

When Cotton Was King

(Pat Guffey, who before writing for the View had worked 12 years for the ASCS, grew up with the story, "When Cotton Was King." Her father, Mr. Bill Philbeck, is a retired Cleveland County cotton farmer. Conversations with her father were the genesis of this story, which tells the rise of King Cotton in the 30's and 40's to the fall by the boll weevil in 1949.)

BY PAT GUFFEY
VIEW STAFF

Stinging worms, pack saddles, biting mother spiders — and clear blue autumn days when Bill Philbeck of Poplar Springs overlooked acres and acres of "white gold."

"White gold" — full white balls of cotton waiting to be picked — is my father's term for the crop that was king here in the 1930's and 40's.

Today the king is off the throne. In 1981 3,700 acres of cotton were planted in Cleveland County compared to 35,000 acres of soybeans, according to Frank Spencer, county agricultural agent. Spencer contrasts that year to 1949, when 80,200 acres of cotton and 86 acres of soybeans were planted.

But those who farmed during the 30's and 40's have kept their loyalty to King Cotton: they owe it the soil under their feet. During times of high prices, my father says, "cotton bought and paid for more land in Cleveland County than any other commodity."

Prices weren't high when Bill Philbeck began to farm cotton during the Depression. He recalls how he and his father-in-law, the late L. E. Hamrick, hired a black man who had walked five miles from Shelby to the Hamrick farm to pick cotton at \$1.00 per 300 hundred pounds.

The hired man called to his children who had been waiting in the bushes by the side of the road. Hamrick paid them \$4.00 that day.

The second day the family brought food with them to the fields, bought with the previous day's earnings.

The third day they came to work in a car, having earned enough to buy gas.

The fourth day Hamrick paid the family \$4 and asked them not to come back the following day. At \$4 he explained, he couldn't afford to have any more picked.



A hired hand works the old way — with mule and patience — last summer on a cotton field owned by Cleveland County farmer Eddie Harrill. Harrill says he didn't make money on his cotton.

Cotton prices began to rise when 1933 brought Franklin Roosevelt to the White House and the "New Deal" to farming. In the fall of 1933 farmers could plow up cotton acreage and qualify for a govern-

ment payment of \$20 per acre. Cotton allotments were established in 1934.

Prices improved. Cotton brought 14 cents, and sometimes went as high as 20 cents during the

late 30's. Cotton farmers were making money again. The early 40's saw prices rising above 20 cents. By 1946 prices were up to 36 cents, Please turn to King Cotton, pg. 6

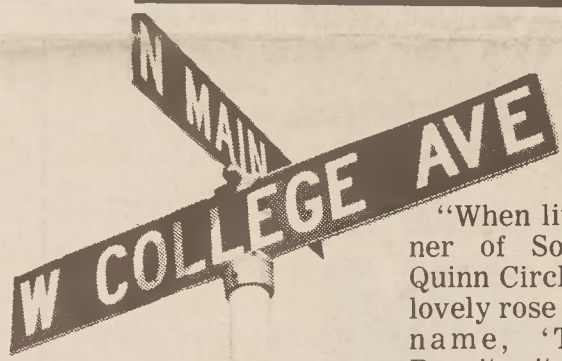
The Foothills View

"We See It Your Way"

THURS. MAY 6, 1982

BOILING SPRINGS, NC

\$7.00 Per Year Single Copy 15 Cents



At The Cross Roads

"When living on the corner of South Main and Quinn Circle I once grew a lovely rose by the botanical name, 'The Doctor.' Despite its name, it has long since died and is only a memory, but it is the inspiration for this."

So wrote Mrs. Lula H. Hamrick in introducing her poem, "A Rose In My Garden." We're pleased to have Mrs. Hamrick's art on page three of this week's View.

We're pleased also to announce the winner of the May 8 bike-a-thon for St. Jude's Hospital. Stuart Blackburn, son of Gil and Martha Blackburn of Boiling Springs, collected \$77 for St. Jude's by riding 50 miles. For his pedalwork, Stuart also won a back pack and a tennis racket,

and in a special drawing following the bike-a-thon a basketball. Prizes were donated by area merchants.

Graduation at Gardner-Webb begins with an alumni breakfast for all candidates 7 a.m. Saturday, May 15. Commencement is at 10:00 a.m. at the Inner Court; the rain alternate site is the Lutz-Yelton Convocation Center.

