finally elected to the House of Representatives. Unfortunately he only lived a few weeks after finally being elected.

During one of his campaigns, Ira came roaring up in front of the newspaper office, dressed immaculately in a suit and tie and was driving a big, long Buick automobile. He bounced out of the car, briefcase in hand, made his way to the counter where he placed the briefcase and opened it. For all the importance of this visit, Ira had only one sheet of paper in the briefcase. Fortunately, for us, it was a political advertisement -- a 2 col. x 5" which was certainly welcomed.

Frank Hix, a former publisher of The News, also served a term in the SC-House at about the same time Ira was elected. It was only a few weeks after being sworn in, Frank recalled one day, seeing Ira outside the state capital building standing atop the steps, looking down the street, with a great sense of pride, he tilted backward and commented: "You know, Frank, I'm beginning to become accustomed to the place already." No one was more proud to hold an elective office than Ira. It was rather sad that he never lived to serve his term...only a small part of it.

This, too, was just after the Joe McCarey era. At one point, Oconee County had two supervisors, one elected and one appointed. Joe McCarey, was a colorful speaker who was duly elected one term as Supervisor, but ran into difficulties dealing with a board of commissioners from over the county. He was eventually stripped of many official duties of the office by the existing delegation who contended the county business was not being handled. At one point, I believe, the office of supervisor was abolished for a while. It was a time when election emotions were easily excited. The stump meetings often afforded a lot of action...probably better than anything you've seen or heard on t.v. lately.

Walter Duckworth loved the Oconee political scene back then and had more fun than anyone at the stump meetings. I've heard him tell about some fellow from the Richland or Bountyland community who wanted to run for Supervisor. Walt said the man had very little money, so he sold a cow and bought himself a seersucker suit for the campaigning.

It was during an early part of this century when the county farm was operated by using mules to do the plowing. Tractors had just begun to come on the scene. Oconee county had made the move from mules to the new tractors in order to handle production at the county farm.

At a stump meeting in Earle's Grove Walt said the candidate, seeking to be elected supervisor came stepping up to a group of men where Walt was entertaining them with his wit and patter. As the man approached! Walt welcomed him to the group and told him that they were just discussing the Supervisor race. "We've decided," he said, "the man we're going to vote for in this race is the one who will sell those tractors and go back to mules." It said he felt surely this man knew he was joking. Apparently, he did not. He got up on the "stump" at Earle's Grove and told them voters out there if he was elected Supervisor of Oconee County the first thing he planned to do was sell those tractors and go back to the mules.

According to Walt, they received only 63 votes in all of the county.