

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

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

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

January 3, 1990

“Foggy” Was Glad To Accommodate Strangers

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is not clear exactly who the man was or where he was from, but he appeared to be sort of refined person with leanings perhaps toward the more “delicate” type. Obviously, he had never had an eating experience at “Foggy’s” before. He did, however, order one of the famous roast pork sandwiches that the place was famous for serving.

Now, when the sandwich was prepared, it was several inches thick and was actually hanging over the sides of the “king sized” loaf bread that “Foggy” served. Using all the care and interest he afforded, “Foggy” placed the sandwich on a napkin and laid them both before the customer.

This man had never seen a sandwich of this proportion before and he was carefully studying the situation as to how he was actually going to attack the food. It was so big, he could barely reach around it and eat.

In this dilemma, he simply looked across the counter toward “Foggy” and said, “Sir, can I get this sandwich cut in two pieces?”

“Foggy” very quickly sized up the situation and his quick wit prompted him to have a bit of fun with the “delicate” type customer.

“Why, certainly,” he responded, and very quickly reached under the counter in front of him where he kept a meat cleaver conveniently hanging on a nail.

With on swift stroke, he came over-hand with the cleaver, cut the giant sandwich in two pieces while the cleave itself stuck into the pine board counter.

The frightened customer almost went into shock...he quickly jumped from the stool, almost knocked two or three other customers out of the way as he departed the front door.

He was, in fact, several feet down the street when someone caught up with him and finally convinced him to return to “Foggy’s” and finish his sandwich which, by now, had been reduced to a manageable size. It was all done in fun as far as “Foggy” was concerned, but the customer had a hard time separating the “fun” from reality in a few brief minutes.

Joe Berry Sanders Was Champion Hog Killer

Joe Berry Sanders was known far and wide in this area for a number of interests, but perhaps more widely acclaimed for his “hog killing” ability.

Time was when nearly everyone who could had a hog pen and raised hogs for a food supplement. Cold weather was the time to kill hogs and cure meat. Joe Berry had somehow, perhaps from necessity, perfected the art of “hog killing” and “dressing.”

In his vehicle, he carried the tools of the trade during the hog killing time. This was a wide assortment of sharp knives, a tripod type set of poles, a big 55 gallon drum that had been cut into two parts, a handy .22 calibre rifle and various other equipment...associated with the work.

While I don't know that any one ever timed him with a stop watch, it was pretty well conceded that Joe Berry Sanders could have a hog killed, scalded, and scraped, “gutted” and cut apart as required quicker than most folks could in this area...especially those less experienced.

At the same time, he knew the fine art of sugar-curing and salt-curing ham meat.

Now, nearly everyone...to this day...understands what real country ham is to the table...especially at this holiday season of the year.

Joe Berry died several years ago, and we're not aware of any present day “hog killers” who could have effectively competed with his skill. Folks called him far and near to help with the hog killing when it was a popular and necessary thing many people did in this section of the country.

January 10, 1990

Harry Truman Said It....

“The only thing new is the history that hasn't been written yet.”

John Butler Said It....

“A bird can fly really high, but he still has to come down to earth to get a drink of water.”

Otis Mason Said Someone Said It....

“A wasteful woman can throw more out the back door with a tea spoon than a working man can bring through the front door with a shovel.”

We Don't Know Who Said It....

Remember, old folks are worth a fortune, with silver in their hair, gold in their teeth, stones in their kidneys, and gas in their stomachs.

I have become a little older since I saw you last and a few changes have come into my life since then. Frankly, I have become quite a frivolous old gal. I am seeing five gentlemen every day.

As soon as I wake up, Will Power helps me get out of bed. Then I go see John. Then Charlie Horse comes along, and when he is there he takes up a lot of my time and attention. When he leaves, Arthur Ritus shows up and stays the rest of the day. He doesn't like to stay in one place very long, so he takes me from joint to joint. After such a busy day, I'm really tired and glad to go to bed with Ben Gay. What a life!

P.S. The Preacher came to call the other day. He said at my age I should be thinking about the hereafter. I told him, oh, I do all the time. No matter where I am in the parlor, upstairs, in the kitchen or down in the basement, I ask myself what am I hereafter?

John Butler Also Said....

“You can't breed a jackass to a mule and get something that will win the Kentucky Derby.” John for many years operated a dry cleaning business in the building now occupied by Dr. Charles Barr Thompson, local optometrist. John passed away several years ago, but his widow, Mrs. Nora Butler, who was his very able assistant in the business, continues to live in the Butler home on Retreat Street. Butler Cleaners was a very popular gathering point for social comment on any matter of the moment.

Oconee Mill Always Had Interesting People

I'm sure there are yet many interesting people working with Beacon Mfg. Co.'s Oconee Mill plant here in Westminster. However, some of the most interesting and colorful characters ever known in these parts have since departed this worldly scene.

One in particular, who was known almost internationally, was the late J. Walter Duckworth who once was foreman over carpentry shop and worked alongside such interesting people as Roddy King and J.L. Holland and others who had the talent for adding spice and humor to what might have otherwise been a hum-drum existence.

I must admit to having been a party to some of the activities that the late J. Walter Duckworth indulged in from time to time.

At one point in his illustrious career, Walt came by *The News* office one afternoon after getting off work on the first shift at Oconee Mill. I told him to get on the extension phone and we sort of pulled a planned scheme on his wife, Nettie, who lived in the Coneross area at the time.

I dialed Mrs. Duckworth's phone and she answered. The conversation went something like this with Walter listening in on the extension:

"M'am, this is a representative of the the telephone company, and I need to speak with you."

"Well," she answered, "Go ahead."

"How long has that phone been in out here in the Coneross community?" I asked.

"I really don't know exactly," she answered.

"Well, according to our records here, it has been in about 24 years, 3 months, and 2 weeks," I stated.

"I guess that's about right," she said.

"Well, the reason I am calling is to let you know that we are going to let you know that we are going to perform a service that should help clear up some of the static on the line."

"That sounds good," she said.

"Now, I will need you cooperation for just about 15 or 20 minutes...what I would like for you to do is get a brown sack from your kitchen, place you telephone receiver in it and tie it with a string so

that it is secure...for what we're going to do is blow out that line... and when we put the pressure on...we don't want dust and residue going all over your home."

Mrs. Duckworth bought the idea with little or no hesitation. She said, "Well, sir, I can do that."

And then I told her that it would be OK to remove the brown paper sack after about 15 minutes or so.

Walter Duckworth listened on the extension to the entire conversation, and he quickly turned to me and said, "Let's get out there right now!"

We got into my car and drove to the back door entrance of the Duckworth home.

As it would happen, there were three or four visitors in the home, ladies, relatives or friends of Mrs. Duckworth, and they were having tea and cookies in the parlor.

Walter and I approached through the back door with both of us wearing our usual work clothes, and normally Walter entered the kitchen area.

Very quickly Mrs. Duckworth noticed that he had not arrived in his truck, so she asked, "Walter, where is your truck?"

He answered, "Nettie, something went wrong with it down the road a while ago, and Jack came along, picked me up and brought me home...and now, I have to call Jim Smith's garage and have his wrecker pick up the truck.

"Oh, No!" she quickly exclaimed, "You can't use the phone now...they're blowing out the lines."

"With that statement Walter looked in the direction of the phone and sure enough she had tied it up with a nice little bow knot over a brown bag with the phone hanging over the back of a chair.

Walter just about cracked up laughing. In fact, he laughed so hard, he got down on the floor with tears streaming from his cheeks with his mouth open and prominently displayed were his famous two front teeth that sort of rivaled "Bucky Beaver."

At that point, Mrs. Duckworth realized that she had been taken in on a practical joke and quickly reached for the broom and with one fell swoop swept both of us through the door, and remarked,

“We were just talking about that in the parlor...none of the women said that they had ever heard of that procedure, but we were all just waiting to hear any particles that might be blown into the brown sack.

Not to be outdone, however, Mrs. Duckworth later went to her physician, Dr. Julius Earle, who had heard of the story, and agreed with her that I should be sent a medical bill for some \$150 for treating her nerves.

