

J. T. Bridges Found Happiness In Setting Type About Haywood Folk

Veteran Printer Operated First Linotype Here

By W. CURTIS RUSS

James Thomas Bridges, an 84-year-old retired printer, has a memory like an elephant.

He never forgets.

I learned this 25 years ago when I came to work on The Mountaineer.

I was told early the first day: "If you want to know the initials of any person, or their address in Haywood, just ask Mr. Bridges."

The possessor of this keen memory retired from active work in the composing room nine years ago. Needless to say, "the walking encyclopedia" has been missed many, many times.

The original plans were to write this story near July 13—his birthday, but after learning he now had more time on his hands for an interview than he would have later, the date for the story was stepped up. When his 84th birthday rolls around in July he plans to be pretty busy.

He has a lot of fishing plans, and a schedule that is designed to make up for some time which he missed a few years ago. Then too, even with his good memory, it might be difficult to get him to talk as much about the past in the middle of the fishing season.

Mr. Bridges would not spin a yarn about fishing, no sir, but then after all, he reserves the right as a fisherman to discuss the subject in his own way, using such figures and facts as he deems necessary for the moment.

He came to Haywood from Pisgah Forest in 1885, where he was born, (1872) and attended school here, working part-time in the woolen mill operated and owned by his father, Thomas Yancey Bridges and D. M. Killian. The plant was about where the



J. T. BRIDGES

Ice Plant now stands.

At the age of 18 he had seen enough of the printing office, then owned by J. D. Boone and Z. V. Rogers, to feel he would like to be a printer.

The more he thought of printing, the less interested he became in his part-time job in the woolen mill. He applied for a job in the printing office and was hired as a type setter. His interest in printing enabled him to catch on fast. He set type under the red glow of a kerosene lamp nine hours a day for a salary of \$5 per month.

A greener pasture loomed on the horizon, as a job as linesman for the local telephone company opened up. The firm was owned by the late S. C. Satterthwaite and John Swift.

The telephone company was rapidly expanding, and he helped build the line to Dillsboro. He strung more wire than any other man, and climbed every telephone pole between Waynesville and Canton. Bobby Howell, Jonathans Creek, was the other lineman.

In 1894 he married Miss Sarah Rixie Miller, and he decided that perhaps he had better go on back to the printing office, because he had never been quite as happy elsewhere.

He kept on setting type, and preparing forms for the men to use on the press. He knew presses, but was so fast at setting type that he seldom ran a press.

In 1905 the shop turned to the mechanical age, and bought a Linotype machine.

Mr. Bridges helped the factory man install the intricate machine, and learned to operate it in a short time.

He operated this machine until it was traded for another in 1937, and he called the Linotype "Old Maude." He gave several reasons for picking such a name, but always clarified it by adding, "It was just a fool notion."

Linotype operators were scarce, and once when Mr. Bridges was serving on the grand jury, the new operator could not get the machine to work all day, and had to wait for Mr. Bridges to get off from court and tighten one small screw.

Mr. Bridges trained several men on the Linotype, and he kept on setting type, often for two newspapers, which were printed in the same plant.

About 1914 he and the publisher did not agree as to salary, so Mr. Bridges decided to go into the lumber business.

The man that replaced Mr. Bridges in the newspaper composing room did not have the experience necessary for the job, and instead of the paper coming out on Thursday, it was still on the press Saturday afternoon.

The press was hand operated, and a large Negro turned the crank that powered the press. The press acted as if it had brakes on.

Mr. Bridges took one look at the stubborn machine, and then whispered to the Negro: "Get a wrench and turn that bolt a half

turn to the left and see what happens."

The bolt was turned and the press rolled like a new one.

Mr. Bridges had been at the lumber plant two weeks when the publisher came for him, pleading that he return to work. The entire composing room staff was out with flu.

Mr. Bridges went on back, did all the mechanical work, got the paper out on time, and stayed on until 1918, when Uncle Sam needed Linotype operators in the Government Printing Office in Washington. The Kaiser was playing havoc in France and Mr. Bridges felt he had to go to Washington to do his part in winning the war, and as he put it, "our son Henry was over there, too."

When he returned from Washington his job in Waynesville was filled, so he worked in Canton that summer, coming back to the publisher, J. D. Boone that fall.

Mr. Bridges is a modest man, and keeps his opinions pretty much to himself, but when asked for an expression, you'll get one, but perhaps not always what you might expect—he gives it straight.

That leads up to the time when he was fired—the first time he was ever fired. He tells it:

"I was working for W. A. Band, and it was during the hot Al Smith and Herbert Hoover election campaign. Mr. Band was for Smith, and I could not agree, but I kept quiet about the matter."

"When Mr. Band asked me how I was going to vote, I told him very politely that although a Democrat, I would be forced to cast my vote for Mr. Smith's opponent. I was told I would not be needed any longer."

