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R. C. RIVERS, JR., PUBLISHER
An Independent Weekly Newspaper

By ROB RIVERS

For A Visitor . . . Sentimental Journey

His recent visit to Boone was a sentimental journey for Al Resch, publisher of the Chatham News, for two reasons— first, he realized a childhood ambition to ride in the cab of a steam locomotive (courtesy of Tweetsie), and again because it gave him opportunity to re-live some happy days spent in Boone a long time ago.

We like what Al wrote in his personal column when he returned to his desk in Siler City, not altogether because of the personal references, but because of the refreshment which comes when a guy looks behind the glitter, and the lust and the greed of modern living, and sees the basic worth of humankind and the eternal verities. . . . We reprint a part of his column:

A trip to Boone is always a sentimental journey for me. There's quite a story and this is part of it.

I had been banged up in a wreck. Physically, mentally and spiritually I was at the lowest ebb of my life.

A friend suggested I go to Boone to recuperate.

Chances are that the taking of his suggestion has had more to do with my career than anything else.

Ever since I can remember I aspired to do the work I am now doing. I wanted to edit a small town weekly. Don't ask me why. I doubt my ability to give credible reasons.

I went to Boone to recuperate and there came under the influence of one of the finest of God's creatures, the late R. C. Rivers, longtime editor of the Watauga Democrat, then and now one of North Carolina's best weekly newspapers.

Mr. Rivers quit carpentering at Linville to become editor and publisher of the little paper in 1889, just one year after it was founded.

It wasn't long after my arrival in Boone that Mr. Bob and I became fast friends. And it wasn't long before I told him of my ambition.

"I don't know why you've got it into your head to be a small town editor," he said. "You'll never make any money at it and you'll probably get more cussin' than you'd get in any other business."

All the while he was talking there was a twinkle of merriment in his eyes for he knew he wouldn't swap careers with the richest man in the world.

When I was in Boone two weeks ago the Watauga Democrat was observing its 73rd anniversary. Today the editor is R. C. Rivers, Jr., and few men have filled their father's footsteps as well as has Rob Rivers.

I noticed that Rob has preserved, against the progress, a maple tree that stood in front of the old printing plant. It seemed to me to be an example of the many close ties the son had with his father for the tree was a favorite of the elder Rivers and I can remember some happy hours of sitting beneath its encompassing branches as I listened to Mr. Bob expound his honey philosophy.

Maybe there are richer monetary rewards in other fields, as Mr. Bob pointed out, but I doubt if there are any which can compare with the knowledge that one's newspaper is a mirror of the community in which it is published. Nor is there any comparison of the closeness of the smalltown editor to the people he serves and the ivory towers in which sit the editors of larger newspapers, remote from the people, and usually inaccessible for the warm relationships which accumulate down through the years.

What bothers me is the lack of time to savor to the fullest these sentimental journeys. There are others of them usually made as part of a jet-propelled dash from one place to another.

I want to go back to Boone again one day soon. I'm not so much concerned that the area is now booming with tourist attractions. That's all well and good.

What I want is more time to reminisce—to think back on days when a much younger man was pouring out his life's ambitions to a man full of his years and possessed of vast stories of knowledge of humankind.

We live at such a rapid pace that if we're not careful we forget the real worth of the sentimental journeys we so seldom make.

Uncle Pinkney

(MacKnight Syndicate)

HIS PALAVARIN'S

DEAR MISTER EDITOR:

A feller has to look mighty careful to find anything in the papers anymore that don't keep him shook up and worried half crazy. The headlines is full of gloom and doom, stories about how them Russians is closing in all around us and hinting that maybe civilization will git wiped out in the show-down. I recollect reading a while back where the Navy was making all officers git themselves a sword and wear it at formal affairs. A sword will be mighty handy when it gits to ever man fer himself, and with the rat race we got going in the world today, I'm thinking about gitting myself one fer civilian use.