Dr. Earle said it was one of the most unusual cases he had ever treated and was pleased to render Mrs. Duckworth any service he could.

January 17, 1990

Luther Simpson Said: “Cut’em, Cut’em, Cut’em!”

Things can get downright critical in a manufacturing plant at times. For instance, the time when the late Luther Simpson who worked in the Oconee Mill cloth room when George Taylor was the plant manager. Luther was very serious about his work, the production, packaging and shipping of blankets and bedspreads. George Taylor, the plant manager in an era of manufacturing that is now practically past, had a way of getting the attention of his fellow workers when he wanted some immediate action.

He would sort of duck his head, look down at the floor, and at the same time talking with whomever he was addressing a problem as he took one foot and gently kicked at any object such as a corrugated carton used in shipping.

In one particular case, the packing area had run out of big labels used by Sears on some of their blankets, and this was one of those orders that “must go.” Sears was a good customer and their shipments were critical...and for some reason the cloth room had run out of their labels.

These were big labels that required a lot of pressure and ink to print them and the fact was they had been ordered from The News printing department. Time had run out. The packers had used the last labels and Luther Simpson was doing his very best to get some

more, so he called The News and talked with Tim Duncan who had some information about the printed matter.

The conversation went sort of like this:

Luther: "Tim, have you got anything ready for us on the Sears labels?"

Tim: "Yes, Luther, we have them printed, but the ink is so heavy in the coverage that it hasn't dried yet; we can't cut them down for fear they'll offset...they need to dry a little more and then we'll cut 'em down and get them over there, Luther."

Luther had a high level of urgency in his voice by now...and replied, "Tim, cut 'em, cut 'em, cut 'em, hang 'em out the window and let them dry on the way over here...George Taylor has already looked down at the floor, and asked me about them, kicked a carton with one foot twice, and if he kicks it one more time my *** is gone!!"

According to our best recollection, it didn't take long to get those much-needed tickets in the hands of Luther...and George's third kick never did follow through.

A Good Question About That Sidewalk?

Maybe there's something we don't know, haven't found out, hasn't been released, or maybe we just need to ask a few more questions and dig a little deeper concerning all the sidewalk work going on down East Main Street.

Is this not the same Highway 123 that is scheduled (or was) for being widened to the tune of about one million dollars? If so, then wherein lies the logic to spend all the money tearing up sidewalks and now replacing them with newly poured ones? Would it not be wiser to have the highway widening procedure completed and then build sidewalks rather than redoing sidewalks now with the possibility of having to tear them up for (perhaps) a widened Highway 123?

Surely, there must be some logical reason for what is happening in this area, but we don't have the information in hand at the moment. Several interested citizens have raised the question.

There is one thing that certainly is not in doubt. It really doesn't

matter who is doing the construction on these sidewalks, there is one thing as sure as life and death...the taxpayers and consumers will pay for it...good judgement and bad decisions alike!

Is Growth Really The Objective Or What?

It can't be overlooked forever that many people did not favor having Highway 123 widened to accommodate four lanes. Many established businesses and residential areas were not in favor of disrupting what has been here for years, and there is the question too, of whether or not widening the road to make four lanes will-- in the long run -- solve any traffic problems.

There is a reasonable amount of congestion in the shopping area next to the Winn-Dixie Store, etc., at certain times of the day, and four lanes may actually make this a bit safer but as far as expediting traffic flow through Westminster this seems to be questionable.

If the object is to make the traffic flow through town on a quicker basis, then the million dollars (if it is ever spent in this area) would be far more effective invested in a by-pass -- either above town or below it.

Then, too, if by some stroke of fate this section should become an attraction for more retail businesses and services, a by-pass would come in handy for development.

Again, we really don't know the objective for this program which has already been approved, but may be delayed or changed...who knows? Those new sidewalks on the lower end of town may be worn out before that highway is widened.

January 24, 1990

Charlie Mulkey And The "City Of Dan"

Among the many interesting characters who have passed this way, Charlie Mulkey should be remembered for several reasons. Mr. Mulkey, at one time, decided to establish a town -- a new community near Westminster in the early part of this century. the location he chose was just off highway 123 about a couple of miles

beyond where the bridge crosses the railroad on the Toccoa highway.

We aren't sure exactly why Charlie chose to establish the "City of Dan" but it was common knowledge among folks here that he was, in fact, making a concerted effort. Someone said that he even established a point in that area where citizens could bring their letters to be mailed and he, in turn, would transport them to the Westminster post office. Evidently he had some interest in establishing a post office in the "City of Dan"...however, it apparently never was incorporated or recognized by enough citizens to be officially chartered.

Charles Barrett, who for many years farmed and lived near the "City of Dan" said that Mr. Mulkey was indeed serious about his effort.

It should also be pointed out that Mr. Mulkey was, for a short spell, postmaster of the Westminster post office. This was back during a time when postmasters were often changed when a new administration or a new president came into power. Handing out postmaster titles and jobs was at one time considered part of the political process for the winners. Just exactly how and why Mr. Mulkey became postmaster is not clear, however, his tenure was short lived since he also engaged in "street preaching" which was not uncommon during the 1930s and 1920s. However, the town had some kind of ordinance against this practice unless the person first obtained a permit...perhaps for safety reasons or whatever. According to one report, Mr. Mulkey either ignored the ordinance or didn't bother to get the necessary credentials and was for a brief time detained in the city jail, and while so confined, someone sent a telegraph to the postmaster general in Washington and suggested that another postmaster be appointed. Apparently this was done or so it was reported.

Mr. Mulkey was an ardent student of government. He read the Congressional Record with great interest and relish. He perhaps knew more about what was happening in Washington than some of the politicians stationed there, for he read and remembered every rule and regulation that especially pertained to the U. S. Post Office.

For some time after he was the deposed postmaster, he would continue to bring up what he considered to be violations of rules and regulations to the attention of the post office department and especially to the postal inspectors.

While he may have been considered eccentric in some ways, Mr. Mulkey was conservative in other ways. For example, he often came to town with a wheelbarrow and shovel. And as he moved about the community during the early part of the century, there were many mules and wagons that came to town...and therefor left manure deposits up and down the streets. Charlie saw this opportunity to acquire readymade fertilizer for his garden. He saved the town a lot of "cleaning up" problems in this area as he scooped up the manure piles and hauled them to his garden location on Lucky Street at that time. This, of course, was not an unwise thing to do, but not a great many citizens of that time availed themselves of this opportunity to pick up and haul "free" fertilizer.

Just exactly why this matter came up at this point in time, there is no special explanation, but some things simply stand out clearly from related memories. Mr. Mulkey one day had acquired a load of manure and was proceeding up Retreat Street, near the vicinity of the home of Sidney Harper and John Butler residence. At the top of the little hill someone was playing with a big truck tire out in the street. Mr. Mulkey was looking down as he guided his wheelbarrow full of fresh-scooped-up manure up the hill. One of the fellows playing with the big tire may have been Milford Hull who lived in the vicinity, and whether or not the tire was aimed or simply got loose at that particular time, it is not exactly clear, but it began the long roll down the hill.

As you may have already guessed, the timing and accuracy was uncanny. The big tire hit the old man with the wheelbarrow full of manure and upset them both and deposited them together in a nearby ditch. Amazingly, no one was actually hurt, but Mr. Mulkey never did exactly understand why he and the big truck tire came to be in collision at that particular place.

January 31, 1990

Lige Marett Remembers Charlie M. And Chickens

Mr. E.C. (Lige) Marett reminded me the other day of another conservative practice the late Charlie Mulkey engaged in from time to time. When the Marett Mule Barn was in full swing, there was a hitching area for mules, wagons, buggies and horses near the barn.

Also, there was a watering trough and customers who came to the barn, fertilizer plant or for seed planting materials, etc., would often feed their animals some corn during the period they were tied to the hitching post.

In this process, sometimes grains of corn would be scattered on the ground in this area...residue lost from the feeding. Mr. Mulkey observed this, and not being a man to let anything waste needlessly, he would sometimes go home, catch two or three chickens from his chicken lot, tie them carefully with some cord by the leg and bring them to the area where grains of corn lay on the ground. There, he would tie them out and let them feed generously on corn that would have otherwise been wasted. He would then untie them and bring them back to his hen house or chicken lot.

