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Writing about Jake Long last week we were forced to admit that no amount of prying could get him to reveal his age. One thing we knew, our memories of the retired Sudan Temple employee go back to earliest childhood.

Thanks to one of our long-time readers, Muse McCotter, the truth has come out. Muse says Dr. Joe Rhem, who fathered Sudan, hired Jake as a yard boy at his home in 1912, and we figure he is 78 years young.

John Beaman, whose enthusiasm for scribblings nostalgic rivals a June bug's intense interest in a watermelon rind, was really turned on by our recent reference to Kentucky miner Floyd Collins and the tearful ballad his tragic death inspired.

Always eager to engage us in a duel of recollections, Beaman insisted on rendering the sad song in its entirety as we walked down Broad Street, accompanied by one of his law partners, boyish but sagacious Norman Kellum.

Being a Baptist, John naturally sings loud. Any comment beyond this about his vocalizing would have to be uncomplimentary. So unnerving was the outburst to a passing New Jersey motorist that he almost totaled his vehicle.

For an encore, Beaman came up with The Letter Edge in Black, and couldn't hide his disappointment when we matched him word for word. How many of our readers pushing 60 or older recall the lines, which follow?

I was standing by the window yesterday morning, without a thought of worry or a care, when I saw the postman coming up the pathway, with such a happy smile and jolly air....He rang the bell and whistled as he waited, then he said, "Good morning to you, Jack." But he little knew the sorrow that he brought me, when he handed me a letter edged in black.

With trembling hands I took the letter from him, opened it and this is what it said, "Come home, my boy, your poor old father needs you, come home, my boy, your dear old mother's dead. The last words that your mother ever uttered, 'Tell my boy I want him to come back.' My eyes are dim, my poor old heart is breaking, as I'm writing you this letter edged in black.

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Yesterday was when the John Wright Stanley house, now anchored on George Street as part of the Tryon Palace complex, experienced its first transplant.

Originally it stood at the corner of Middle and New, facing Middle. It was moved up New and turned so it faced the First Presbyterian Church, after the land on which it was located was procured to build New Bern's present Federal

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READY FOR HALLOWEEN

—Photo by Billy Benners