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We'll have to admit that writing in rather complimentary fashion about one's own kin folks is probably in bad taste. And, when the subject you're writing about happens to be the uncle you were named for, it could be doubly so.

Running that risk because it's a story worth the telling, we're thinking today of Captain Joe Gaskill. He was a familiar figure here for many years before moving to North Wilkesboro with his daughter, Mrs. Will Caroon, to spend his last days amid a wealth of mellow memories.

Captain Joe hailed from Portsmouth, that little island along North Carolina's outer banks where the ravages of hurricane-swept seas have all but obliterated a community of hardy, ocean-loving people.

Once hundreds called it home, and dreamed of it fondly after they left. Today it's shores have dwindled from the lashings of a raging surf, and only a mere handful of souls cling stubbornly to its unprotected stretch of sand.

They were brave and adventurous souls, those Portsmouth Islanders of old. They asked no quarter from nature's violence, though long association with the sea taught them to respect it.

They knew what it was to see a passing vessel fight a losing fight against the elements, and come to rest in broken pieces at their very doorsteps. They saw men die with courageous dignity, and accepted their grief with deep inner faith when their own loved ones went down to the sea in ships and never returned.

Captain Joe was part and parcel of their breed. At 17 he was skipper of a sailing vessel. Among his ports of call were the islands in the West Indies. It was hazardous business, but he loved it. So did all the others of sturdy English stock who shared the storms and churning foam with him.

It took not only fortitude but a keen sense of humor to brave the tempest as a way of life. You had to learn how to shrug off adversity, and laugh at misfortune.

We're not just indulging in family pride when we say that Captain Joe Gaskill was a man of remarkable wit. Up until his death at the age of 85, he could top any wisecrack you tossed in his direction, and he could make your favorite pun seem ridiculously flimsy with an impromptu pun of his own.

Above all, he was a gentle and kindly man—the typical old salt with a pipe in his mouth and a twinkle in his eye. Probably the meanest thing he ever did was unintentional. The victim was an unsuspecting pig.

In his younger days, Joe was a member of the crew on a sailing vessel that had to exist solely on beans. That's all the cook served—beans and more beans. Having to eat them for weeks on end got to be monotonous.

One day Joe and other men on board decided to dump a huge batch of soda in the bean pot, to make the pellets inedible and bring about a crisis. To say it created a crisis is putting it mildly.

Like every cook on a sailing vessel, this cook had a pig on board to fatten up on garbage. When nobody ate the beans, it meant a bountiful meal for the hog.

Eating his fill—soda and all—the pig started swelling, and he kept on swelling for days. He got so puffed up that his eyes closed completely, and instead of grunting he sighed softly every now and then.

Everybody but the cook knew what was wrong, and telling him was out of the question. He was just about as pathetic as the pig, as he tried to console the gritter

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SHOVING OFF—Youngsters from Camp Sea Gull, who sailed to New Bern and spent the night, prepare to take off for their home port. Watching them with keen interest are a

couple of local landlubbers who would be tickled pink to join them on the voyage.—Photo by Billy Benners.

Don't Suggest Retirement to This 80-Year-Old Minister

Neither the Rev. J. C. Griffin nor his countless friends can visualize retirement for the 80 year old minister, as he rounds out his half century of preaching the gospel in and around New Bern.

For one thing, this grand old man of the local clergy has never considered it a burden to be about the Lord's business. Spreading the old-time religion here at home and in seven other States is a thrilling experience that he never tires of.

Even as recently as last April he flew to Alaska to help organize its first Free Will Baptist church at Anchorage. And through the years he has held successful revivals in Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, South Carolina and Tennessee.

New Bernians know him best as a sincere and dedicated man of God, who has made thousands of visits to hospital rooms and jail cells. It matters not to the Rev. Griffin what a fellow mortal's faith is in time of need, or whether indeed there is any faith there at all. If he sees a chance to bring consolation, comfort or hope, he'll wend his way to their door.

In his day the Nash county native has preached his share of outstanding sermons, but it has been by deeds rather than words that he has rendered his greatest service to mankind. Many who read these lines can personally attest to this fact.

Since 1942 he has been a member of the General Board of the National Free Will Baptist Association, and is also a member of the executive committee of the Eastern Conference of Free Will Baptist Churches.

For 35 years he has been writing regularly for the Free Will Baptist magazine, which is something of a record in itself. Ministers half his age would have trouble matching his schedule, and few if any will

ever come close to equaling his total accomplishments.

It was on June 10, 1910, that Griffin preached his first sermon. Appropriately it was delivered in his home church—White Oak Hill

Free Will Baptist church—near his Nash County birthplace. He was pastor there for a year before he attended the old Free Will Baptist Seminary at Ayden for two and a half years.

His pastorates have included two New Bern churches, St. Mary's and Ruth's Chapel. He has also served as pastor for Holly Springs in Carteret county, and at Arapahoe and Whortonsville in Pamlico county.

At present he is pastor of the Bridgeton Free Will Baptist church. Recently hospitalized, he remained seated for his two services last Sunday. His congregation was impressed just as much as they would have been had he been standing. It was sort of like the talks they have enjoyed with him in their respective parlors and living rooms, and by their sick-beds.

"As far back as I can remember," says the kindly minister, "people have been saying that each younger generation is the worst one yet. Actually, human nature never changes, except through the grace of God."

Despite his advanced years, Rev. Griffin hasn't let the world pass him by. He is a keen student of current events, and familiar with the tenseness and perplexities involved in today's international picture.

"I do not believe that any immediate war is in prospect," he reasons. "In my opinion the rulers of the world would be afraid to start one, and use methods that would annihilate the peoples of the earth."

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REV. J. C. GRIFFIN