Apparently, Mr. Mulkey had learned at an early age the old adage which stated, "Waste Not...and...Want Not!"

Lige probably could fill several interesting chapters in a big book about things that happened in the mule, horse, wagon, fertilizer, seed and feed area as well as the period when cotton was ginned by the Marett gins.

This big cotton gin was located in the area which is now occupied by the Winn-Dixie store on Eat Main Street, and it hasn't been so many years past that I can recall seeing farmers bring their wagons and trucks loaded with cotton during the late summer and early fall to be ginned.

Ginning was a big business back in the late 1930s and 1940s and there were several in the area. Horse and mule trading was a really interesting part of the economy, too. The late Mr. Joe Duncan (Tim's grandfather) was a very famous horse and mule trader of that era, and he worked, on occasion at the Marett barn.

It is not clear whether it was he or the late Jule Marett who

reportedly traded a nice looking farm horse to a farmer below Westminster. It was said the animal looked to be first class in every way and had the features that every farmer wanted in a good work-horse. There was, however, one thing about the animal that apparently was not fully explained: when the horse was hooked into a set of wagon or buggy shafts or tried to be hooked to a plow, he would more or less “go crazy” and kick everything loose. Therefore, as a work animal, the horse was more of a destructive creature than a productive horse to work the fields. After the farmer who apparently traded for the horse in an “as is” condition realized that he was “taken” by the trade, he began trying to figure out a way to repay the fellow he had traded with at the mule barn.

Finally, he decided to get some kind of dye and dye the animal a different color. He felt that a “new look” would be sufficient to interest the mule and horse trader and would be enough to effect a “trade back.”

According to the story, the idea worked. The horse was duly dyed and the trade was made. The horse under a disguised color was to be picked up by an employee of the barn and returned. However, on the way back, it came a shower of rain. With it, the dye on the horse simply washed away, and by the time they arrived at the barn, the dealer looked out and saw the “real horse.” “My God! he exclaimed, “We’ve got that same horse back that almost tore the building down!”

Oh well, that’s the way things sometimes happened in the mule and horse trading business. It took a really sharp observer to keep up the age and disposition of all the mules and animals in the trading arena.

Nowadays, the same kind of thing often occurs, by instead of mules and horses, it is more likely to happen with used automobiles and trucks. It’s really hard to tell what you have until you put it to the test.

February 7, 1990

“Mrs. Minnie” Peden Taught English And ‘Then Some’ At WHS

You won't have to travel far in any direction in the Westminster area to find former students of “Mrs. Minnie” Peden at the “Old Westminster High.” Mrs. Peden and husband, Mr. T.C. (Tom) now deceased, once lived in the home now occupied by Rick and Denise McCormick on Abbey Street. “Mrs. Minnie” as she was affectionately called by most who knew her, taught English. She even attempted to teach me. This, of course, proved to be a near impossible task, but “Mrs. Minnie” specialized in doing the difficult things right now...and the impossible things took a little bit longer.

In the early 1940s Mrs. Peden taught most of the tenth and eleventh grade students, also some of the ninth graders. Other English was taught by the late Mrs. Sam Reeder along with perhaps another instructor in the seventh and eighth grades. At that time there were only eleven grades in high school. It was long before the stretching of eleven into twelve grades. However, that is beside the point since this article concerns a few things recalled about how “Mrs. Minnie” went about conducting her classroom activities.

This was during a period when it wasn't yet against the law to pray in school classrooms. Each morning, when students were not directed to chapel programs, Mrs. Peden conducted her own moments of meditation, along with scripture reading, Bible quoting, or whatever she felt was needed by the first period class. Normally, it was probably a good idea to pray for all those students at that particular point in time. It was needed many times at the moment and certainly thereafter. This was also a common practice in many first period classrooms, not something only peculiar to Mrs. Peden's English class.

Occasionally, she would call on one of the more learned students who was familiar with the Bible, to quote some verses. I can remember that nearly all of the Robert McClain children were particularly good in Bible verses. They had been trained at home in Bible Study far more than the average in that class, and their excellence shown through when called on to quote. A great many others

had been exposed at home, but the experience had not registered altogether. Without doubt, I was amongst the latter group, and had been told that unless my ways were mended, I would probably “bust hell wide open!”

Be that as it may, “Mrs. Minnie” ran her classroom according to her rules and regulations that she felt needed in her efforts to “beat some English” into the heads of a class that weren’t always disposed to learning.

Discipline was not a problem with Mrs. Peden. She was in charge. Make no mistake about that. She used whatever means necessary to keep “law and order” in her English classes. She had a very familiar leather strap with a convenient cedar handle that she used on unruly boys. She believed in the Bible philosophy of “Spare the rod and spoil the child.” She knew what it was all about, and whether or not anyone learned English grammar was not in question so far as having the class disturbed by disciplinary problems. This, of course, was not against any kind of law at that time. The school board, the trustees, the superintendent of education, the school superintendent and more importantly, the parents, backed the kind of procedure required to keep classroom attention at a maximum. Mrs. Peden very seldom required any outside assistance in any kind of disciplinary problem. She very much felt it was needed before the subject matter could be approached. That is not to say that her patience wasn’t tried time and again by some of those (others) who thought they might get away with a bit of mischief in “Mrs. Minnie’s” English class.

One of her favorite quotations when she became aware of a problem was, “Young man, I will fall on you like a ton of brick if you don’t straighten up right now!” This admonition was usually enough to get matters back in line. Sometimes she would comment, “Young man, I’ll fan the shirt right off your back!” And she meant it!! More than once she would lead a student into the hallway and remind him rather forcefully with that leather strap (which sounded bad, but didn’t hurt much, so they said) that she expected attention and respect in the classroom.

Now, that kind of corporal punishment is not allowed by law. I’m

not sure that it was a bad thing. As a matter of fact, I don't know anyone who ever suffered any permanent injury being inflicted by a caring school disciplinarian. The greatest fear most of us had at the time was that our parents would discover that we had a problem in school and would consequently get a sure enough old fashioned, rip-rearing, butt-tearing-up at home. The parents generally backed the teachers with very questions asked about what happened and how.

"Mrs. Minnie" was a genteel lady from the old south. She had attended the University of Georgia and had graduated *summa cum laude* which I later learned meant with highest honors. It was not like some of her disciples who more or less got exposed to a bit of higher learning and finished "Oh, Lordy!"

Regardless of her methods, Mrs. Peden, above all, got results. Students who availed themselves of the opportunity could learn enough English in her classes to pass, without any problem, college English courses. Naturally, there were a few exceptions, but her passing ratio must have been among the best in the business. She was a dear teacher, and small lady in stature, who wore little glasses, but who could stare a hole slam through you. She loved her students and did her darnedest to teach them not only English but good principles to live by. (She wouldn't like that sentence ending with a preposition.)

February 14, 1990

Standing In Line For Chapel Program Could Be Hazardous!

As we pointed out last week, Mrs. Minnie Peden, an English teacher at the old Westminster High School, generally maintained law and order in her classroom. However, there were times when innocent students were caught in the crossfire.

A case in point involved two of her students who were causing slight problems in one of her classes. The two in question were Lee Haley and Broadus McGuffin. (Broadus has retired and moved

back in the area -- at Clemson.) The last we heard of Lee, he lived in Texas.

What was going on in the classroom to cause the initial disturbance is not clear. But "Mrs. Minnie" had a system of sorting out some of the problems. In this case, she simply moved Lee and Broadus to front seats near her desk. Lee was in the number two seat...just to the back of Broadus seated in the number one trouble spot seat. Whatever the disturbance was seemed to continue, and "Mrs. Minnie" decided to take immediate action. In the procedure she simply hauled back her right hand supposedly to "ring the bell" in the head of Broadus McGuffin. Broadus saw what was about to take place and was rather quick to react. He watched her arm as it went through the back-stroke position and timed it perfectly as she took a healthy swing at him. He ducked and with it "Mrs. Minnie" followed through with a "mighty right" that caught Lee Haley completely off guard and darn near flattened him out for a count of ten. Realizing that she had perhaps "misfired" and hit the wrong student, she was quick to apologize to Lee Haley, and Broadus nearly "cracked up" laughing about the unusual turn of events.

