



## Gift from the heart is something truly special to Manning

BY LAURIE HUFFORD  
Staff Writer

At age 10 (1920), E. C. Alexander moved to Edenton. Now retired, Alexander still preaches part-time at the First Christian Church, and has had time to build a beautiful gift clock for longtime friend, Pete Manning. This friendship of 45-46 years began in the mid-1950's when the two worked together in the Chowan Herald's print shop.

Alexander started working at the Cotton Mill at age 15, for 5 cents an hr. When he retired in 1983, Alexander was in charge of taking care of the whole village and the Mill, fixing everything that went wrong. He was also making more money: \$500-\$600/week. He and his crews installed all of the fluorescent lighting in the Mill, and another one of his tasks was the design and installation of the Mill's air conditioning.

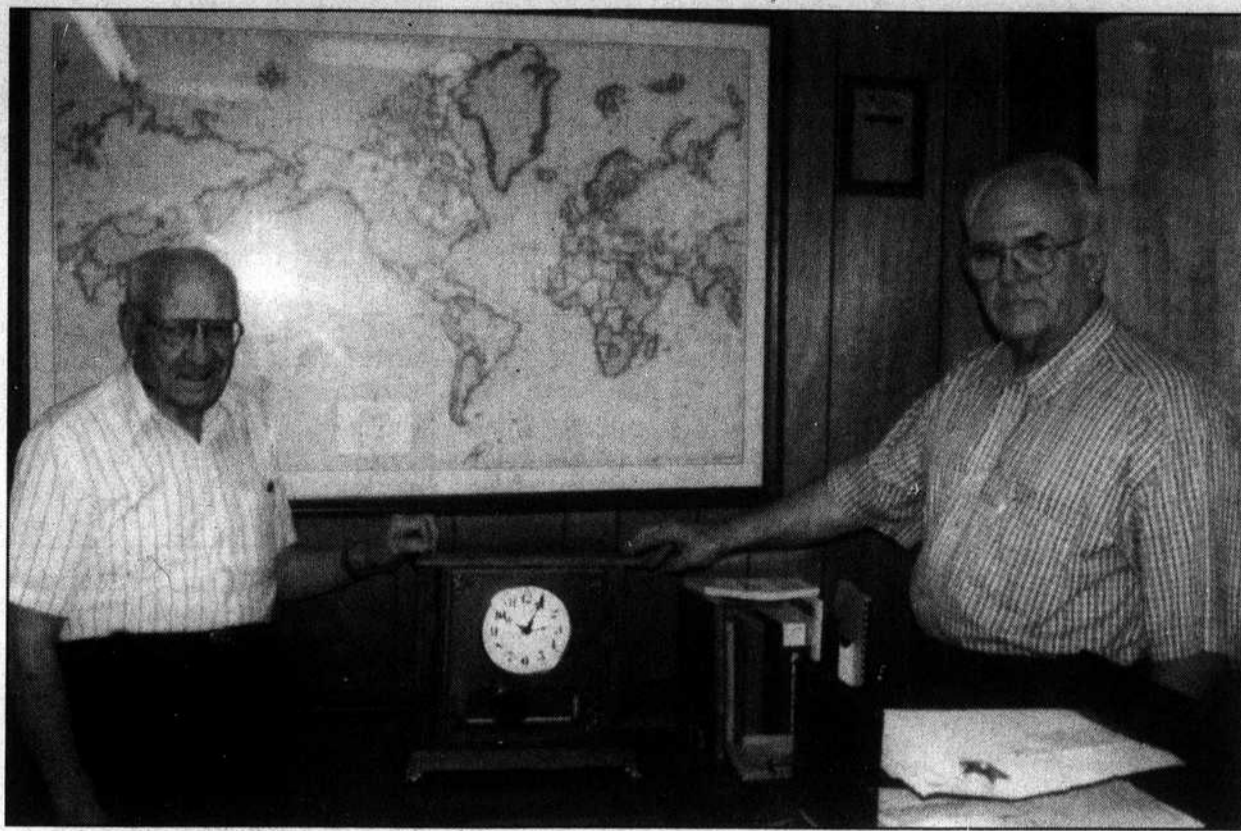
"They told me when I got through with it (A/C) that I saved them \$37,000," says Alexander.

