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In A Tri-racial Setting."

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IS THIS BRANT HARRIS?



by Bruce Barton

Charles Bryant, Chief of Security at Pembroke State University, recently brought me a picture of this gentleman and, according to members of the Harris Clan, it is the one and only J. Brantley Harris, "The meanest man in Robeson County," according to some reports. He was reportedly killed by Henry Berry Lowry on or

about Buie's Store (now Pembroke area) in the early part of 1865.

W. McKee Evans, who wrote the well-documented *To Die Game* (considered by historians as the most definitive work about Henry Berry Lowry) said that James Brantley Harris was "a white merchant and liquor dealer who had settled among the Scuffletonians (the provincial name of what

is now Pembroke) some years before."

Enmity had sprung up between Harris and the Lowrys because of Harris' position as conscription officer during the Civil War years. But Harris was not liked by the whites either. He was variously identified as "a rough man" and as one "not sustaining a fair character...being feared by all who knew him." In his official capacity as conscription officer he was described by Mary Norment, a local historian of the times, as "the roughest of his class, overbearing and abusive" to the Indians. According to an account in the *Wilmington Daily Journal* (April 4, 1872) Harris was "charged with many too familiar with the wives and daughters of his customers and from this first sprang enmities between himself and the Lowreys." (Note the various spellings of either "Lowrie," "Lowry," or "Lowery." The various spellings continue even today, and is dependant upon the inclinations of the various Lowry families as to how the name is spelled.)

According to all reliable sources, Harris was not a particularly nice guy, weighing in at 230 pounds. No matter, on January 15,

1865, while riding in his buggy with an Indian woman, he was shot down and was cast into eternal damnation, if accounts of his character can be believed. Some sources swear that he was killed by Henry Berry Lowry himself. Whether true or not, Lowry and his associates received the credit (or discredit), according to one's particular point of view.

Jack Harris, the heavy in 'Strike at the Wind' is tailored after James Brantley Harris, and has been played by Willie Harris, Jr. for the last two years. Willie Harris, too, is a descendant of James Brantley Harris. As a matter of fact, as well as I am able to ascertain it, all Harrises in Robeson County are descended from James Brantley Harris and an Indian woman, Elizabeth Locklear.

Is Harris as mean as history has cast him? Is the heavy in every story told of Henry Berry Lowry? Who knows? An interesting aside is that I am in possession of a deed in which he left a tract of land in the Prospect community to Elizabeth Locklear and Mary Catherine Locklear, Ellen Locklear and John Locklear. The deed is dated the 10th day of June, 1863, some two years before he was summarily killed. Was Elizabeth Locklear the Indian woman who was with him when he was killed? History does not record who she was. But Mary Catherine, Ellen and John Locklear seem to have been children sired by James Brantley Harris. He must have cared enough about them to leave them a piece of land, a precious commodity in those troubled times.

But the question at hand is: Is this James Brantley Harris? The photograph was found by a member of the Harris family, and surfaced at a recent gathering of the Harris Family. Charles Bryant is descended from the Harrises. We appreciate him sharing this photograph with us. Do any of you have any information as to the authenticity of this photograph? The uniform seems to be of a later time period, and he does not seem to be "elephantine" as one writer described him.

Is this Brant Harris, "the meanest man in Robeson County?" What do you think? If you have further information, I would like to hear from you. You can write me at this address:

Bruce Barton, P.O. Box 1075, Pembroke, NC 28372 or you may call 521-2826.

[Editor's Note: The following article was submitted by Ronald H. Lowry of Virginia Beach, VA. He and his brother, Marvin, have their roots in Robeson County. Ronald Lowry has often submitted articles for publication in this newspaper. Most memorable is his series "Growing Up In Robeson County."]



Photo by Grant Wilson

McMinn County's Extension Agent Marvin Lowry was judged Communicator of the Year in a contest among extension agents statewide. The Award is named the Sweet Award after retired communications specialist Fletcher Sweet who sponsors the yearly competition.

Marvin Lowry transformed small niche into his life's work

GRANT WILSON
Staff Writer

When Marvin Lowry discovered his niche in life, he stuck with it but didn't let it cramp him. He stretched out until that niche became a notch and then further widened it's scope until it was roomy enough for his personality.

Today you might call that notch a full size excavation and one not likely to be fully-filled when Lowry leaves his life-long work as McMinn County's Agricultural Extension Agent to retire someday.

Lowry has been at that job since he joined the Extension Service in 1962, fresh out of college where he was degreed through a Smith-Hughes education grant in Vocational-Agricultural education. At first he worked as a agriculture teacher in Monroe County, but after a couple of years moved to McMinn County where had some family. He was born in Richmond, Virginia, and reared on a tobacco farm in eastern North Carolina.

"I had an ambition to become a teacher," Lowry said, and with Marvin, this is obvious, not only because of his work but also because he speaks like a teacher — in facts and figures, relating data and listening to your response.

He projects the feeling he's doing just exactly what he wants to be doing and that he considers his job one just as important as those of a governor or doctor.

He may be wearing cowboy boots with mud on them, but he is extremely proud of the work he did to get them dirty.

The state's county agricultural agent system became the Tennessee Extension Service shortly after Lowry took his job. As an agent, he became a University of Tennessee employee, effectively the same ranking as an on-campus associate professor. Some Extension officers are also professors having completed doctoral degrees in their fields.

