

Brunswick Between Bookends

By Eugene Fallon



BLOCKADE RUNNERS of the CONFEDERACY. By Hamilton Cochran. Bobbs-Merrill, N. Y. 350 pp. Illustrated.

Some time ago a novel by the author of this book was briefly examined in this column. It pained us to give "The Dram Tree" a poorish recommendation to our readers, but it is with an easy conscience that we laud this work.

In the imaginary world of the novel, Cochran floundered from Smithville to Southampton; from Key West to Grand Cay. When he sticks to factual history—and particularly such history as the Confederate blockade-running from the North Carolina coast—the boy can do no wrong.

In this work our own Smithville is mentioned no less than a dozen times; almost as many as the larger port of Wilmington. Some of these references are of considerable length, since South-

port, then as now, is the eye for the needle that is the great and shining Cape Fear River. Brunswick readers thus can, by projecting themselves in reverse, take part in the heroics which centered about this area. Such projection I think well worth the effort.

In the spring of 1861, Lieutenant John Wilkinson resigned his commission in the U. S. Navy. Heading for Richmond, sailor John accepted a commission in the Confederate States Navy. His first duty was pleasant enough: to sail to England and purchase a steamer suitable for running the blockade. He acquired the "Giraffe", a fairly new steam freighter, paying for it with cotton. Wilkinson had the ship refitted at Glasgow, Scotland, and sailed her back to Nassau, where, after picking up two Southern pilots—one from Wilmington and one from Charleston, S. C.—he made a run for the Old Inlet entrance to the Cape Fear. The Giraffe just did make it, almost grounding once or twice. During part of this time a jittery lookout kept reporting imaginary ships, breakers, and finally a rock. The pilot from Wilmington (actually a Brunswick County man) was reported to have lost his patience and to have exclaimed, "God Almighty, man, there ain't a rock as big as my hat along the coast of the whole d---d state of North Carolina!"

The lookout is described as being a "mountain man" and should be pardoned for seeking rocks where there weren't any rocks. . . . To prove just how important

was Southport and other Brunswick areas during the Union blockade, I quote from Cochran's book:

"When the blockade of the Cape Fear River became a serious objective of the Union Navy, both entrances to the river were closely watched by Union cruisers. From Smithville (Southport), both groups of blockading vessels could be distinctly seen. This gave outward-bound blockade runners an advantage, for they could take their choice as to which inlet to use, depending on the positions of the Federal men-of-war. . . . The soundings both north and south of the river entrances were deep and remarkably regular. With a light-draught steamer the pilot could run her close to shore with little danger of going aground."

As things wore on during the war and the Southern cause began to falter, a serio-comic thing came to pass beginning up at Wilmington and terminating right here at Southport. It seems too many Confederate soldiers, sickened with the starvation and the slaughter, stowed hopefully away aboard blockade runners at Wilmington, remaining hidden until the ship made either a European or West Indian port, when they would emerge as free men in a foreign-held country or island. So many were successful at this subterfuge, that a regular fumigation station was set up at Smithville, to flush the stowaways from their secret berths.

There are many such incidents related in this excellent book, and, as stated above, many with a Smithville connection. This reviewer will go as far as to state that he has never read a more interesting compilation on the subject of running the blockade.

The illustrations found in this volume are a thing of joy and add much to the work; many of these graced earlier books print-

Hybrid Corn Yields Dollars

Hybrid corn research at North Carolina State College has meant many millions of dollars more income for Tar Heel Farmers.

"Since 1936, when Dr. G. K. Middleton began the first project, the college has spent a million and a quarter dollars for research on hybrid corn," says Dr. Paul H. Harvey, head of the Field Crops Department at the college.

"Today, the state's corn producers are getting 16 million dollars a year more income through use of hybrid corn; for at least 25 per cent of the average yield of 48 bushels per acre in the state may be credited to use of hybrid corn."

Nationally, says Harvey, hybrid corn has brought corn yield increases that mean 500 million dollars more income a year to corn producers. "In its hundred years of existence, USDA has spent one billion, 800 million dollars on research," says Harvey. "Hybrid corn alone has paid many times over for this research."

From 1936 to 1942, Harvey and Middleton collected varieties of corn from all over the Southeast and the cornbelt states in developing the basis for a hybrid corn program. "World War II stimulated the development of the most promising combinations," says Harvey.

After the war, the program was given new directions. Better breeding procedures and new approaches to disease problems were developed.

Many hybrids were released in the 1946-59 period. And the college's genetics program got under way, headed by Dr. H. F. Robinson.

Official corn variety tests, started by the college in 1942, have continued since. The program recently was reorganized under the direction of Dr. Guy Jones.

Dr. Donald L. Thompson is testing many early-maturing hybrids from Tennessee, Virginia and Indiana—at the Lewiston and Waynesville experiment stations. "Several of these hybrids look very good," says Harvey.

One of the most promising is NC14034, which has yielded 112 bushels per acre at several locations. Its plants are 100 per cent erect and corn ear height is a low 49 inches.

Thompson also is doing research to develop stronger corn stalks that will withstand high winds. After three years, he has come up with a stalk whose strength has increased from 500 to 800 pounds of crushing pressure. But some of the Mexican races of corn will withstand up to 2000 pounds.