This would not be tolerated today in this modern "suing society" but at that point in time it was not only used effectively, but often by instructors who didn't turn their problems over to someone else. Corporal punishment was not only legal but necessary, and most students expected it when they stepped "out of line" for any reason.

Another "misfire" on the part of Mrs. Peden occurred one morning as she marched her students to a chapel program. One in that class was Richard Smith who later lived somewhere in the Pittsburgh area of Pennsylvania.

Richard was generally a good student, well behaved and attentive. He was not classified as a regular "trouble-maker" as were a few of the others. But at this time, he had a habit of being extremely susceptible to any gesture that appeared to be a finger-pointing, "goosing" movement. If you said something to him and then pointed your finger at him, he would react by simply repeating exactly what you said, but with a loud and sometimes disturbing voice.

Nearly everyone in the territory knew this, and often more or less

“picked” at Richard causing him to repeat some things that were not considered socially acceptable to some people...especially “Mrs. Minnie” Peden.

One morning as “Mrs. Minnie” was marching her students to chapel, Richard was in the line passing by one of the classroom doors near the lockers that lined the wall just to the right of the big double doors leading into the auditorium.

A student who knew Richard and his habit was just inside the convenient classroom door as “Mrs. Minnie” kept everything and everyone in line. She happened to be standing just on the other side of Richard who was now between her and the cracked classroom door to his right. As he came into the exactly correct position, the student punched him and at the same time said something that may have been considered a mild obscenity...something like “kiss my royal ****,” etc.

With the correct gesture and words to repeat Richard simply yelled out what he had just heard. “Mrs. Minnie” could not see that he had been primed by a student hiding behind the cracked classroom door and who by now had quietly and most obediently taken his place at his seat with the classroom instructor not knowing anything about what just happened.

“Mrs. Minnie” was not amused at Richard’s repeating utterance. She more or less jumped on him like “a turkey on a June bug” and with great determination let it be known that such conduct and language would in no way be tolerated.

She did prevail at the moment and Richard’s explanation of what had happened just wasn’t acceptable at the moment, for there was really no visible effort to support his claim.

We never did know who that student was that punched Richard that morning and caused him to repeat something that was not nice, but if we ever find out, we’ll surely bring the matter to public print.

February 21, 1990

Mignon Brockman Recalls Mrs. Peden

“Mrs. Minnie” Peden left her impression with nearly every student who passed through her high school English classroom.

Mignon Brockman remembered that students who passed English under Mrs. Peden’s instruction usually had very little or no trouble passing English courses in college. Mignon was one of the more brilliant students that knew Mrs. Peden very well and made very high grades throughout high school. She was an honor graduate at Westminster High and perhaps later in college. She said it was fun to recall some of the things that happened during her high school experience.

Then There Was A “Snooper’s Column”

One of the interesting projects one of the teachers at the old Westminster High undertook was known as the “Snooper’s Column.” This was a weekly column published in the old Tugaloo Tribune as it was printed then by Mr. W. C. Felder.

There were bits of local gossip, much of it harmless, but always some tidbit of information that concerned parents, teachers or students, and sometimes school officials.

This column was widely read in the Tribune each week. There were a few that almost “held their breath” for fear of what might be reported or insinuated in the “Snooper’s Column.” Most of the items were in good taste and certainly the column was read with consistent “following.”

The writer of the column was the late Mrs. S. F. (Sam) Reeder. Mrs. Reeder was also an accomplished teacher at Westminster High and held some pretty firm opinions on many things. Then, as sometimes now, politics entered into the school profession. There were differences of opinion among the staff as well as students. However, the least little disturbance was not always aired publicly or in print. Most of the problems were settled locally without involving high level school officials. Turing to the courts to run the school was almost an unheard of practice 50 years ago.

There is good reporting these days, with the press, radio and television stations nearly frantic to get a "story" from schools or anywhere public money is expended. It also happens very quickly. The system is better today in some ways but not all. Much of the "junk" news could be easily settled without all the fanfare.

Harold Hull Was A Patient At Old Hospital

Harold Hull came by the other day and said he remembered the old hospital that was in Westminster very well. Harold was among those who were patients at the facility. He said that he had his tonsils removed by the surgeon Dr. J. H. Johns, and Ms. Belle Cowan was the attending nurse. The hospital apparently didn't last very long, but it was interesting to learn that someone local recalls being a patient there.

Harold, for many years, travelled as a salesman. His first selling experience was with the Marett Seed Farm. He said he travelled for them for about seven years prior to joining the Chilean Nitrate firm from which he retired.

Harold's father, Mr. John Hull, for many years worked for the Marett Seed Farm and Gin Company. Many older citizens may recall the late Mr. Hull. As I remember, he always dressed with great care, almost immaculate in appearance. That meant a coat, suit, white shirt and tie with shined shoes both winter and summer. Among several duties, he was one of the cotton buyers at the gin company. He would cut into a farmer's fresh ginned bale of cotton that was bound with steel straps and burlap and pull out a handful of cotton. In a rather skilled fashion that came from many years of experience and practice, he would begin pulling the cotton apart. This pulling procedure was repeated over and over again until the fibers were aligned in such a way that he could determine the staple and length. From this information and his considerable experience, he would then make the farmer an offer for he bale of cotton. This was an important part of business, for his judgement often depended on whether or not cotton could be bought and sold for a profit.

Harold said that the late Mr. K. W. Marett, who was a manager of the business at one time would sometimes accompany him on the selling trips. An over-night trip in the mountains of Tennessee found the two at a motel with the gas supply in the car running low. Harold said that he asked Mr. K. W. if he wanted him to get the tank filled that night before they retired to the motel. He said that Mr. K. W. allowed that it would be alright to wait until morning. However, when morning came, there was not a service station found open anywhere about 5 a.m. Mr. Marett became greatly concerned that no gas stations were open because he believed in getting on with the work of the day. Harold said that Mr. K. W. was almost "fit to be tied" before one of the stations finally opened for business about 9 o'clock in the morning.

February 28, 1990

Article from WHS "Hustler" Tells Of Mrs. Peden's Retirement

The following article appears to have been written in *The Hustler*, the old high school newspaper at Westminster. This article and a picture of Mrs. Minnie Peden was furnished The News by Marilyn Jones. The Hustler was the school paper that was prepared and printed on a mimeograph machine and distributed to the student body.

Prior to publication of The Hustler, the school newspaper was "The Yellow Jackets" and the school teams were then known as the Westminster High "Yellow Jackets," later on "The Trojans" and now, "West-Oak Warriors."

The article is reproduced as it appeared upon the noted teacher's retirement.

Adieu To Mrs. Peden

Through the years she has stood just outside her classroom door and greeted each pupil with a smile and cheery comments as they enter her chamber of learning. Sophomores tremble when they first

enter her classroom, feeling they know so little; juniors think of her as an exacting master, who demands book reports every six weeks; but the seniors look to her as a mother who is instructing her brood before turning them loose into the adult world. Although they fear her, students have found relief upon entering her room from her added personal touches in the line of pictures and flowers.

For fifty years our English teacher, Mrs. Peden, has filled the role of a teacher in many different classrooms. In fact, she has taught every grade from the first to the twelfth in her teaching experience. Her favorite subjects, and the ones she taught the most, are English, Literature, Latin and history. In all these years she has probably trained over a thousand students at least, if not more, to meet every day life.

Mrs. Peden possesses a spirit which won't be defeated and a patience which never seems to fade. Her life is example enough of this. After finishing as an honor student at R. E. Lee Institute at her home town, Thomaston, Ga., Minnie Smith came to Westminster to teach and found her heart soon captured by the handsome young sport, Thomas C. Peden. There was no doubt about this being true love so they married in 1902. They lived a fairy tale life until 1915 when Mrs. Peden was taken suddenly ill. It was generally thought that this illness would end her activity for life. But Mrs. Peden didn't think so and, as a result, she rose from her bed of affliction to begin a most active career. Although she was not fully recovered from her sickness, Mrs. Peden worked untiringly to organize the young people's program in the Southern Presbyterian Church from 1920-25. She says these are the best years of her life. During this time she substituted occasionally in the school, and finally when able, taught regularly at Gaffney for two years, 29-31. But that was too far from Mr. Peden, so she began the 1932 school term back in her home town, Westminster. Since R. E. Lee was only a junior college, Mrs. Peden decided that she wanted a college degree. Regardless of discouragement for every side, Mrs. Peden braved it out at the University of Georgia and graduated "summa cum Laude" in 1935, with students who envied her because of her high record. The discouragement now turned into praise and admiration as she

proved her determination. And here she's been year since, giving advice reproof and correction when needed.