But if a feller will skip the big type and read down in the fine print, he can find a heap of items that'll help take his mind off'n his troubles. Fer instance, I see where a inspector in the U. S. Mint says our money is meeting the "physical requirements." It's comforting to know there's somepon it's meeting.

And a expert from the Retail Association says more and more folks is going to the smaller towns to shop. A general trend to the small towns would be a big help to a heap of us. It used to be that a feller couldn't see much in a small town, but now-a-days wimmen dress about the same everywhere.

Here a while back, I was telling you about this pamphlet from the Department of Agricul- . . . Yours truly, Uncle Pink



SOME LOCAL HISTORICAL SKETCHES

From Early Democrat Files

Sixty Years Ago

July 18, 1901.

Mercury stod at 92 in the shade on Tuesday.

Mr. W. R. Spainhour, wife and two daughters, of Montezuma, are over this week.

Many of the familiar faces of Watauga Academy students are to be seen on the streets this week.

On Monday evening Henkel Bros., livereymen at Blowing Rock, had three good horses killed by lightning near Green Park Hotel.

Four horses were hitched to a surry on the road to Lenoir. Three were instantly killed, the fourth one badly stunned, and the driver knocked from the surry, but not seriously hurt.

The horses cost Henkel Bros. \$340.00.

We are told that a field of fine corn owned by Benjamin Culler, of Howard's Creek, was almost entirely destroyed by a large drove of sheep that was deliberately turned out by their owner, in open violation of the stock law.

For such violators there is a remedy.

Hay-making is now in full blast in Watauga, and as the weather is very favorable, good headway is being made.

A finer crop of grass was never harvested in the county than will be this year.

W. E. Shipley, of Valle Crucis, and J. D. Brown, of Blowing Rock, left on Tuesday for Grayson Co., Va., where they go to buy some thoroughbred Hereford cattle for Moses H. Cone, of Blowing Rock.

Rev. Dr. Thomas Hume of the State University, has gone to his summer home, in Waynesboro, Va.

One eighth per cent of the people in North Carolina live in cities.

The country people have long memories. Therefore, the "commercial McKinley Democrats" will find a frost in North Carolina.

News & Observer.

Great Bend, Kansas, dispatch of the 8th, says that 1500 acres of wheat was destroyed by fire here this afternoon.

The fire originated from a lighted cigar thrown down in the stubble by an unknown man. It is estimated that at least 300,000 bushels of wheat was destroyed by the flames.

Thirty-Nine Years Ago

July 20, 1922.

Dr. and Mrs. R. H. Hardin, of Shulls Mills, passed through the village Monday en route to a Charlotte Hospital with their little son, who had the misfortune to break an arm and stiek a nail through one of his feet.

Miss Ella Hardin, who graduated at the A. T. S. in the class of 1915, arrived in Boone Tuesday from Kirksville, Mo., where she has just completed her second year in the American College of Osteopathy.

She will spend her vacation here, and return for the fall opening. She has two more years before her to complete her course, after which she intends to locate in Wilmington, N. C. Her home is near Rutherford. She is one of the brightest young women that ever left Watauga, and the Democrat wishes for her abundant success in her chosen profession.

Mr. James Council, our local and efficient civil engineer, has been employed by the Road Commission of Henderson county, and entered upon his duties several days ago.

The services of young Council are always in demand, as he is becoming quite an expert in his line.

Training school items: Miss Ruth Rankin is teaching piano this session.

Mr. Downum, school registrar, has returned to his home at Lenoir after registering the students of the second term.

Young Archie Qualls, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Qualls, was taken by his parents to John Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, for treatment. The boy has been suffering most excruciatingly for some weeks with some trouble in his hip joint, which, it seems, baffled the skill of our best physicians.

They left Tuesday morning and the anxious parents have not yet returned.

Fifteen Years Ago

July 18, 1946.

Major Catherine E. Falvey, WAC, has announced that she will run for the Democratic nomination for representative from the 11th Massachusetts district, position now held by Mayor James M. Curley.

