

The Foothills View

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How Mecklenburg Sees Cleveland

All Cleveland County once belonged to Mecklenburg County, and Mecklenburg has never forgotten it.

In 1841 Cleveland was created from Rutherford and Lincoln counties, wrote the late Lee Weathers, and in his "Living Past of Cleveland County," Weathers continued the genealogy back to the begetting county: out of Tryon, Rutherford and Lincoln counties in 1779; and in 1768 Tryon out of Mecklenburg county.

Mecklenburg ever since has tended to be possessive of the western counties, and, particularly in its large-town newspaper, to speak of them as if it were speaking for them. It's easy to dismiss this tendency as metropolitan arrogance, but it's worth knowing. There's a certain truth in how people perceive us to be that's independent of what we're to be; just as a mirror can tell us much about ourselves even though it doesn't accurately reflect right from left.

How Mecklenburg sees Cleveland can tell us truths that we don't see when we look at such native gatherings as the County Fair or Cleveland Tech's "County in Transition" program. I've collected some impressions of Cleveland County from Mecklenburg people who've known and lived in Cleveland County. Here's what they see:

"Oh, the fo-u-od," smiled Pat Borden, and rolled her eyes heavenward. Pat, now a feature writer for the Charlotte Observer, began her journalistic career in Cleveland County covering Kings Mountain, Patterson Springs, and Grover. Even today her memory of Cleveland County is a cornucopia of thick-sliced tomatoes, fresh corn, and blackberry pies. Pat is of the serious opinion that nowhere else do journalists eat as well as on the Cleveland County beat.

"But what about the battle of Lattimore school?" asked Patsy Cornwell, wife of Cleveland County native Charles Cornwell. That, too, was a happy meal as I treated this couple to a celebration breakfast in Charlotte. Charles, after a distinguished career as an English professor at Davidson College, was answering a call to study for the ministry at Union Seminary; Patsy was to begin research on a biography of Ruth Graham, the evangelist's wife.

Within a year Charles would know Greek and the book would bring Patsy \$40,000. But what about the battle of Lattimore school?

"Oh, I was about six or seven years old," said Charles, "and was being teased unmercifully by a classmate at Lattimore

"Well, we got into a fight in the schoolyard, and I was getting the worse of it," he continued. Suddenly, with the same wit that one day would serve him well in seminary, Charles noticed that his opponent's overalls hung by but one button. Quick as thought he unhooked it. With the pants tumbling to his feet, Cornwell's opponent had to make a sudden, inglorious retreat. Charles has fought, and won, many battles since that day, but the first was best at Lattimore.

An authoritative fellow has the last word on Cleveland. "You, there, Robertson, I felt a hand fall on my shoulder. On the other end was Jack Claiborne, an associate editor of the Observer and a scholar of some note. We'd met at Tech's program, "Cleveland in Transition."

"I want you to go back to Cleveland County," Jack said, "and find out for me why they produce so many fine writers there."

He named them: "Hatcher Hughes, who won the Pulitzer Prize, Lee J. Weathers, W.J. Cash," Jack rocked back and forth as he spoke, looking for all the world like a country schoolmaster calling the roll of pupils in which he is well pleased, "Kays Gary, Johnny McKnight, Pete McKnight...."

Cleveland County is thought of as the home of such talented people, and it is as home that Cleveland County thinks of them.

"Do you know Pete McKnight?" a businessman asked me at a Rotary luncheon. "Why, he's the most brilliant man to come out of Shelby."

The Rotarian did not know, or care, that Pete McKnight, former editor of both the Charlotte News and the Observer, has received accolades from corporate presidents and national politicians. What's important is Shelby, and that Pete is the best that home has produced. It is as home that so many see Cleveland. And that's the best view of all.

Blalocks Named Family of Year

"I'm just putting in barley," Jim Blalock said Monday night. The Boiling Springs farmer was interviewed the first work week after the Blalocks were named Farm Bureau's Family of the Year last Thursday.

Blalock, 37, and his wife Nancy received the award along with their two children, Jenny, 9, and John, 13. Blalock is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Hoyle Blalock of Boiling Springs.

Farm Bureau presents the award annually to a full-time farmer in the county who is active in community work and the Bureau. About 150 people saw the Blalocks receive the award Thursday night.

"I farm 325 acres in cotton," Blalock said Monday, "and 400 acres in soybeans. I double-crop the soybeans with barley."

Blalock graduated from Gardner-Webb in 1965 and from N.C. State University in 1967 "Nancy



Farm Family of the Year: Jim Blalock, his wife Nancy, from left, their daughter Jenny, and son John.

went back to Gardner-Webb about four years ago and finished her degree," he said.

Blalock is a member of Farm Bureau's board of directors, a deacon at Boiling Springs Baptist, and a former committee member of ASCS.

She's Homecoming Queen



Kiersten Kirk, 17, was crowned homecoming queen of Crest High School last Friday night. Kiersten is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kirk. Crest High won the following football game with East Gaston 13-7.

Police At Edge Of Local Arrest

Four months' police work will come down to an arrest Tuesday for a breaking and entering last summer at West Cleveland School.

Boiling Springs police, as the View went to press Tuesday morning, were planning to arrest Phil Eugene Walton on charges of breaking and entering and possession of stolen property, according to patrolman Dan Ledbetter.

Walton, 18, is from the Boiling Springs area.

Officer James Ciary has been investigating the break-in since last July, according to Ledbetter. Police also expect to recover two tape recorders reported as stolen, he said.

Area News

Doug Mayes will be filming "On the Square" at Gardner-Webb College next Tuesday, October 27th, at 12:00 noon.

Gardner-Webb College will host several homecoming activities on Saturday, Oct. 24, with barbeque and bluegrass music highlighting the noon hour and the Gardner-Webb - Carson - Newman football game being the feature of the afternoon.

At 10:30 a.m. the Alumni Board of the college will meet. A traditional homecoming parade will stream through Boiling Springs.

The "Let's Honk" band will provide country and bluegrass music while everyone enjoys a meal of barbeque in the Best Gymnasium from 12-1:30 p.m. The Bulldog football team will take on Carson-Newman at 2 p.m.

During the entire day, the Dover Memorial Library will have a book sale in front of the library building.