One research project, on dwarf corn, may prove of value although dwarf corn is mostly a "novelty" hybrid so far. It stands about 24 inches off the ground, and some use has been found in the mountains for it.

"One of the Latin American ed in London, New York and Paris, at a time when the sails of both the Confederacy and its blockade-runners had scarcely set. The volume is available at the Southport Public Library.

aces grows 15 to 20 feet tall," says Harvey. "Genes from dwarf corn have reduced it to about seven feet."

In the vast and complex task of developing better corn, one great question has stayed in the background since George H. Shaw developed the first hybrid corn in his Princeton, N. J., garden in 1910. It concerns heterosis—the increased vigor or capacity for growth displayed by many cross-bred plants and animals.

"When we understand heterosis, we'll know why we can get such tremendous boosts in corn yields," says geneticist Robinson. "Clearing up this mystery will lead the way to new breeding methods."

Part of the answer may be found in the college's complex program of genetic research on corn—the nature of gene action, yields, plant shape and size. "Much of our research is a combination of statistics and mathematics at a very high level," says Robinson.

Out of the research may come new methods of breeding other plants, and even of breeding animals, he believes.

"Internationally, there are 11,000 different corn collections," says Robinson. "The patterns of their influences are unpredictable; but somewhere in there is the corn of the future."

South's Forests Growing Faster

The forests of the south today are growing at a rate one third faster than a generation ago.

This and other new facts about forest development in the south from 1935 to 1960 are contained in a booklet, "Miracle in the Southern Forests," which has just been released by the Southern Pulpwood Conservation association.

While a tremendous amount of wood has been harvested for conversion into thousands of products since 1835, the report said, the south still has more trees than it did a quarter of a century ago.

This "miracle" has occurred, it was noted, largely through the efforts of professional foresters, including pulp and paper industry foresters, and state and federal government foresters.

These men, the booklet said, "sought out the nearly two million private land-owners in the south to urge wise management of existing forest lands and planting of trees on idle lands."

Among the specific results of these cooperative efforts over a 25-year period were (1) the conversion of more than nine million acres of idle land into profitable forests; (2) development of cooperative forest fire control, by state and federal agencies, which today covers 9.5 acres out of every 10 acres in the South, and (3) development of a multi-billion dollar pulp and paper industry.

Forestry research, the booklet said, has also been a part of this "miracle," and "it will be even more important tomorrow." It was pointed out, for example, that

improved strains of trees are being developed. They will have such qualities as a greater immunity to disease and insect attack, the ability to grow to usable size faster, and a greater yield of wood fiber per cubic foot.

production of pulpwood, and as for the future: "The south's new economy of the forest is secure in the hands of the 'miracle-makers'—in partnership with nature, supported by a stable and ever-growing pulp and paper industry, to meet the needs of a growing population."

A WANT-AD Did it!

For House of Representatives



After thoughtful consideration, I have decided to announce as a candidate for the Democratic Nomination for member of the House of Representatives from Brunswick County, subject to the will of the voters in the May Primary Election.

I am making this race in the thought that I can be of service to my county and to my fellow citizens. I believe that Brunswick County has a future for unlimited development if we will all work together to help make it possible. That

will be my purpose if you pay me the honor to nominate and elect me to this position of responsibility and leadership.

Odell Williamson

— NOTICE — OF MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION & REVIEW

The Board of Equalization and Review will meet at the time listed below for the purpose of hearing all complaints concerning assessment on property values for 1962.

PLEASE -- If you are going to meet the Board, come in the day designated for your Township, as that is the ONLY TIME you can see them.

PLEASE--Cooperate with us in this matter and the Board will cooperate with you.

Time of Meetings is From 9 a. m. to 4 p. m.

Notice is hereby given that, pursuant to Section 1105 of the Machinery Act, Public Laws of 1939, an Adjourned Meeting of the Board of Equalization and Review will be held for:

MONDAY, MARCH 12th
Northwest and Town Creek Townships

TUESDAY, MARCH 13th
Smithville and Lockwoods Folly Townships

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14th
Shalotte and Waccamaw Townships

The Board shall, on request, hear any and all Taxpayers who own or control property assessed for Taxation in the country with respect to the valuation of such property or others: and shall perform such other duties as required by the Machinery Act with respect to assessing and Listing Property for Taxation.

No Notice Will Be Mailed To Taxpayers Except in Cases Where Their Valuation Has Been Increased or Decreased by \$100. or More.

D. H. HAWES
BRUNSWICK COUNTY TAX SUPERVISOR

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examine this quality closely and to take a 1962 demonstrator out for a good long test drive. Note the cab comfort, the good visibility, the smooth ride, the solid feel of its quality. Compare Chevrolet truck features with those of other makes. Then decide which are your wisest investment. We're sure it will be Chevrolet's.



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WEST VIRGINIA

The State Capitol at Charleston was built in 1932 at a cost of \$10,000,000. It is one of the newer and more impressive State Capitols. The dome, illuminated at night, is 300 feet high which is higher than that of the national Capitol. The building consists of 33 rooms and occupies sixteen acres. The chandeliers in the House and Senate chambers contain 10,000 pieces of rock crystal each. The gold-domed building is a beautiful sight to see. It is flanked by office buildings built in 1952 and 1954. They face the Kanawha River. A guided tour service is available.

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