By the side of her fifty school years, we can place forty years of teaching Sunday School in the local Presbyterian church. There are few authorities outside of the clergy who can equal Mrs. Peden's Bible knowledge. The Great Textbook finds a place in every class Mrs. Peden teaches.

She is active in club work and belongs to the As You Like It, the Garden Club, The United Daughters of the Confederacy, and was once Chairman of Child Welfare in the State Federation of Clubs. She desires to see progress made and is glad to help make progress in any way possible.

Great is the loss of our school for Mrs. Peden won't be back next year. She leaves a place vacant which can never be filled. Her pupils will never forget her and hardly will a week pass next year that several won't drop in to see her.

Yes, Mrs. Peden is retiring, but not before she has left the school a better place because she has taught in it. No finer tribute can be paid her than that found in the teacher's resolution which she has faithfully carried out. "I am resolved...to be alive as long as I live; to have faith in children, in God and in myself; to teach from the great book of life as well as from school books; to be a helper and leader, if possible, without, as well as within the school room."

March 7, 1990

An Innovation In Printing...But Alas!

The Editor of *The News*, Jean Snyder, requested the story last week which concerned the 37th anniversary of *The News*. In reflecting, several interesting incidents have occurred since the early beginning of this publication.

As most of the people in this area know, *The Westminster News* has been engaged in commercial printing along with the weekly newspaper. Having the right equipment and the qualified people to get most of the jobs done has been a great help down through the

years. However, there have been some developments that could have never been anticipated.

One thing that stands out involves Joe Hunt, the oldest son of Jack and Aline. Joe must have inherited some qualities that defied predictability. When he was a youngster attending Westminster High School, his interests turned to many other things that were not academic. He engaged in several extra-curricular activities that were not always known to his parents and perhaps his instructors at school.

It all boiled down to one day, as Joe was a rising senior, "word" finally filtered to his parents (us) that Joe was being expelled from school. Knowing that my record was almost ??? without blemish during high school, this came as a great surprise! How could it be that this oldest son was being disciplined...expelled from school...had he been a little less than perfect? School officials informed us that Joe had several unauthorized absences, according to the Principal, Mr. J. O. Lovin, and his application to the assigned school work was less than desirable...in fact, much of it was in most serious question as to his ability to pass the grade.

It just didn't make good sense. Immediately, I challenged the absenteeism and also the grades. With assured confidence, Mr. Lovin brought forth the permanent record which, fortunately, was kept in a safe place. As I looked at this record and made a mental note of the report cards we had seen and signed, there seemed to be great discrepancy.

As I recall, I told Mr. Lovin, "These grades on your permanent record and the report cards we have seen are not the one and the same."

It also made me think about what possibly could have happened...it didn't take long for an entirely new story to unfold.

My instinct quickly turned to what may have happened.

Joe was a youngster who sometimes worked in the print shop at The News. He was not necessarily a "slow learner" when it came to those things that he was interested in learning. He very quickly mastered the skills of photographing layouts and copy to be reproduced. He learned the art and ways to make printing plates and he

learned enough about printing presses that he could very quickly get a printing job done.

So it was, Joe knew how to print just about anything he wanted printed. Fortunately, for us and him, he never tried to outdo the Bureau of Engraving in Washington, but he most certainly found a need to reproduce his own report card. He did this in such a way that we couldn't help admiring his talent if not his purpose.

He had one report card for the benefit of his parents and the other original from the school that he "doctored" with our signatures...thus there was a major discrepancy in the two, and we were not getting the picture at all when we saw and signed a report card.

Fortunately for all, Mr. Lovin, the principal of the school and his other instructors were very much in a mood to help us and Joe correct the situation. He paid the price by going to summer school where he did an excellent job of learning and passing subjects he was failing.

Joe furthered his academic training in college and graduated from schools in both Germany and England where he really applied himself to some difficult work and tasks as he proved to himself that he could, dedicate himself to getting the job done...as he does today in a position of responsibility with a textile firm in North Carolina.

Printing, spreading ink on paper, has many interesting aspects. It is a definite form of communication on which we all depend heavily. To know, according to statistics, there are about twenty-five percent of all Americans who are functionally illiterate, shakes the foundation of our system. There must be some way we can attack this national problem and win. No one should be deprived of the pure pleasure of being able to read and understand. Just how this can be accomplished presents a challenge to all...but we know there are some answers if we can only find them.

March 21, 1990

John Allen Reynolds -- A Man Of Many Talents

Some colorful characters have passed through the portals of *The Westminster News*. Certainly among those whose memory is deeply embellished in my thinking is John Allen Reynolds, now deceased.

John was a man of many talents and we mean that literally. He was reported to be the youngest man ever elected to the House of Representatives from Oconee County. At age 21, he became a member of that august body. But his tenure only lasted a short while. It was reported his extra-curricular activities were more than he could handle at that young age, and the voters turned him out at the next election. Be that as it may, John never lacked for color or imagination.

For about three years, he worked at *The News* as an advertising representative, and he also wrote some stories that many still mention to this day. At one point he had a column entitled, "Laying It On The Line." In it he penned many fond memories, some funny, sad, but always entertaining.

John had "done" a little bit of everything. He was noted for "handwriting analysis" during a time when there was an Indian Chief Sanook at the Cherokee Reservation in North Carolina. John had printed for this business a rather long and complicated form. As the tourists piled into the reservation area, John had worked out a deal with the Chief and had a corner in one of the chief's wigwams. For a professional fee of about \$2 or so, a tourist could get one of the forms from John, complete it and get in line to have him give a detailed report on exactly what that person's handwriting was indicating. The big technical term for this, I believe, was Graphoanalysis. It sounded good and important, and John kinda liked things like that...especially since he and the chief were in business together and doing rather well at \$2 a throw. The tourists loved it.

Walter Duckworth stumbled upon this scene years ago. He said he was taking a short trip through the mountains and noticed a big billboard that read sorta like this "You've heard him on the radio...you've seen him on TV...and now's your chance to see him

in person... the one and only John Allen Reynolds, Graphoanalysis Expert.”

Since Walter knew that John was the one and only original that he remembered from Madison, SC, he investigated the billboard’s claim and sure enough found him doing a brisk business at Chief Sanook’s wigwam.

John Allen had done just a little bit of everything. He had been everything from a Deputy Sheriff in Texas to a baseball pitcher in one of the minor-league farm clubs. But most of all, he had the sales ability of a genius -- except for one thing, he would let personal habits throw him out of control. Prosperity eluded him often for this reason. John was the kind of man who could sell an Eskimo an ice box and convince him the advantages of keeping his food warm with the box.

He was, for whatever faults he had, generally liked by nearly everyone who knew him and even by those he had “conned” on occasion.

One day a fellow who ran a little store down about Blackjack community came in *The News* office looking for John. Someone asked him, “Is there anything we can help you with...he is out of the office at present?” The man finally said for someone to tell him to get in touch. It seems the fellow was holding a check that was having difficulty clearing the bank. When John came in, we advised him of the visitor.

Without any question, John said, “I’ll take care of that right away.”

A few days later, the man was back in the office looking for John.

“What’s the problem, now?” he was asked.

“Well,” he reported, “John came down to the store and offered to take up the \$25 bad check, and I listened to him very carefully, but I didn’t realize that he was replacing the bad \$25 check with another check for \$35. In this procedure I gave him the \$10 difference, and now the \$35 check has proved to be dishonored by the bank.”

With that explanation we simply excused ourselves from the conversation and wondered just how good a salesman must be to

replace a bad check with a bad check and then collect the difference in hard cash!

