

Life in a tourist center

Resident enjoys being a part of Old Salem

By TERESA CURRY

Stroll along the cobblestone streets of Old Salem, N.C., and see scattered on each side one- and two-story homes constructed of either weathered brick, white wood siding or large rectangular tan blocks.

White picket fences or greying split rail fences surround open grass fields and protect small herb gardens. Small shops where blacksmiths, wheelwrights and candlemakers practice their trades and peddle their goods are bustling with activity.

Often a woman in a long, pale blue cotton dress with a white apron and white bonnet can be seen scurrying into the bakery; while a man wearing green knickers, a white shirt, white stockings and pointed black buckle shoes sits on a bench outside the cobbler's shop smoking his pipe.

But what is this? That woman over there hoeing is out of place. She has on lavender polyester pants, a white cotton shirt and navy penny loafers. She is a part of the scene, yet not part of the scene.

Flora Ann Bynum, 57, lives at Salem. She has been an active resident of this tourist center for 30 years. And her four children grew up here.

Aside from an abundance of tourists, By-

num finds living in a tourist center little different from living in any other community.

Bynum's home, constructed in 1844 by John D. Siewers, a cabinet-maker, is one of the many homes preserved by the Salem restoration committee. The committee's primary goal is to make sure this tourist center is maintained along the same lines as when it was originally founded in 1766 by Moravians migrating from Bethlehem, Pa.

Past experience has taught Bynum to work in her front yard early in the morning. Otherwise, all her time is spent leaning on a hoe while talking to tourists.

"You become a tour director, particularly, if you are in the yard or in the garden, for people rarely knock on the door," she said. "They may be wanting directions on how to find the museum, a certain street or a dorm room at Salem Academy."

"Tourists, or even people in Winston-Salem, are concerned with the private homes and what they look like inside, since they are not included on the tour."

Patience and a willingness to help others has become a standard part of Bynum's daily routine. She even keeps pamphlets in a desk drawer in her hall for curious tourists who wonder around after the information center has closed for the day.



DTH/File photo

Tourists walk along Main Street by the Single Brothers House ... the lower floors hold the shops where the men were taught

Bynum will never forget a man from California who approached her on her front porch one night in hopes of learning the entire history of Old Salem.

"After talking with him he was so excited by what he had learned, he reached in his cooler and gave me a big wedge of Colby cheese," she said, amid smiles. "At least I got paid that time for being a tour guide."

Surprise visits are also not unusual. "People come by to see you who might not otherwise get in touch with you," she said. "Friends, or people who claim to be your friends, want to bring by others to tour your home."

Bynum recalled her worst experience of this type. Her children were quite small, and she had been out all day on business. After returning home she had paid the babysitter and gone upstairs to change. While in her underclothes she became engaged in a 30-minute telephone call.

Upon hanging up she thought she heard noises downstairs. Her friend, Ann (not her real name), then called up to her and said she had brought a few friends by, which turned out to be her entire garden club. Bynum's son, who was four at the time, had let them in. Bynum then had to redress and usher the guests around her home.

Bynum, along with other residents, has opened her home to tourists on three or four occasions, but this practice was eventually stopped because residents worried about thefts that would occur during or after the tours.

The only restrictions on living in Old Salem concern keeping the exterior of the house and surrounding landscape in accordance with 18th century standards. Residents are allowed to arrange the interior of their homes as they wish.

"These restrictions bother some residents who want to build drives or garages that wouldn't be in keeping with the time period," Bynum said. "It is sometimes hard to get across to them that authenticity is the key to Old Salem."

Bynum possesses a strong sense of pride in her community. She has written *The Old Salem Garden Guide*. She is chairman of the landscape restoration committee, a member of the board of trustees and a member of the executive committee.

"Things you do begin to evolve around Old Salem," she said. "If residents didn't work for the community, who else would?"

Teresa Curry is the editor of *Weekend*.



DTH/File photo

The bakery is still open today selling fresh baked goods ... bread, sugar cake and Moravian cookies are all favorites

Microwave cooking is atomic

By RANDY WALKER

It is Sunday night in Carr Dorm's TV room. This is the time of whacking; this is the time of munching. Small-timers' heads are filled with visions of Hector's and hot dogs, doughnuts and Domino's.

At 11:30, Mid-Atlantic Championship Wrestling comes on. Eefus, Hugh G. Reckshun and I need to celebrate. "This calls for big-time food hitters," Eefus says.

"Hector's?" I ask.

"No need to go out," Eefus says. "We have microwave capacity."

"You goin' atomic?"

"Man, get out the Geiger counter," Eefus says. "Nuclear popcorn is calling me."

In the kitchen next door, Eefus pours Pops-Rite into a grocery bag, enough to cover the bottom. He microwaves it five minutes. Then he pours in salt and microwave-melted margarine and shakes it up.

"Awesome," Hugh G. says, testing it out. "Eefus, you ought to be an atomic physicist."

"Owww!" I spit out a red-hot kernel. "That one was still radioactive."

"Only about half of them pop," Eefus says. "They have a pretty long half-life."

Soon we're down to the kernels. "Time to recycle the leftovers," Eefus says.

After three minutes of nuking, Eefus opens up the 'wave. A mushroom cloud rises from the bag. "MELTDOWN!"