Manning also recalls instances where Alexander efficiently fixed machinery and saved money. One instance involved an eccentric gate on a linotype machine, which Manning needed, but would be unable to get for two weeks. Alexander constructed the part and installed it, quickly, and without charge. Later, Manning ordered the part, and found that it cost \$96.

On another printing press, a shaft was going to cost \$800, plus labor, which put the cost at \$3700. Alexander was able to fix the machine for significantly less.

Alexander's method for fixing or constructing things is one of natural genius. At age 10, he took apart his mother's sewing machine, and learned how it worked. He says that he has been "messing with" watches and clocks ever since he was 15 years old, and has never studied, out of books, how to fix or build things.

"The way I build things," he says, "is, I just look as I go along. I just figure it out." Alexander does not remem-



Chowan Herald Publisher Emeritus Pete Manning (at right) admires a handmade clock created especially for him by the Rev. E.C. Alexander of Edenton. (Staff photo by Laurie Hufford)

ber anything that he hasn't been able to fix, as long as he could get or make the parts for it.

"I've run into one or two jobs," he says, "where it was impossible to make a part or to buy it, because it had to be a certain kind of steel."

At one time, Alexander ran a sewing machine shop, and repaired all sorts of items for people, including furniture, dishwashers, bicycles, vacuum cleaners, clocks, watches - especially "anything that moved."

He says, "I'd just take the parts out of them, work on them, and put them back."

Charges were always minimal, and often, there was no charge at all.

"I love to work and do things for people," he says.

Alexander says that one reason he stayed with the Cotton Mill so long was that he got to do a lot of different jobs that had to do with fixing things. He says that he also got to order most of the items bought by the company

from 1952 on, and that he believes in shopping for the best price, as long as quality is comparable.

He says that the company told him, "It's in your hands. There's nobody you can come to to ask anything, because we don't know anything!"

Alexander obviously likes people, and says that he worked in a cafe as a youth, and was also in the Army for a while. This next May, he will have been preaching at the same church for 53 years.

According to Alexander, First Christian Church was organized in the old historical courthouse in 1923-1924, and moved to its present location in the latter part of 1924. He remembers belonging to it as early as 1929, at age 19, and was appointed Superintendent of the Bible School. He did this along with serving in other capacities, including preaching, until 1954, when he began preaching exclusively. He preached full time until six years ago, when he suffered heart failure. He still preaches Sunday mornings, however, and hopes that the church will grow. The Mill's closure, he says, hurt church membership, and he worries about the church being able to afford a new preacher when he can no longer do it. (Alexander does not accept a salary for his preaching.)

Alexander has made five clocks besides the one he made for Manning, each one unique. Manning's new clock chimes every 15 minutes with a beautiful tone, using a different number of strokes to indicate quarter, half or whole hour time. Several months of work went into the clock, with Alexander working on it intermittently. He estimates that it took a total of approximately 4-5 days of solid work to create the gift for his friend. The first clock Alexander made was for his daughter. The next, he says, will be for himself.

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The Edenton Kiwanis Club is joining thousands of other Kiwanis clubs around the world in a Worldwide Service Project (WSP) to virtually eliminate iodine deficiency disorders (IDD) as a global health problem by the year 2000.

Iodine is an essential micronutrient in the human diet. Over a lifetime, a person needs a total of just one teaspoon of iodine. But a lack of iodine can cause mental retardation, stillbirths, and a wide variety of other serious disabilities. Iodine deficiency is the leading preventable cause of mental retardation in the world today.

Iodine deficiency disorders are most prevalent in mountainous areas.

See KIWANIS On Page 9-B

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