March 28, 1990

Original “Streaker” Created A Big Stir At Homecoming Service

Minnie Owens who reads and occasionally writes for *The News* reminded us the other day of a story that got a lot of attention a few years past.

It concerns, perhaps, one of the “original” streakers that passed through a part of Oconee County.

A young man, a Clemson University student, became involved in some kind of drinking party in the area of the school. His inexperience, or perhaps his first experience, got him into rather serious trouble.

Apparently the young man, a resident of the lower part of South Carolina, began his drinking spree on a Saturday night. Activities spilled over into the following Sunday morning. For some unexplained reason, or perhaps a dare from a fellow student, this young man decided to strip himself down to the bare skin and thus “set sail” in the area near the Shiloh Baptist Church, just below Oconee Airport on Shiloh Road. He must have been the first streaker, or among the first in Oconee County. This was perhaps 20 or 25 years ago.

For some strange reason, the “Streaker” came down Shiloh Road and ran into the church on Sunday morning where regular church services were being held. This stunning development, needless to say, caused quite a bit of activity among the worshippers. Quickly some of the men and officers of the church began trying to catch the fellow, corner him or contain him to see exactly what was troubling him. It happened on a Sunday when the church was celebrating a homecoming service and there was an unusually big crowd reported.

Deacons, officers of the church immediately realized this was, indeed, a troubled fellow, and they gave diligent chase. Some said he ran through the main auditorium, and eluded his captors there

and proceeded into an upstairs or balcony area, it was reported, and there he again eluded those giving chase. He simply jumped out of the window and the chase continued with police officers who, by now, had joined the chase.

With genuine pursuit, all concerned in his capture ran him through a thicket that contained, of all things, a lot of saw-briars. Finally, he was caught and placed in the custody of the Oconee County Jail.

Paul League was then the editor of *The Seneca Journal*. Paul very quickly recognized this unusual development at the Shiloh Baptist Church and either wrote or had a reporter on the scene do a follow-up story. If memory serves correctly, the story as reported, had the reporter to talk with some of the people who happened to be at the church that Sunday and who had witnessed this most out-of-the-ordinary development. Paul said that the reporter asked several women if they saw the young man streaking through the church building. Some acknowledged they did, and then the reporter asked, "Can you give an accurate description of the man?" According to the report none of the women said they could positively identify the man's face. With that the interview ended.

But the story was not totally complete. The young fellow, who reportedly was, up to this point, a student with an excellent academic record, came from a respected family and had never before caused any serious trouble.

If memory serves correctly, he was expelled from the University for indiscretion, and some indecent exposure charges, etc., were placed against him by officials, thus his escapade became quite involved from a legal standpoint.

The last we recall of this matter was the fact that the Solicitor then, Wm. Howard Ballenger, now a Circuit Judge, took all things into consideration. And in some kind of settlement where there was plea bargaining, it was reasoned that while this young fellow had, indeed, made a serious mistake, his past record of academic achievement, his previously good behavior, and the fact that he had already been expelled from the University, he was given a fine and/or suspended sentence with, perhaps probation.

It was also pointed out that the fellow had actually done himself more harm than anyone else by his streaking escapade and he paid a rather steep price, too, when those officers and deacons of the church gave chase and he ran himself through that thicket of saw-briars.

Amen!

April 11, 1990

Nathan Nuckols And The WHS Class Of '44

The president of the high school class of '44 at the old Westminster High was Nathan Nuckols. He said that one of the instructors and class sponsor, Mrs. Sara Johns of Retreat Street, Westminster said it was among the better classes she taught...and Mrs. Johns taught a lot of them. However, that may be putting words in her mouth that could be disputed, but no doubt Mrs. Johns was an outstanding teacher throughout her career that spanned a number of grades and students here and in the Seneca schools.

Nathan came by the other day and suggested that a committee be formed to get another class reunion together. Nathan was an outstanding student himself. After serving his time with the Army during WWII, he graduated from Clemson and is now retired from the textile industry. He lives near Easley and continues to work part-time as a paint salesman. Nathan's father, the late Clyde Nuckols, also the father of June Nuckols Strickland (Roy's wife), was a leather craftsman and for many years operated a successful business on Main Street in Westminster. Nathan was a paperboy for the *Greenville News* and was the first to deliver the fabled red headline of the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, on noon of that infamous day. I helped him a little bit with that chore, for we were friends and often rode our bicycles all over the territory.

It was pure pleasure to talk with Nathan and re-live some of the interesting events that we experienced during our school years and shortly thereafter. We both shared in many events that were deeply buried into memory. Though, at the time, these things just sort of seemed routine and expected.

In his inquiry about forming a committee to have a class reunion - one more time - Nathan produced a list of members of that class that he had kept since 1954 when there was a 10-year reunion. It is interesting to know that a lot of the members are yet in the general area, and thus may be easier to reach than one might suspect. Here's the list of the members as he retained it and a brief bit of information:

Lillie Mae Davis, now Mrs. James Bryant of Westminster; Miriam Cumalander, or Mrs. Don Varreyer, address unknown; Ethel Burton, now Mrs. Walter Pelfrey, Star Route, Westminster; Bobby Browning, address unknown; Helen Brock, formerly Mrs. Tom Canupp, now deceased of Westminster; Lenore Butler, now Mrs. Howard Ballenger of Walhalla; Bobbie Bond, Mrs. J.L. Whitfield, now deceased; Doris Williams or Mrs. James A. Phillips, now of Walhalla.

Also, Christine Turner, address unknown; Dorothy Spearman, now married and lives in the St. Petersburg, Florida area; Dorothy Smith, now Mrs. R.T. Hamilton of Westminster; Sarah Sims, now Mrs. R. McGuffin of Westminster; Dorothy Rogers, now Mrs. Furman Waters of Westminster; Estelle Ramey, address unknown; Elizabeth Owens, now Mrs. Aldine Carter of Atlanta, GA area; Mary Adeline Oliver, married, address unknown. Frances McClain, now Mrs. James Armstrong of Westminster area; Ruth Moore, or Mrs. George Brown, now deceased of Walhalla; Virginia Mason, of Greenville area; Frances Mason, now Mrs. Dillard of Westminster area; Mary Jean Martin, now Mrs. Mike Lynch of Westminster.

Also Gladys Lyles, address unknown; Annie Belle Lyles, now Mrs. Robert Canupp of Westminster; Winnie Bell Lee, now Mrs. Raymond Findley of Oakway area; Ruth Knox, now Mrs. Fred Blanton of Gaffney area; Edna Hilley, now Mrs. F.M. Kurtz of Florida; Margie Haney, now Mrs. Loyd Wyatt of Seneca; Louisa Hall or Mrs. Richard West of Massachusetts; Mary Gregory, address unknown; Morris Alexander, now deceased; Bill Brock, now deceased; Aldine Carter of Atlanta; Paul Crenshaw of Warner Robbins, GA; Jack Davis, Madison; Carl Garner, now deceased; Jack Hunt, Westminster; Richard Lay of Seneca; Nathan Nuckols

of Easley; Paul Powell of Westminster; Arthur (Junior) Smith of Ladson, SC; Roy Strickland of Westminster; Bill Watkins of Seneca; Julian Grubbs of Westminster, now deceased.

Also, Othella Freeman, now Mrs. Bobby Long of Westminster; Elmina Franklin, now Mrs. Marion Sisk of Toccoa, GA; Sara England, now Mrs. Warren Bonner of Gaffney; Ethel Elrod, or Mrs. Guy Sanders of Greenville, may be deceased; Evelyn Duncan, former Mrs. Roy Littleton, now deceased of Clemson.

Anyone who knows the correct address and/or phone number of any of the above, it would be very helpful to the class president if this information was furnished on a postcard and sent to Nathan Nuckols, c/o Mrs. Roy Strickland, Isundega Street, Westminster, SC 29693. After all, that class of '44 is still very interesting to a lot of people.

April 15, 1990

Russ Carter Did His Bit For "Earth Day" -- Before We Had One

Russ Carter, now a nursing home resident in Seneca, (the last we heard), was perhaps one of Oconee County's most colorful and remembered office holders. Mr. Carter was the Oconee County Probate Judge for about three terms and took a great deal of pride in his work and the general history and upbuilding of the county.