She will be opposed by John F. Kennedy, son of former Ambassador Joseph Kennedy.

Mrs. Jack Hodges returned Tuesday from Louisiana where she had been called due to illness of her father, Sheriff O. H. Haynes, who was wounded in a gun battle with a fugitive.

Mr. Charles Wilcox, suffered a broken leg while in bathing last week near Wilmington, where he and his family were on a vacation trip.

Reports are that Mr. Wilcox was struck by another swimmer as he dived into the water. He has returned to his home here, and is carrying on his business for the time being from his residence.

Mr. Leander Norris left Thursday on his return to Bentonville, Ark., after spending 30 days with relatives in the county.

Mr. Norris left Watauga county in 1883. Before leaving he dropped by the Democrat office to say goodbye and renew his subscription.

He has received every edition of the Democrat since its establishment 58 years ago this month.

Mr. and Mrs. John F. Greene announce the birth of a son on July 14, at Watauga Hospital, who has been named John Floyd Greene, Jr.

Mrs. Annie Cooper, chief clerk of the house of representatives in the last session of the legislature, and Mr. Cooper of Raleigh, visited in the home of Representative and Mrs. S. C. Eggers recently.

Just One Thing

By CARL GOERCH

AFTER ANOTHER

Legal formula varies in different states, but up in New York, the custom is that in a capital felony, before the jury is empanelled and before the evidence is heard, the prospective juror takes an oath to make true deliverance.

George Gordon Battle; was prosecuting a case of this kind, the defendant being a rather hard-looking customer. The first juror called to the box was a dour-looking Scotchman with a long upper lip.

The clerk put the prospective juror on his oath: "Juror, look up on the prisoner; prisoner, look up on the juror. Do you solemnly swear that you will hear the evidence and give true true delivery as between the prisoner at the bar and the people of New York?"

The Scotchman took a long look at the prisoner, and it was evident that he wasn't impressed very favorably. Turning to the Judge, he solemnly announced: "Your Honor, I vote 'Guilty'!"

When your suit gets mixed up with somebody else's at the cleaners, it usually isn't very difficult to get the matter straightened out.

W. R. Grant, town clerk of Troy, N. C., didn't find it quite so easy to do this, however.

The day before Easter, his suit came back from the cleaners, and instead of being a 44 stout—which is his regular size—it turned out to be a perfect 36.

Naturally Mr. Grant was upset. He rushed to the cleaners and demanded his suit.

The cleaner made an investigation and then announced very apologetically that it was impossible to return Mr. Grant's suit.

"Why?" inquired Mr. Grant.

"Because we sent it to another man," he was informed.

"But why can't you send for it

Accommodations Problem

With the tourist season hitting its peak in the Boone, Blowing Rock, Linville area, almost every day we find visitors searching for rooms and apartments, and houses to be rented during the hot humid weeks ahead.

The Chamber of Commerce has tried manfully, and with some success, to get those who have rental properties to let it have the information, and another appeal is being made to this end. The Chamber is trying to render an important service by keeping a listing of facilities, without cost, and should have the full cooperation of those who have accommodations.

A considerable building boom is going on in the area, and more accommodations will be available next year, or even before, but right now the people are searching for comfortable apartments and small cottages, furnished, for im-

mediate occupancy, and unless these accommodations are listed at the Chamber, visitors could possibly spend a short vacation going from place to place trying to find a place to live.

It is quite likely that many rural householders have suitable accommodations for visitors, and quite often we find places of this sort being sought. In the town perhaps there are still some spots which are not filled.

In any event, if you have living quarters which are unoccupied, and which could handily be used, you should call the Chamber of Commerce so that inquiries may be directed to you.

A few more weeks and the peak of the season will have passed. It's not only good business, but a good thing for the town and country roundabout for you to report unused living space.

New Road Commissioner

Avery, Burke, Caldwell, McDowell, Mitchell and Watauga are the counties assigned to Highway Commissioner Jack Kirksey of Morganton, one of the new commissioners recently appointed by the Governor.

