

The Henry Berry Lowry Gang: An Inside Look, Part VIII

"The contraband sale of whiskey and tobacco in wagons is carried on quite extensively in that section of the state because of the opportunities the dividing line affords to traffickers to elude arrest by revenue officers. And the Saffletown settlement was then a favorite rendezvous for those "block-aders" who would sometimes camp for a week at a time in some one of its numerous hiding places, and diffuse their stock to the . . . At night groups of men and women would congregate at the campfire of the illicit trades, and between 5 plato of the white corn whiskey, would engage in song and dance. On one of these occasions, the lone outlaw, after scouting the thickets a considerable distance around the camp, ventured to the wagon to obtain a "portation" of this moonshine product. It's soothing effect induced a lack of his accustomed caution, and he joined the light-hearted gathering around the glowing embers.

For a time he silently watched the supple dancers, as keeping time to a lively chant, they merrily waltzed on the greenwood sword. The sound of human voices, song and merriment seemed to entrance him, and he continued to tarry until the fire grew low. More fuel was added and as the blaze grew, casting long, weary shadows out into the darkness of the wilderness, and shaking the leafy canopy above sparkled and flashed like a jet

and dome studded with jewels, the revel continued. At last a banjo was handed him, and "was persuaded" to play for them as he was wont to do in days gone by. When once he took the instrument in his hands he never relinquished it. All dread and fear seemed to have fled his mind. Until then he had held his gun on his shoulder ready for instant use, but now, placing it between his thighs, he seated himself on the stump of a felled pine, and began to touch its tensioned chords with old time skill and dexterity. Reel after reel was danced until tired nature bade the rompers cease, but still the banjo rang with rude melody, and the listeners squatting around the entranced musician, silently watched his nimble fingers as he continued to play, until the day star lifted its head above the eastern horizon and the twinklers in the sky had lost their "sparkle". Suddenly, out from the gloom of the forest there came a flash of vivid light instantly followed by a loud report, and the outlaw minstrel, with a sudden lurch, fell at the feet of his enchanted "listeners": a shot riddled corpse. Thus did end the last of the gang, and with him ended the era of violence and bloodshed that had so long cursed that section.

In this account only the sanguineous part of the matter has been told, and the primal reasons therefor given. Other causes added to its violence,

and generated increased bitterness and brutality to it, and promoted the shedding of so much blood. There are some people who claim that the outlaws had right on their side, but the great majority utterly condemned them as human butchers without justification or palliation.

The old mother of the Lowry's is still living on the homestead, and she always claimed that her boy, the leader, was a dutiful and obedient son with exemplary habits until the lion in his nature was aroused by the treatment his father received. Others affirm that the gang were kindly disposed, and generous and considerate with all except those who sought their arrest or gave information to pursuers. To those they showed no mercy. The lusty women of the locality, all were their staunchest friends, and it was through them, they so often and cunningly evaded capture. Their loves and liaisons were many and replete with dramatic, and sometimes tragic incidents.

One of these days, when the atrocities committed have been forgotten and the wire-edge of prejudice and passion has been ground away by time, some future romances, with deft pen and subtle brain, will disrobe these characters of their vile habits, and make heroes of them in stories more thrilling and romantic than any that Scott or Cooper had ever written."

REFLECTIONS

by Alta Nye Ozendine

"Here is some of what I've sent to my mother's paper"
My Boys and Michael Jordan
Gordon
"Mama, I ain't gonna die!" 15-year-old Gordon gave me a disgusted look as if to say: "When are you EVER going to stop worrying about me!" Referring to his near-fatal accident TWO YEARS EARLIER at age 13, I had just remarked: "The thing that really worried me, was that I didn't think you were ready to go on!" When he got back home from the hospital in 1978, Gordon learned about the rumor that had circulated among his classmates. "They thought I was dead!" he had laughed.

By now it was June, 1980. After two years of being uptight over Gordon's condition, I was finally beginning to relax a little. One Sunday afternoon the two of us rode home from youth fellowship at our church with a young couple who, like me, were helping with the group each week. Rosemary was driving. As she turned off main street onto our little private road, she asked, "What's the name of this street?" Before I could open my mouth to say anything, Gordon spoke up with "Oxendine Drive"! Surprised, I said, "I didn't think it had a name." "It didn't!" he shot back. "I just named it!" Well, I thought, his mind must be okay by now. I was really relieved, knowing I could once again look forward to watching my youngest use his sharp, fully functioning brain.

It was just a few weeks later when Gordon, his big brother, Donny, their daddy, and a friend named Junior Locklear left to sell farm produce. They never quite made it home. On the way back, there was a collision 10 miles from Pembroke. Though injured, the driver of the 18-wheeler survived. None of the four van riders did. Many times since then I've thought about how Gordon's split second response assured me, as he gave "OXENDINE DRIVE" a name. And then those other words of his: "Mama, I ain't gonna DIE!" - I'm sure that they, too, were meant to be reassuring.

DONNY AND MICHAEL
A few months ago it dawned on me that my son, Donny, and Michael Jordan had both attended college at UNC-Chapel Hill. Since then I've been taking a special interest in Michael. In spite of his alleged gambling problem, Michael seems to be a rare kind of hero for today's young Blacks, and all the others. In May of 1980, when Donny came home from Chapel Hill, he was at loose ends. Graduating third in his class of 210, he had chosen to attend Chapel Hill because he was thinking of becoming an orthodontist, and the NC dental school was located there. Although Donny had been on the high school track team, he did not have an athletic scholarship. Wanda Kay and I still have Donny's Intramural Trophy for the 200-yard dash.