His name came to mind as the entire nation celebrated "Earth Day," on Sunday, April 22. Years ago, Judge Carter served on a committee that was trying to get North Carolina to pave their part of the road that goes into beautiful Whitewater Falls, located above Salem.

It was presumed that if this section of the road was paved then it would promote tourism and thus the county would somehow benefit from people coming through, stopping by and possibly spending money within the boundaries. I believe the late John Duncan, Oconee County Planning Board Director was spearheading the movement. Perhaps the Mayor of Westminster at that time was Mr. Sam Reeder who was also busy promoting these kinds of projects.

Anyway, a committee was designated to meet with a committee

from North Carolina somewhere in the Brevard, NC area along with the highway commissioner from the neighboring state. Apparently, during or after the dinner meeting, Russ was exposed to a few rounds of beverage which evidently had some effect on his mission. For as the meeting progressed, Judge Carter finally got his turn to speak a few words, and according to witnesses, hit the floor with great elegance and determination to make his point in oratorical fashion that would have rivaled many trial lawyers.

In so many words, he reportedly told the group, "We really don't need that road paved down through that area of the country. Already, we have too many people visiting that beautiful virgin forest, and for North Carolina to pave their part of the road into Whitewater is simply going to multiply the visitors to the area, and we need to preserve this beautiful wilderness."

In other words, Russ reportedly turned his mission about 180 degrees. And on the return trip home as he was riding with his friends back to Oconee County, there wasn't much conversation. However, Russ did say that he supposed he had alienated all of his Oconee County friends who were waiting to get the road paved.

Looking at the situation today Mr. Carter, was just slightly ahead of his time, and the county may see the day soon when we may have been better served without a paved road into Whitewater Falls. Of course, there's still room for discussion on the matter...which doesn't change a thing anyway. Way back then Russ was doing his part to preserve the good earth!

"The Court House Ring" Was Campaign Cry

When Joe McCarey was running for Supervisor of Oconee County many years ago, he would go to the "stump" speakings and attract a huge crowd of followers as he lambasted "the court house ring." He was referring to a group of politicians he said that were formed into a "click" or "clan" that were extremely interested in keeping themselves elected to public office.

Joe took on the task of defeating the county supervisor at that time and was finally successful. But things didn't work out exactly as planned. The county delegation finally wound up by abolishing

the office of supervisor and placing their powers under a board of commissioners. This, however, didn't prove too popular with the people, so at the next election they turned the delegation "out to pasture."

Eventually, the county returned to a supervisor system of government with an elected board of commissioners...as it is today. Too, there apparently isn't a "court house ring" as it was once referred to by the very colorful and talented speaker, the late Joe McCarey. The offices have become too complex and involved in the modern trend of expansion that there really isn't much time for the more personal "ring" type of arrangement that apparently once existed.

It is, however, no less important or interesting to politicians and voters. The stakes are higher, and the voters seem to really have less to say about what happens to them and their tax dollars.

T.V. Derrick Was Dedicated Public Servant

Mr. T.V. Derrick, former Superintendent of Education in Oconee County, passed away last week. For several years he had been in declining health and was a patient at Lila Doyle Nursing Facility.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Derrick was perhaps the most effective Superintendent of Education this county has ever had or probably ever will have. He operated the entire system that served about 10,000 students then, as now, with a staff of about five or six knowledgeable and dedicated women. He seemed to get the job done efficiently and was not simply interested in having more and more people in executive offices. His administration was simple, to the point and effective. By comparison, he probably saved us millions of untold dollars...when one considers there are now 25 administrators with 25 secretaries doing the work that Mr. Derrick was able to accomplish with a fraction of that number. Of course, you can say, "times have changed," and they have, but you can also ask if we are any better off...is the quality of the product (in this case, the student) better off now than was the case 30 years ago? One thing's, for sure, it certainly does cost more!

May 2, 1990

General Patton Impressed Local Soldiers During WWII

His record is legendary. His image was visionary. His determination to “get the job done” was extraordinary. General George C. “Blood and Guts” Patton impressed several local soldiers who served with him during his drive with the Third Army during WWII.

While there were those who didn’t always agree with his methods, General Patton left definite images with those he commanded and others he came in contact with as he helped drive the Nazi forces out of business.

The other day Johnny Duncan of Doyle Street Westminster, recalled an encounter with General Patton. It was after the war had ended and the general had set up headquarters in a building in Germany. Johnny, who served as a First Sergeant and retired from more than 20 years service with the US Army, was also part of the occupation forces at that time. As the general was leaving one of the headquarters buildings, Johnny said he decided he would like to have a photograph of General Patton. He simply aimed his ready camera in his direction and was in the process of making the picture. For some reason, General Patton didn’t like the idea. According to Johnny, he stopped, called him over and asked what he was doing. John said he explained that he simply wanted to take his picture. Accordingly, the general admonished him like this, “You are a member of the Third Army, Sergeant, and you don’t have to take anything; come in here,” as he motioned to the office building...and of course the Sergeant dutifully followed. Once inside the building, he said General Patton reached up on the wall and took down a picture-portrait of himself and personally presented it to Sergeant Duncan. Of course this was an impressive and most memorable event for Johnny. His recollection of things that happened during that period seem most clearly imbedded in his thinking to this day.

Oddly enough, Harry Duke, who also served in North Africa when General Patton was busy trying to get Field Marshall

Rommel to cooperate, recalled an encounter he briefly had with the general. It was during a period when Rommel was going strong, and American troops had just landed and were in the process of assisting in this effort as replacements in the front line action.

Harry said he was among the first troops that were assigned to train alongside the tanks that General Patton commanded. He recalled the general being in the area to which he was assigned, and recalled that someone mentioned the famous trademark “pearl-handled revolver” that the general wore at all times. Harry said someone referred to them as being “pearl handles” one of his aides corrected him thusly, “Pearl handles, hell!...they’re ivory handles!”

Another observation that Harry recalls is the voice the famed general commanded. “When he talked, he sounded exactly like (the late) Mr. Wade Lumpkin,” Many old-timers will recall how Mr. Lumpkin had a distinct, high pitched, piercing tone of voice that one could hardly ignore.

If memory serves correctly, Frank W. Hix, who also served in the ranks of the Third Army as it made its way through Africa, Italy and Europe, once said he was assigned as one of the jeep drivers for General Patton.

However, Frank also mentioned something about his job driving the general’s jeep didn’t last but a few weeks...due to some kind of accident...and he was replaced and sent on to other duties.

Occasionally, a group of WWII retirees will gather at Joe McGuffin’s Quick Stop, and the conversation often turns to grammar and high school experiences along with some of the military duties that scattered local folks to the four corners of Earth during WWII. Joe said the talk is interesting but it doesn’t really help the cause of putting money in the cash register.

Walter Duckworth said an old World War One soldier used to drink beer in the Star Cafe at Walhalla. He had one finger missing on his right hand. When asked how he lost it, he would invariably comment, “I wore it off cocking a cannon during the battle of the Argonne Forest in France.”

May 9, 1990

B. Molgro England Much Faster Than Most Computers

The England family has been in business in Westminster since the early part of this century. B. Molgro England worked with his father, the late Mr. Luke England, who operated (on a limited basis) by W. J. England, brother of Molgro.

The general merchandise store located on Main Street was headquarters for all kinds of general merchandise and building supplies.

Several years ago about 30 or so Molgro formed Oconee Implement Company and has been active in the business ever since. However, since he is 80 plus years old now, he has slowed down a bit and turned most of the day to day operations over to his son, B. Molgro (Snook) England.

The span of business Oconee Implement Company has been widespread. Molgro is a natural "trader" and if you don't want to buy or trade a farm implement or tractor, you had best stay about as far as possible from Molgro when he is really in a trading mood.

One of the interesting traits he has always exhibited is his ability to calculate cost with a pen or pencil. When the customer is pressing hard for a good deal, Molgro has always had a remarkable way of calculating his position simply by writing in the palm of his hand or on the leg of his suntan trousers. When the "wheels" are turning in his head, his hand was always moving with the figures on his hand, trouser leg or any nearby object where he could do some sudden mathematics.

