

WALLTOWN

By Donald Love

Before there was a Wall-town, there stood a forest. Mr. George Wall came here from somewhere with Trinity College. I don't know how long he was here. Of course, he had to have a place to live. I can imagine, at off times, he explored Durham, searching a place for his family. Naturally, he wanted to live as near his work as possible. He went north of Trinity College, entered this forest, picked a place, and said to himself, "This is it." I have no idea how he went about finding out how he might buy this spot or any spot. He did and if you observe where the Wall's site is now, it appears he went about half-way into this forest and made his decision on the tract of land he wanted. The home site is almost dead center of Wall-town.

There was no log rolling to build his home, there was no one there. He collected material from Trinity College, such as boxes, scrap lumber, anything he could find useful to build quarters for his family. As he worked building his castle, he beat a path through this forest from Trinity College. After finishing it, moving in, this path was the only in-let and out-let to and from his home.

Knowing him as I did, he worked hard night and day clearing around his place. As much as he liked tilling the soil, his main objective after moving into his home was a garden spot for raising food for his family.

I don't know how long after others invaded this forest. There were the Pattersons, Haskins, Canidies, Besses, two sets of Davises, two of Hopkins, Rogers, Love Hookers, and more. These were the earlier settlers and there were others. I would assume, it was these early settlers who conceived the idea of calling the area Wall-town.

These settlers had the least knowledge about laying off and planning streets. They beat paths to their castles. One or more came in possession of horses, cows, hogs, chickens, and garden spots which were their main and chief objectives.

These passageways in and out of the area were called wagon tracks, not even roads. In order to get from one neighbor to another without going through the woods, these wagon tracks were used.

If you note now, Wall-town is one of the best laid out communities in the City of Durham.

There were no churches, schools, lights, water, other than a few neighbors had wells for water. The whole community depended on one well until others were dug. The lighting system was lamps for the inside and lanterns for the outside. Lanterns were used for night visiting also.

One of the first churches was a Methodist Church which once stood where St. John Baptist Church now stands. The next church was a store located on what is now "B" Street. Rev. J. R. Brandon had

this store house moved from where it was down to the spot where St. John was. This church was a Baptist Church and called Wall Street Baptist Church.

The only school the children could attend was in the West Durham section, a community known then and now, Hickstown School. This school was located where the Baker House Nursing Home is now located.

These Wall-town children had to walk. There was no such thing as being transported to and from school.

Going to and from school, you had to go through the heart of West Durham. The white children would be going to their school at or around the same time and there was a daily fight between the children.

The last fight between the children was one morning. My brother Otho Love and the late James (Fox, Little Man) Bass, were going to school together. They were late and the last to be getting to school. As the two boys were going on Erwin Road they met the white boys. These white boys joined hands and formed a line across Erwin Road. There was no way for them to get through. If they went or tried to get around either end of this line, these white boys would force this line longer to prevent them from getting through. This went on for a while until it became so provoking to my brother. He found a stick of some sort handy or nearby and he used this stick on these boys. James Bass was able to make it through line and ran all the way to the school for help. Help came causing my brother to get away without bodily harm.

The parents of these white boys had warrants taken against all the black boys involved. Met court, the black boys were found guilty. The parents of these black boys stood up and were all counted. They had special meetings with the County Board of Education, not asking but telling the Board what they were not going to do and what was to be done. The black kids from the Wall-town community did not attend school any more. Now the Wall-town School was born. There wasn't a building suitable for classes. The black parents suggested to the Education Board, they would contact the pastor and officers of Wall Street Church, asking permission to use the church for a school building but the Board had to make the plans and pay the expenses to meet the plans. This was accepted by the Board of Education. The next move the Board had to make, getting a principal and teachers. This was no hill to climb. The parents asked several teachers but they refused. There was a lady by the name of Anger Turner, accepted, mainly for the kids in the community. A few years later, some man by the name of Rosenwall had four or five schools built in Durham County just for the Blacks. One in Hickstown, Walltown, Lyon's Park and East Durham. These schools were the property of the County School System until Durham extended the City limits and all of these schools became the property of the City School System. The boys in Wall-town became very much interested in athletics; especially baseball. One reason, we would go to all of Trinity College ballgames. We learned the names of the players and would pick our idols and put forth every effort to duplicate their style of play. Our relatives, such as fathers, uncles and friends

