

THE NEW BERN MIRROR

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A PERSONAL LOSS

To many New Bernians and millions of other Americans, the death of Irene Ryan was almost like losing a member of the family or a favorite neighbor. So believable as Granny was she that she appeared for real in the role.

The rest of the actors and actresses who performed year after year in the Beverly Hillbillies televised series seemed pretty far fetched. Granny alone reminded us of somebody else, encountered along life's way.

She was woefully ignorant, strongly opinionated, and at times utterly ridiculous. So what, aren't we all? Granny couldn't write a thesis for a master's degree, but how many intellectuals know how to milk a cow?

For that matter, is there one among us who could have come into sudden wealth, as Granny did, without getting above our raising and flaunting our riches? In a largely phoney world, she was genuine.

Sure, she was loaded with pride, but there's a lot of difference between pride and vanity, just as there's a lot of difference between book learning and wisdom. Don't kid yourself, Granny had plenty between the ears.

Truthfully, she was the kind of woman who journeyed unflinching to the untamed West in a covered wagon in pioneer days; the kind, we might add, who gathered her broken dreams when the Old South was crushed to earth, and built new hope and a new life upon the agony and ashes.

Granny, as was intended by producers of the television success in which she starred, came across hilariously on the screen. Underneath, however, there was tenderness, and pathos.

These were dimensions that Irene Ryan gave the role, and they were qualities that emanated not from her long theatrical experience, but from the depths of her compassionate and tremendously generous heart.

Even as Granny, Irene for most of her life knew what it was to have little of this world's wealth. Later, like Granny, she became rich, but it didn't change her one iota.

While living she devoted much of her fortune to scholarships. In death she left the remainder for this same purpose. Most people in show business are noted for their generosity, but few have approached Irene Ryan in this respect.

Money meant little to her, as little as it did to Granny. Entertaining others was her life, from early childhood, and she was still going at it with enthusiasm when stricken with a stroke while on stage in New York.

Her last role, in the Broadway play "Pippin" was far removed from her image as Granny, but audiences weren't that easy to forget. At every performance, the moment she appeared, she was given a standing ovation.

The final curtain has fallen for the two of them, Irene Ryan and Granny, leaving this troubled land of ours, where genuine compassion is in scant supply, a sadder place.

As we said at the outset, losing Granny was almost like losing a member of the family. Irene Ryan, of all people, would have understood and appreciated such bereavement.

Historical Gleanings

—By—
ELIZABETH MOORE

JAMES RIGGS VS.
BENJAMIN TILLMAN
AND CHURCHILL RICE
North Carolina, Craven
County. 1822-1823.

The deposition of WILLIAM JONES, a witness for the plaintiff, before EDWARD C. KING, one of the Justices of the Peace for Craven County, on 12 February 1823:

Many years ago, I believe in the year 1791 or 1792 I was present at the running of the GALE'S patent on JONES BAY, near the mouth of BAY RIVER, beginning at a live oak called GALE'S corner,..... having cross DITCH CREEK and DOWDY'S CREEK..... COLONEL HENRY TILLMAN, who was the surveyor on the occasion, then mentioned there was vacant land between the line and the River, and if some of them did not enter it, he would. The survey was made by COLONEL TILLMAN as a private surveyor for JOHN DOWDY to show where his land lay that he had bought out of the GALE'S PATENT from SPARROW and DELAMAR, or one of them. There were present at the time JOHN DOWDY, his son WILLIAM DOWDY, JONAS JONES, DAVID JONES, EDWARD CREEKMAN, and JAMES RIGGS, SR., THOMAS SHANAWOLFF and myself were the chain bearers. The last line was run to show AMOS SQUIRES where his land was, which was likewise included in the GALE'S PATENT.

Deponent further saith he was present the second of the same lines by JOHN ALLEN, who was then surveyor of BEAUFORT COUNTY, the lines were run the same and distances as before and appeared intently to correspond. The second running was to lay off a tract of land to JONAS JONES, which he also bought out of the GALE'S PATENT from SPARROW and DELAMAR, or one of them. Some time after the survey by ALLEN, I believe the next season, THOMAS JONES and JAMES RIGGS had their entries of vacant land, which they had taken up, surveyed by THOMAS BEASLEY, the Deputy Surveyor of BEAUFORT COUNTY. JONES land was run out first, beginning at a stake in the mouth of the ditch at the Head of DUMP CREEK, running 80 poles to a gum standing in the line which COLONEL TILLMAN and Allen had run as GALE'S lines, the gum is a tall and notable tree, and has been shown by me to Messrs. R. SHIPP, STREET and RICE. The gum was then and there marked as FRANCIS JONES' second corner, at this gum JAMES RIGGS began his survey. Myself and HARDY JONES, I think, were the chain bearers....

Village Verses

SWARMING

Bugs come out in springtime,
That's when they incubate;
How we have some new ones,
Those bugs at Watergate.
No one wants to claim them,
Their praises won't be sung,
And a lot of politicians
Hope they won't get stung.
Whose hide will be punctured,
We'll have to wait and see;
Which proves that insects know
Much more than you and me.

—JGMCD.

In 1792 or 1793 JAMES RIGGS settled on this land which he entered in 1793, he built a house on it. AMOS SQUIRES assisted him in building it, which house he lived 20 years or longer, and continued to live there until he was depossessed by the Sheriff, after the termination of a suit brought against him by COLONEL HENRY TILLMAN or his heirs. Deponent being cross examined by the defendant, says I never heard any dispute about he dividing line between RIGGS and the GALE'S PATENT, until after COLONEL TILLMAN bought from SQUIRES.....

There was no dispute to my knowledge between COLONEL TILLMAN AND RIGGS about the land. I was with REDING SHIPP, when for our own satisfaction we ran the last line of RIGGS' PATENT..... (Signed) William Jones. Before Edward C. King, Justice of the Peace. J. W. Guion, C. C. by J. G. Stanly, D. C. (Clerk's Loose Papers, Craven County, N. C.)

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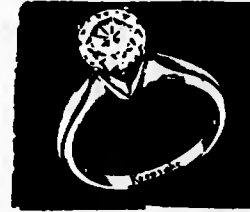
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