One fellow observed, "Molgro England had made more money writing in the palm of his hand than most of these other folks have with all the complicated computer equipment now available."

And another added, "Yes, and he could probably do it much faster, too."

Another thing that many remember about Molgro is when he was an active member of the volunteer fire department. For a fairly big man, over six feet and weighing in at about 200 plus pounds, Molgro, at one time, could take a fireman's axe and remove a shingled roof from a burning house quicker than you would ever

believe. This was sometimes necessary to get to the source of the fire.

Molgro's age, like most of us, has slowed him down a bit, made his hearing a bit more difficult, but he is, indeed, an interesting man who has done a lot of business throughout this area and several other states. He has delivered farm equipment to many places distant from Westminster...such as Ohio, Indiana, and places one may not suspect customers who would have searched out Molgro England and Oconee Implement Company for transaction.

All of this goes to prove that if one is willing to work and knows how to "trade," his business needs not to be limited to the city limits, county boundaries or even state lines.

Beacon Has Improved The Baseball Field

Beacon Manufacturing Company's Oconee Mill has always been a good, civic-minded plant in Westminster, and have perhaps done "more than their share" to help provide facilities for the citizens of the area and especially youngsters.

The company has made a real effort to improve the present baseball field, and has made it very attractive to the teams that are presently using it. The company has made several other very noticeable improvements in landscaping, painting and repairing their physical plant grounds and buildings.

It is amazing how the qualities of a neat, well-kept, facility seems to add to the way one feels about his workplace, job and general positive outlook. The old baseball field has many deep sentiments for many people of this section, and nearly anyone 50 years old or more has some good memories associated with the facility.

Beacon has certainly done its part to keep the "legend and memory alive and well."

May 16, 1990

No Radio Needed To Get In Touch!

Those who have experienced flying an aircraft probably know some things that others may never understand. Especially those who have been trained to do spins in light aircraft. It occurred to me as the young instructor back in the early 1970s was “doing his thing” that it would be good to know how to get into - and more especially - out of a spinning situation.

Little did I know that the pilot-instructor at that time, Douglas Gill of Spartanburg, would put me through such a situation without my asking. Climbing up to about 5,000 feet over the Clemson area in a Cessna 172, a single engine, light airplane, the instructor asked for an approach to landing stall. In case you don't know, when the airplane stalls, it simply quits flying. This can be done with the engine running - full throttle - or with the engine “chopped back” to idle. The end results are the same. You either take appropriate action, immediately, or you “pay the price” for being in a non-flying airplane.

Pilot-instructor Gill was a natural pilot. All of the things you needed to know, he knew, and he could fly with all the ease that a confident and experienced pilot gains from training and practice, plus a natural gift of talent in that profession.

As we began to slow the aircraft down to a stalling attitude with the engine at idle throttle, suddenly, without my input or knowledge, Gill kicked the left rudder. This quickly turned the airplane to the left and in a spinning attitude. The turns to the left were slow at first, but then the law of gravity took effect, and the earth seemed to be gushing forward at an unbelievable rate of speed. Exactly what I did at the moment, I'm not sure...but it worked...finally, the plane began to ease the turns and back into straight and level flight. It was a most unexpected experience, and after it was over, I was in more of a mood of shock than anything else. Apparently Gill knew this, so he immediately began barking instructions. “Call down there on the radio...tell them who you are, where you are and what you're going to do,” he advised.

As he was talking, he handed me the little radio microphone. I

took it in my hand, and depressed the button momentarily, but actually said nothing. The shock of being in and recovering from the spinning aircraft was very much on my mind at the moment.

Again Gill barked, "Call 'em now...give 'em your N number...etc...etc...!" With that he handed me the microphone and began to point to the numbers that were posted right in front on the cockpit panel in big letter especially designed for students who didn't know the number of the aircraft.

"Tell 'em," Gill said. And by then he was pointing with his finger to each of the posted numbers on the cockpit panel.

Finally, I spoke, and it was straight from the heart, "Doug, here is the microphone and the radio is yours...if you know of anyone you wish to contact...please go ahead...call up anyone you wish...tell them anything on your mind...I don't really care to speak on the radio...in fact, it really isn't needed...for the power I'm in contact with and have been for the past few minutes...no radio is needed...to reach a higher power than anything around here."

With that, Instructor Gill almost cracked up. He knew that I knew what happened and it didn't take me long to figure out that he made it happen, probably with the intent and desire to give me some "on the job" spin training. It worked! I haven't forgotten to this day that experience. Thrilling, though it was, it came at the most unsuspecting moment...one I'll always remember.

There are at least three things you'll probably remember for the rest of your life from the very first experience. Two of them can occur in an aircraft - you'll never forget your first solo flight and always remember that very first spin and how it happened.

The other thing is experienced by consenting adults and has nothing to do with flying.

May 30, 1990

Clayburn Davis Had Some Of The Answers

The late Clayburn Davis, for many years, ran the most popular service station in town. Only back then - 30 to 40 years ago- they were known as "filling stations" instead of service stations.

Clayburn's famous station was located at the place where Black's Tire is now located on Windsor Street. Clayburn was really a likeable person who knew a lot of people and had a very active business. He was intelligent, aside from the fact that he was a graduate engineer from Clemson College. (It was before Clemson ever thought of being a University -- but was a military school that did a rather good job of educating young men only, who wore uniforms of grey with black trouser stripes.)

Clayburn hired some very capable people to help him. Among them were the late Ernest McGuffin who actually kept the place going when Clayburn happened to be incapacitated. Ernest was a very capable operator, and later had his own successful business. He was a brother of Fred, Joe, Broadus, and Bruce McGuffin, who still live in the area.

Ernest was one of the old school operators who truly gave service at the old type "filling stations." He, in fact, kept Clayburn's place operating on an even keel for many years and was among the most respected operators in the business.

Pumping your own gas - as many do today - was unheard of at most places 30 years ago. The operators would pump gas, check your oil, wipe your windshield, empty ash trays and check the air in your tires, the water or coolant in your radiator, and in fact, just about everything except drive you to your destination.

That of course is now changed just about everywhere you travel. The economic system today perhaps won't permit it, but the truth is there is little service you receive from any so-called "service station" today as compared to the past. Who knows it may change back again...but in the early part of the 1930's and 1940's, you could yet receive many worthwhile benefits from those who operated "filling stations."

It just so happened one day that Clayburn had been drinking a bit -- in fact, just enough to keep off the Polio virus which was raging at that time -- and was standing by one of his gas pumps as an out-of-town customer stopped for a "fill up."

It happened to be a lady, and in the course of having her car serviced, she asked Clayburn if he had a rest room facility. For some

strange reason Clayburn did not understand the lady's request. He thought, as he later explained, that she wanted a wisk broom to perhaps sweep off her vehicle floorboard.

However, Clayburn certainly was an accommodating operator and wished to assist the woman, so he immediately answered kinda like this, "No, Ma'am, we don't have one, but if you'll pull over to that air hose, we'll be glad to blow it out for you!"

As best as anyone can recall, the lady declined the invitation, and probably never did know that he had misunderstood her original request.

Clayburn was certainly a gentleman and perhaps would not have intentionally said anything that may have offended a customer besides; sometimes things just happen that way.

Then there was the time when the late Gordon Cashin was in the building with Clayburn and some other friends during a cold Christmas season. The temperature wa down to about 15 degrees outside. A water spigot was dripping water and had formed a long icicle. The late Jack Dillard saw this and realized that Gordon had parked his car to the side of the building. His vehicle, at that time had an outside radiator cap. Quick witted, as he often was, Jack Dillard simply broke the icicle, removed Gordon's radiator cap, set the icicle on the opening and placed the cap in a dangling position on top of the icicle.

By the time Gordon was ready to make his departure, he looked out and saw what he first believed to be a frozen radiator that had "done shot up a big icicle."

He was, however, happily surprised to discover that this was just a practical joke. He probably suspected Jack Dillard as the prankster since he sometimes participated in things like that.

It was a very interesting place -- Clayburn Davis' filling station -- a place where they gave service in more ways than one.