worked in dormitories classrooms and the gym. The students would five them balls, such as baseballs and tennis balls. We kids were given these balls, gloves, bats and whatever. We played ball twelve months to the year. We specialized in running throwing and batting. We gradually became interested in football but never basketball. Our interest grew in football equal to that of baseball. The older boys would teach the younger how to throw, run bases, slide, throw the football. After going to high school, we learned finer points in football and passed this information on down. In the years of the thirties, we began to lean toward politics. There were just a few individuals interested in voting knowing nothing about any of the insides of politics. There were one or two and no more, who would go to the voting place, just sit there and ask the voters to cast their votes for candidates who had promised a few dollars over a day's pay on their job. The masses knew nothing about voting, registering, when to register, when to vote, who to vote for, and how. We held night sessions in the school to acquaint them. It was amazing how interested they were. At these sessions, questions were asked, the attendance was good denoting interest. Our first political test was on mail delivery. The mail was delivered in the nine hundreds blocks. The blacks on 2nd Street began at the 1000 block to Club Blvd. Third and Fourth Streets began at the 900 blocks to Club. Fifth Street began at the 1000 block to Englewood Ave. This means from the 1000 blocks on all streets did not get mail delivery. We took it upon ourselves to make contact to find out why the lower parts of the

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LT. COL. BERTHOUD

A student of Black Marine history, Lt. Col. Kenneth H. Berthoud is now a deputy commander of a Marine facility in Okinawa.

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Consumer Scene



Consumerism Is Here To Stay

The Seventies may well be remembered by historians as the Age of Consumerism.

Consumer advocates such as Virginia Knauer and Ralph Nader have become household names. "Action Line" columns have sprouted in major newspapers to advise consumers, and the old Latin phrase, "caveat emptor"—let the buyer beware—is being superseded by a true phenomenon, a modern battle cry from a dead language—"caveat venditor"—let the seller beware!

The latest shot-in-the-arm for the consumer movement is Consumer Information Week, a national program sponsored by the Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc., with the aim of encouraging business to talk to consumers and, more importantly, to listen to them.

The list of companies supporting Consumer Information Week is impressive, and not surprisingly is laced with major firms such as General Electric Company which have long been in the forefront of consumer education efforts.

General Electric, for example, packs a "use and care" manual with every appliance it makes which not only covers how to make the best use of the product, but also how to obtain service.

GE use-and-care manuals try to answer most of the questions a customer might ask. The instructions are written by home economists, not engineers, and they translate technology into layman's language and take special pains to anticipate a housewife's problems.

Warranty information included in each instruction book is in clear, concise form so the consumer can understand her rights without needing legal training.

The telephone book is the most common source used by the public to locate help when they have an appliance problem, so GE maintains extensive Yellow Pages listings in most large population centers as well as the normal white page entries.

GE product service personnel in the area where the customer lives are able to handle most customer problems, questions or complaints. But if a problem cannot be handled locally, GE's Major Appliance Group has a customer relations manager—a sort of consumer ombudsman—whose job it is to see to it that consumer questions get answered and that complaints are resolved. Consumers can write to him at Appliance Park, Louisville, Ky. 40225, or call 502-452-3362.

Still a "higher court" that consumers can take their problems to if they are not satisfied is the independently operated Major Appliances Consumer Action Panel. It analyzes consumer complaints and recommends appropriate action to manufacturers. All GE use-and-care manuals tell consumers about MACAP, and provide its address: 20 North Wacker Drive, Chicago, Ill. 60606.

With cooperation like this from manufacturers, Consumer Information Week should have no trouble achieving the status of a major annual two-way information exchange between business and consumers.

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