It is the intent and purpose of the law that the Chairman and members of the Highway Commission shall "represent the entire State and shall not represent any particular area, provided, however, that the Governor and the Chairman shall, without regard to boundaries or engineering divisions, divide the State into Geographic areas and assign one or more commissioners to each area to be responsible for relations with the public generally and with individual citizens regarding highway matters."

This is in line with the effort of the Administration to return the operation of the Highway Commission closer to the people, after an era of a reduced number of commissioners, and of at least arm's length contact with those in high position on the matter of roads.

This is good. And we would hasten to add our approval to the appointment of Jack Kirksey to be responsible for our area, and we believe he will fill the position with a high degree of competence.

Mr. Kirksey, prominent Morganton business man, has long been concerned with the affairs of government, and has contributed to the betterment of the political processes for a great many years.

Certainly we would think that Mr. Kirksey is eminently qualified for his new position by virtue of his knowledge of the area for which he is responsible and the road needs of the section, and we have no doubt but that he will devote his considerable abilities and talents to the betterment of the highway system.

Of course there are limitations as to what can be done, but we'd bet on Jack Kirksey's doing his dead level best as a member of the expanded Highway Commission.

That should be good enough.

Days Of The Dog Star

The hot, clammy time which comes in summer and fetches mold and mildew, and hides the sun a good part of the time, has always been known as dog days, and householders used to keep track of the humid period by Blum's Almanac and wait fretfully for the end of the disagreeable season.

We'd always noticed, however, that during one of those nearly bone dry summers, when the corn wilted and spindled and the garden sass had to be watered, no one said how come the dog days didn't bring the stickiness and the heat which are supposed to come at this time of year.

Anyway the forty days of humidity and clammy weather have taken over from June, which didn't win its usual acclaim in these parts for perfect, balmy days.

You might have guessed it was the Greeks who gave us the name for this summer misery. World Book Encyclo-

pedia says the ancients derived the name from the dog star, Sirius, which rises with the sun during this period.

Of course, the uncomfortable commuter might disagree and insist that the days were so named because dogs are most likely to get rabies at this time, as some superstitious people once believed.

Sirius, the brightest star in the heavens, radiates about 27 to 30 times as much light as the sun. That's not why the weather is so hot, but it is a reason why we pay any attention at all to the star.

Another reason is that Sirius, which is the head of the constellation Canis Major, or Great Dog, doesn't travel alone. It has a companion star made up of material that is about 50,000 times as dense as water. One cubic inch of material from this star, would weigh about one ton on the earth.

What Is A Fireman?

(Lincoln Times)

The volunteer firemen of the Lincoln county departments — at Lowesville, Denver, Boger City, North Brook, as well as members of the Lincolnton Fire Department may feel, after reading the foregoing, like saying "Amen" to the Florence, S. C. Fire Department.

It seems the South Carolina firemen eventually got fed up with accumulated gripes and complaints.

Consequently, the following was included in its annual report to the Florence City Council:

When fire trucks are delayed 40 seconds in traffic, people say, "It took them 30 minutes to get here."

When a truck races at 40 miles per hour, it's "Look at those reckless fools."

When four men struggle with an eight-man ladder, it's "They don't even know how to raise a ladder."

When firemen break windows for ventilation to reduce heat in fighting a fire,

it's "Look at the wrecking crew."

When firemen rip through a door to get at a blaze, it's "There goes the ax squad."

If they lose a building: "It's a lousy department."

If they make a good stop and do a good job: "The fire didn't amount to much."

If lots of water is necessary: "They are doing more damage with the water than the flames."

If a fireman gets hurt: "He was a careless guy."

If a citizen gets hurt: "It's a careless department."

If a fireman inspects a citizen's property: "He's meddling in somebody else's business."

If he gets killed and leaves a family destitute: "That's the chance he took when he joined the fire department."