Lowry is also the Extension leader, a title that means he is responsible for adult and commercial agriculture and for agricultural and community resource development. As such he has helped to develop of the local farmer's market and livestock pavilion for the county and has initiated several long range programs for educating the farming community.

"I've worked with him for 25 years," says Extension service secretary Sue Cobb. "He's a perfectionist. He

doesn't want to be second in anything he sets out to accomplish."

It has been Lowry's influence to a large degree, that has pushed high quality dairy cattle production in McMinn County, Cobb said, adding that the improvement in the local dairy herds can be traced in part to the area junior dairy shows which Lowry started for 4-H members some years ago. "The interest shown early by the kids in breeding, showing and judging dairy cattle has developed into interested, educated adult dairy farms," she says.

J. Huse Martin, Lowry's ex-boss and retired Extension leader for McMinn County, says he admired the work Lowry has done and is still doing for the county. "He's a hard worker. He wants to get things done," Martin says.

One of the odd facts related to his job is that until the late 1960s state Extension Service employees could not have farms of their own and so, as much as he knows the farm business, Lowry doesn't have one himself. "By the time they changed the rules I had too much to do with this job. It was too late to start something like building a farm as a part-time job." Part-time farming probably wouldn't fill the bill for Marvin — Mr. All-Or-Nothing — anyway.

"They thought an agent who farmed would be in competition with other farmers, a conflict of interest," Lowry explains. "Back then the female agents, the home Extension demonstrators, weren't even allowed to marry and keep their jobs. Miss Myrtle Webb worked for the service for 35 years and knew all there was to know about running a home for a family but couldn't marry. They've changed all that now."

Lowry is one of only a few agents who have spent their entire careers at one office, in one county. The result is not that Marvin has been somehow retrained in his job as some men might feel, but rather that he has had the opportunity to do the work he loves for and with the people he cares most about.

"I admit I'm busy — running all over and trying to keep up with a county full of farms and farmers," he says. "But I'll keep at it until I can't on the job any more. I stay as long as my health will let me."

"This is the work I do and I just hope I don't get any older like it."

Don't worry Marvin, you do.

THE ELEVENTH SEASON OF Randolph Umberger's

STRIKE at the WIND!

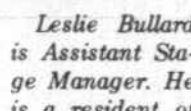
The Eleventh Season of "Strike at the Wind" is being presented each Thursday through Saturday night at 8:30 p.m. at the Lakeside Amphitheatre, three miles west of Pembroke. The drama will continue through September 6, 1986.

Carnell Locklear returns for his eleventh season as the popular Boss Strong. Locklear also serves as General Manager of the outdoor drama.

But there are more people involved with "Strike at the Wind" than is obvious on stage. In fact, the real strength of our popular outdoor drama is those hard working folk behind stage. We would like to introduce you to some of them. You won't see them from the audience, but "Strike at the Wind" could not function without them.



Leslie Bullard is Assistant Stage Manager. He is a resident of Red Springs, NC and this is his first year in the drama. He has been in the show every year since he was five years old. It is a chance he always wanted. He is expecting to be in the show for the next ten years.



Sylvia Lowery is Props Manager. Sylvia is a native of Pembroke and is a newcomer to the production staff and also to the Strike at the Wind cast. She is employed by the N.C. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in Lumberton. She is the proud mother of one daughter; her hobbies are riding, recreational walking and meeting people.



Mickey Ozendine is a native of Robeson County and is married to Johanna with one daughter, Cora. He enjoys playing music and is one of the original musicians on the sound track of Strike at the Wind.



Annie Neal Locklear is Costumer. She is well known in the area for her fine talents as a seamstress. She enjoys gardening, canning & cooking. For many years she has been active in church work, serving as director of music and Sunday School teacher.



Margaret Freeman is Assistant Costumer/Ward robe. This is her second year as a member of the production staff and her third year with the show. She enjoys reading, singing, and watching T.V. She is the mother of six children.

Adolph Blue New Member Of The Robeson County Board Of Elections

Lumberton-Adolph Blue, an employee of Pembroke State University, is the newest member of the Robeson County Board of Elections, replacing Russell Powers, Jr. who died in June. Blue, a life-long Pembroke

resident, was sworn in August 12, giving the board two Republicans and one Democrat. The board usually reflects the affiliation of the governor in office. As Governor Martin is a Republican, Blue, also a Republican,

joins Chairman Bo Biggs to give the board a Republican majority.

Blue said, prior to the meeting, "I'm just glad to be here...I'm going to do the best I can to serve."



The Print in a Frame shown above is by famous artist Gene Locklear. It will

be given away to the winner of a drawing to be held Friday, September 19. Tickets on the print cost a \$2.00 donation to "Strike at the Wind." The event is being sponsored by First Union National Bank of Pembroke. The Print and Frame are valued at \$200.

You do not have to be present to win. The print is #59 of 100 prints of a Limited Edition.

Shown to the left is Frank Daughtrey, City Executive of First Union National Bank of Pembroke. Right is Harvey Godwin, manager of Hill's Food Store in Pembroke who also stars at Henry Berry Lowry in the outdoor drama "Strike at the Wind."