After two years of almost no personal contact with professors, he was tired of school. And he wasn't sure what he wanted to do. (Earlier he had considered engineering). About the same time Donny dropped out of college, planning to work for awhile. Michael Jordan must have started school at Chapel Hill. I assume that their paths never crossed.

I was working on the story about Gordon when I heard the shocking news that Michael Jordan's father had been murdered. (JUVENILE CRIME) If what I've read is true (that communist leaders like Khrushchev and Castro set out to destroy our country with deception and drugs) they must be happy now! In our east coast area, crime (usually connected with drugs) has become so rampant that we never know what's going to happen next. Because of the cocaine transported north on Interstate I-95, it's sometimes called "The Highway to Heaven."

In spite of all the strong statements made by law enforcement officers, I doubt that those two boys were already hardened professional criminals before this happened. Or else how could they be so naive as to keep on using James Jordan's cellular phone, for instance?"

So I wonder: Were they out to steal and sell whatever they could find in order to support a drug habit? Or was it simply that they were looking for a car? Or something else? I would suppose that these boys, like so many people of all ages, were fans of Michael Jordan. If so, would they have treated his father with more respect if they had known who he really was? (In any case, I suppose it's best for the rest of us to withhold judgment until all the facts are in.) Even though I've never been able to understand how ANYONE could take another person's life, I can't help caring about Daniel and Larry as persons, at the same time that I care DEEPLY about what the entire Jordan family is experiencing. My life has not always been as simple as I'd like. But it has been my privilege to know and or work with individuals and families from all the basic racial groups in this world. I've found all kinds of people in each group. And my current friends are from all of these VARIED racial groups.

There are at least five reasons for my SPECIAL interest in young people. (1) I remember, as a teen-ager, often feeling that our age group was left out of other people's plans. (2) For most of the years since I went to Browning I've had a special connection with teen-agers in the churches I was working with (or attending). (3) I've had three teen agers of my own, with their own special needs and concerns. (4) I've established friendships with other young people to help fill the void left when I lost my two boys. (5) Most of my substitute teaching has been with teen-agers. Now the Jordan family, my daughter, Wanda, and I all have something in common. The two tragedies that claimed the lives of our loved ones took place on Highway 74. I'm thankful there was no foul play involved in our families accident. Praying for the Jordan family comes easy. To me life is NOT cheap. I do not believe in taking away anyone else's life, no matter what the circumstances. But I'd like to suggest that we also pray for the two boys (Larry and Daniel) who have, apparently KILLED ANOTHER HUMAN BEING, as well as for each of their families. Now that the damage has been done, they have to live with what has happened. And, like my two boys and all the rest of us, Daniel and Larry need to be ready to meet their maker no matter what kind of sentence they get for such a crime.

Trivia Test

by Linda Luckhurst

1. Astronomy: Who discovered the planet, Pluto?
2. Vocabulary: What is a pluviometer?
3. History: How long was Marco Polo a guest of the court of Kubla Khan in China?
4. Rock and Roll: Who won second prize in 1945 at the Mississippi-Alabama Fair and Dairy Show, singing "Old Shep?"
5. Artists: Who is considered the greatest of the Dutch master painters?
6. Mythology: What is the Riddle of the Sphinx?
7. Business and Industry: Who was the first billionaire in the United States?
8. Music: Who recorded the January, 1960 number one hit single, "Running Bear?"

Trivia Test Answers

1. Clyde Tombaugh; 2. a device to measure rainfall; 3. 24 years; 4. Elvis Presley; 5. Rembrandt; 6. What walks on four legs, then on two legs, then on three? - Man: as a baby, then an adult, then in old age (with a cane); 7. John D. Rockefeller; 8. Johnny Preston

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INTER-TRIBAL ELDERS CORNER

Elders and Traditionalists from other tribes and groups are encouraged to submit news releases about happenings, gatherings, powwows, what is happening with elders and children. Keep them noncontroversial and nonpolitical. Submit articles to: Carolina Indian Voice, PO Box 1075, Pembroke, NC 28372. The Carolina Indian Voice is interested in the happenings among the other tribes, nations, and organizations.

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Religions and Cults 8:30 PM - 9:45 PM
- Tuesday:
Child Evangelism 6:30 PM - 7:45 PM

Registration for Day Classes
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In The Armed Forces

Navy Seaman Apprentice Mickey C. Jacobs, son of Bruce C. and Brenda Jacobs of Pembroke, N.C., recently graduated from Basic Electronics Technician School.

During the course at Naval Training Center, Orlando, Fla. students receive introductory instruction in electronic circuit concepts, radar principles and the basic of radio transmitters and receivers. Studies also include procedures for repairing amplifiers, transmitters, receivers, and power supply lines.

The 1992 graduate of Purnell Swett High School joined the Navy in September, 1992.

MAGNOLIA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Magnolia Elementary School, Lumberton, NC, will hold its annual open house on Sunday, August 22, 1993 from 3 P.M. to 5 P.M. All parents are invited to attend.

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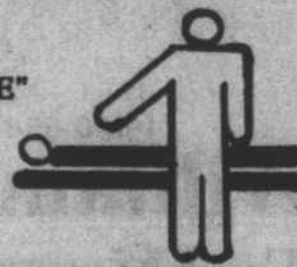
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