Hugh G. and I rush into the kitchen. "Radioactive gas escaping into the atmosphere," Hugh G. warns.

We look into the bag. A charred, smoking, stinking, radioactive mass is all that's left of Eefus' Pops-Rite.

"Left it in too long," Eefus remarks.

"This is nuclear overkill," I observe.

"No need for panic," Hugh G. says. "Atomic spuds are on

the way."

With a fork, Hugh G. stabs two medium-sized potatoes full of holes. "Nuke 'em seven or eight minutes, they taste just like baked," he says.

While Hugh G.'s spuds nuke, Marvin comes in with a foil-wrapped sandwich.

"Hugh, you're standing pretty close to the 'wave, buddy," Marvin says.

"What are you sayin'?"

"Man, I'm afraid that thing's gonna fry my gonads," Marvin says.

"The wave is safe, if you use it right," I say.

"I don't know, man. I bet that thing could roast your hand. I've seen it fry roaches pretty good."

"Well, yeah," I say. "See, this tube generates microwaves. They agitate molecules in the food, make them turn over real fast."

"How fast?"

"Real fast, man. A billion times a second. The friction heats up the food. But the waves bounce off metal, they can't get through the door. Your 'nads are safe."

"What if I put this aluminum foil in there?"

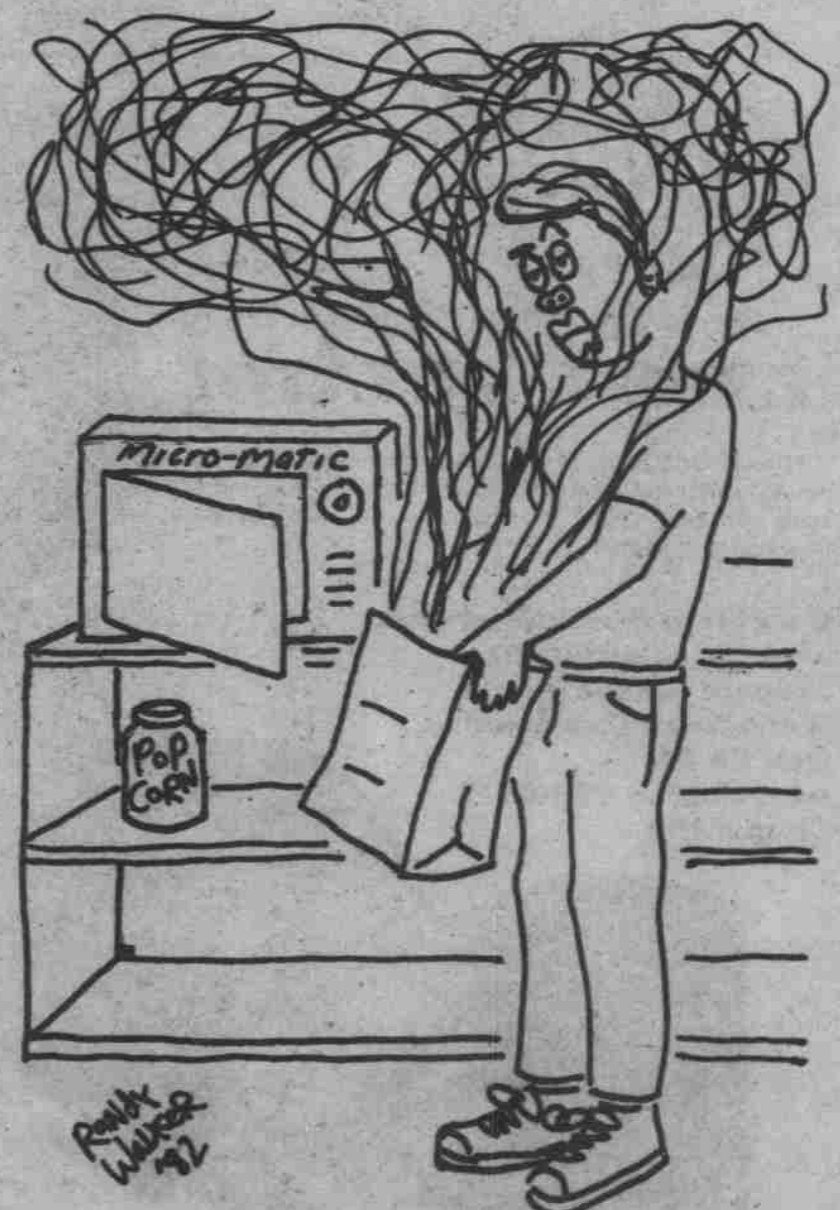
"We're talking big-time electrical storm. Pops and flashes. Like World War III."

Back in the TV room, Hugh G. Reckshun munches atomic spuds. Eefus brushes off the fallout from the Pops-Rite disaster.

"How the spuds, Hugh G.?" I ask.

Hugh G. slices open a spud and steam rises into his face. He squeezes on some more butter. He raises a dripping, steaming forkful to his lips and blows on it gently.

"Man," he says, serious look on his face, "sometimes I can't understand why those people protest against nuclear power."



Randy Walker '82

Randy Walker is a staff writer for *The Daily Tar Heel*.