Cows gazed at a hot air balloon late Monday afternoon as it floated over the pastures behind the Earl Owensby studios. Against a Cleveland County sky and landscape the balloon was colorful, improbable, but much like Owensby himself.

Davis And Beam Funerals Held

In 1912, Mrs. Addie Davis, then a young woman of 22, met a little boy named Willie Lee Blanton. Last Monday afternoon, Blanton, now 83 and a respected deacon at Green Bethel Baptist Church, spoke to church members at Mrs. Davis' funeral. She was 92.

Her funeral was followed Tuesday by services for another Boiling Springs resident, Mrs. Ernestine Beam. Mrs. Beam, 56, died Sunday at Cleveland Memorial Hospital after a long illness.

Tuesday Blanton recalled Mrs. Davis: "I met her 70 years ago. She was faithful, always at church and choir rehearsal."

The deacon gave what he thought was the reason for Mrs. Davis' long life: "She contributed to helping herself and to serving the Lord."

Mrs. Davis was a member of the Missionary Circle and the choir at Green Bethel. She is survived by two daughters, Mrs. Delia Corry and Eloise Ingram, both of Boiling Springs; nine grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren; and 21 great-great-grandchildren.

Burial was at Green Bethel cemetery. Services were conducted by the Rev. R. B. Blanton, and remarks were given by Blanton and the Rev. S.A. Rayford.

Mrs. Beam was a native of Rutherford County and the daughter of the late Lee and Belle Putnam. She was an elementary school teacher and a member of Boiling Springs Baptist Church.

Survivors include: her husband, Robert L. Beam; a daughter, Mrs. Jimmy Mathis of Boiling Springs; two sisters, Mrs. Beth Greene of Boiling Springs and Mrs. Jack Gardner of Shelby; and two grandchildren.

Graveside services and burial were at Holly Springs Baptist Church cemetery in Rutherford County. The Rev. Max Linnens and the Rev. Francis Dobbins officiated.

Following are excerpts from Rev. Linnens' remarks: "Ernestine was well acquainted with pain. Her pain was a constant companion through the last 25 years. Her pain was a

prelude to peace over and over again along her unbelievable pilgrimage. From the pit of pain she clawed her way up and out more times than I can remember."

"Her suffering resolved to joy. I don't mean just the final victory when she passed over into a higher life, able now to straighten that twisted body upright and walk without pain, tasting wholeness, soundness, and peace that is beyond our imagination. Paul says that 'eye has not seen, ear has not heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those who love him.'"

"Her suffering resolved to joy during her struggles here. I mean that I saw and felt her joy in this life. I heard the tenderness in her voice and saw the care she had for others. I saw the glow of love on her face as she ministered to her family from her bed. I shall always remember the pictures of her on her bed with her grandchildren... feeding them, holding them, playing with them, and loving them. They gave her a new lease on life. And I'm sure that the security they felt through her love and continuing presence was woven into the very fiber of their tissues.

"But now her suffering has resolved into the greatest joy in her fairer home."

Youth Choir Presents Music Drama "Acts"

The college youth choir of Boiling Springs Baptist Church will present the musical drama "Acts" Sunday, May 16, at 7:30 p.m.

Keith Dixon, minister of education, will portray the apostle Luke, and Chris Winans, summer children and youth worker, will play the roll of Peter. Others actors and soloists include:

Robert Lamb, Steve Hamrick, Sandy Hastings, Kenny Harris, Esther Perrin, Dean White, Susanne Sanford, Lisa Piercy, Lori McEntire, and Kelly Taylor.

Phillips Village Okayed; New Well Needs Survey

Councilman John Washburn will obtain final approval in Raleigh of sewer hook-ups for the proposed Phillips Village apartment complex after council met with representatives of the Division of Environmental Management this Monday in a called meeting.

Council voted to send Washburn to the state capital May 13 to obtain written approval from the

Division. Council also voted at the Monday night meeting to take informal bids for paving the access road to the newly constructed Artex plant off Highway 150.

Council took no action on the proposed land purchase for the new town well off DeHart Avenue, awaiting a survey by the land's owner, Gardner-Webb College.

Council will hold another called meeting May 25 at 7:30 p.m. to discuss proposed uses of general revenue sharing funds during fiscal 1982-83. The town will receive approximately \$23,089.

In other town news, Boiling Springs police and fire department reported a quiet week with no calls.