In a few weeks, however, the publisher was back begging the Linotype operator to return to work—the election was over. He remained on the newspaper until he retired in November 1947.

He helped move the plant to about eight different places in

(Continued on page 8)



FERGUSON



RAMEY

COMPLETING AIR FORCE BASIC TRAINING at Lackland Air Force Base near San Antonio, Texas, are Arnold H. Ferguson (left), son of Mrs. Violet Hannah of Waynesville, and James L. Ramey, brother of Jack Ramey of Lake Junaluska.

Federation Stockholders Meeting Set Here Saturday

The Annual Farmers Federation stockholder meeting for Haywood County will be held Saturday, March 17th, beginning at 10 a. m. in the Waynesville Store, it has been announced by James McClure Clarke, Farmers Federation Executive Vice-President.

The Waynesville and Canton Store committees will be up for re-election at which time new members may be added to the committees.

One county director will be nominated and voted upon at the annual meeting of all Farmers Federation stockholders scheduled for the Buncombe County Courthouse in Asheville on March 24th beginning at 10 a. m.

Each county in the Farmers Federation territory is represented by two county directors who serve two year terms with one of the directors up for re-election each year. Business reports will be given by Farmers Federation officials.

Music will be furnished by Panhandle Pete and the Farmers Federation String Band during the meeting and free baby chicks will

be given as door prizes.

Interesting and helpful talks on farming will be given by extension personnel, Federation officials and other farming authorities.

All stockholders, patrons and persons interested in the Farmers Federation and its many programs are invited to attend the meeting.

Now serving as Haywood County directors are Herschel Hipps, Route 1, Canton and F. A. Justice, Route 1, Clyde.

Members of the Waynesville and Canton Store committee are David Burch, Rt. 1, Canton; C. C. Burnett, Rt. 3, Canton; D. M. Clark, Route 1, Canton; Charley Evans, Rt. 1, Canton; Roy Haynes, Rt. 1, Clyde; Herschel Hipps, Rt. 1, Canton; Velt Holland, Rt. 1, Canton; Howard Jaynes, Rt. 1, Canton; Russell Kinsland, Rt. 2, Canton; Fred Mann, Rt. 1, Canton; P. C. Mann, Clyde; Dr. Roy Moore, Rt. 1, Canton; Roy A. Robinson, Rt. 2, Clyde; R. E. Sentelle, Rt. 3, Canton; Julian Smathers, Clyde; R. I. Smathers, Rt. 3, Canton; Jasper Trull, Canton; W. K. Boone, Rt. 1,

Jack M. Sentelle Named Head Of WNC Masonic Unit

Jack M. Sentelle of Clyde, was elected Venerable Master of the Asheville Lodge of Perfection,

Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite at a meeting recently in the Masonic Temple in Asheville. He succeeds V. P. Fullbright of Breward.

Mr. Sentelle, is employed by Champlon Fibre Co., as freight rate clerk. He is also an officer in the Asheville Consistory, Buncombe Chapter Rose Croix and Asheville Council of Kadosh. He is class Marshal at the Spring and Fall reunions held each year and also takes leading parts in the fourth, fifth, 21st, 24th, 30th and 31st degrees. And is a past master of Clyde masonic lodge No. 453 and takes part in conferring all three degrees.

The newly elected and appointed officers were installed by Edwin Fincher, 33rd degree of Clyde and Henry R. Henderson, 32nd degree, KCCH, Breward served as marshal.

(Continued on page 8)

KURT GANS — "The Store of Quality"

FOR THE SPRING BARGAIN FESTIVAL

100 EXPANSION

WATCH BANDS

Latest Styles

ALL GUARANTEED

LADIES' AND MEN'S

33% OFF

Kurt Gans
JEWELER

ANNOUNCING THE APPOINTMENT OF HAYWOOD GROCERY COMPANY

Inside Painting
NOW?

AS THE LOCAL DISTRIBUTOR FOR
BERRY BROTHERS PAINTS



but definitely!!

WITH **Rev SATIN**

There's NO "PAINTY" ODOR
And It's DRY IN 20 MINUTES!

THE FULL LINE OF BERRY BROTHERS
PAINTS WILL BE AVAILABLE AT YOUR
LOCAL GROCERY STORE

You've Read About It!
... Seen It On TV!
... Heard Raves On It!

It Doesn't Drip
...or run or spatter like ordinary paint
because it's JELLED!



Yes, this newest development in interior paint is actually jelled... jelled so that it clings to the brush or roller... and yet it flows out like magic when it's applied to walls, ceilings and woodwork in the usual way. Gone is the runniness, the messiness and untidiness that you always associated with painting. With Jelled Magic you can enjoy carefree painting!

Now We've Got It!...and YOU'RE INVITED
to come in for a demonstration and see the gorgeous new colors available in this amazing new paint