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## DOORS AND HOWARD MOONEY—By Bob Ammons, Editor, Kentucky Kernel

I really don't believe it myself, of course, because college students know that such things just aren't possible—but just the same, there is something about the story of Howard Mooney that just can't be tossed off as pipetalk.

There are even a few graduate students and old workers around the University who will swear up and down that it's true. They don't like to talk about it usually, because, as I said, college students scoff at such things. But one of these winter nights, if you buy them a beer or two to loosen their tongues a bit, they will tell you the story...

Howard Mooney was spotted as a remarkable boy before he ever came to the University as a freshman—that was back in 1931. The story of his high school record—passing three grades in one year, for instance, and doing independent work on the theory of infinite numbers in his junior and senior years—was already well known by educators in Kentucky, and several studies had been made of him for educational journals.

It didn't surprise the psychology department much when the results of the entrance tests were tabulated and it was learned that Howard had made the highest grades in the history of the tests.

It wasn't long before he was noticed around the campus, too. It might have been his thin face, or his long white hands, or intense black eyes—but whatever it was, it made people notice him.

Through all his freshman year, things went just as expected. Howard made three standings both semesters and was doing outstanding work in everything he took up. The campus was buzzing about this brilliant young student.

And then, along about Thanksgiving holidays of his sophomore year, people began to notice a change. At first, no one thought much about it—just a nervous way he had about him, a continual glancing around...

Before long, though, the habit became positively obvious, and Howard began to do other things that people liked to talk about while they were eating a sandwich after the library had closed. He would suddenly glance around and walk away from a crowd of people without saying anything; he had been found sitting on the library steps staring into the distance; he would wander about the campus for hours at a time, apparently unaware of anyone around him.

Before long, also, his class work began to fall off. Professors would call on him and he would seem to be miles away, he never studied anymore; most of his time he just wandered or sat and stared.

The psychology department, of course, talked to him and gave him some reflex tests, I think, but he wouldn't talk to them. They finally said he had some sort of neurosis or hysteria or something like that—I never did know the difference—but they couldn't do anything about it because they really didn't know what was wrong.

I guess the only person who really knew what was the matter was Harry Montgomery, Howard's roommate—you know, that quiet boy with the thick glasses. Harry never says much about it any more, because people are always laughing at him for his story.

Because, you see, as Harry finally told it—after it was too late—Howard had trouble with doors. Yes, I knew you'd laugh—I did myself the first time I heard it.

From the very first day Howard had trouble with doors. They seemed to hold some sort of grudge against him; they acted as if they were always working against him. They never were exactly right.

When Howard would come out of the library, for instance, where one of the double doors is always locked, he invariably would take the

wrong side. He would try to memorize which ones they kept locked, but as sure as he pushed hard to open one, it would be the other one that was open. The Union doors always opened out when he thought they opened in, and they opened in when he thought they opened out. He would always push when he should have pulled; pull when he should have pushed.

At first this didn't bother Howard much, and he just passed it off as coincidence. But it kept up. All through his freshman year and the first part of his sophomore year every door he tried was the same way. Soon he began to realize that this was much more than just coincidence, there was something working here that was more than just chance.

Slowly Howard developed a shyness of doors which grew into a queer sort of terror. He would hesitate in front of them, knowing what would happen, afraid that they would not work right again... and just as much afraid they would.

This came to have a terrible hold on him. He could not force himself to touch a door. The thought of them was always on his mind; the dread of them filled most of his thinking.

And then, on that night in January, 1932, according to Harry Montgomery, Howard startled him by saying suddenly, "I'm going to the library to get some books before it closes." Final exams were coming up, and he knew he was failing every course. "I'll be back in a few minutes," he said.

Harry was glad to see these signs that Howard was going to try to take hold of himself again. As usual, he offered to go along to open the doors, but Howard said "No. I'm going to do it myself tonight." Putting on a light topcoat and carrying one book, he left. A light snow was falling outside, and a wind was rising in the west.

That was the last anyone ever saw of Howard Mooney alive.

When Howard had not returned by 11:30, Harry began to worry. The temperature was dropping every minute. He began asking around the halls if anyone had seen him, but no one had.

By midnight, Harry was thoroughly frightened. He put on his coat and started across the campus in an icy wind. The snow was falling faster and heavier, and the cold crept through even the heavy coat Harry was wearing. He began to think of Howard's light clothes and told himself he never should have let him go out.

The wind was sweeping up the sidewalk between McVey and Kastle hall and all the campus was still, as Harry walked on, each step quicker than the preceding one.

And then he gasped, and broke into a run. There, in the dim light, he could see a form crumpled before the side of the library, the snow drifting over it. He knew what it was without looking anymore.

When the coroner arrived he gave a verdict of accidental death by freezing, although he could not explain exactly why or how it happened.

Harry never said anything about it for a long time afterward, I guess, because he figured no one would believe him. But, as I said, if you ever get him talking he will laugh at the coroner for calling it freezing to death.

Because Harry had seen what the coroner hadn't seen, and he knew what the coroner didn't know. He knew that the side of the double door where Howard was slumped was the side that was always kept locked. He had seen the look of unspeakable horror on Howard Mooney's face.

Well, that's all of the story, I guess. You don't have to believe it if you don't want to.

But there are some people who do. And there are some people who will tell you that, even today, if you pass by the side door of the library late on a winter night with the wind from the west and a light snow flying, you can hear the doors quivering a little and making a rattling sound. As if there were someone there, pushing when he should have pulled; pulling when he should have pushed.

# The Daily Tar Heel Editorial Page

Opinions • Columns • Letters • Features

## small fry... By Billy Webb

APROPOS LA GUERRE: Harry Dewey, English major of last year, escaped the draft's ill wind that blows no one any good by enlisting in the ever publicized "Uncle Sam's armed forces." After volunteering he became converted to the Quaker faith and to the ranks of the conscientious objectors. Since the die was cast, he was unable to un-list, and now he spends his spare moments distributing pacifist literature.

In mid-city Winston-Salem is a prominent red sign which admonishes "No Left Turn." Unfortunately for the integrity of the street department, there is no street on which to turn left—just a small ten story building. It must have been put there to confuse invading Japs.

Sylvan Meyer now has his Winter Quarter joke which you will no doubt hear more of. "Do you know what one log said to another log as it stretched from a deep night's sleep?" Sylvan innocently, "No," his victim yawns. "It said I slept just like a man last night," say Sylvan. Then he laughs.

"Too bad there isn't more room for my column," Damtoft glowed as he pounded out the usual trash. "Too bad there isn't more room," a loitering reporter glowed as he held his nose and read over Damtoft's shoulder.

Following the example of Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, and other acclaimed bandleaders, Johnny Satterfield recently relinquished a member of his band, drummer Dutch Hammond, to the army.

Latest ludicrous episode of the CVTC drill file occurred Tuesday. A squad in single file was confidently practicing "to the recesses... march!" One evidently was dreaming of Jeannie because the command floated like a zephyr over his head. The man in front of him turned. He marched staunchly ahead. The collision layed them out as flat as a bull dog's nose.

The Ben Hall-St. Clair Pugh effort to put the skids under the campus will have its christening Saturday night as students have the pavement in front of the Y broken over their sterns. To be a little more clear, the Y court will be converted into skating rink where students may cavort and caper at will.

With some fraternity hell weeks' pending and others pushed painfully back into the past, Chapel Hill sleuths are already combing the campus for the alleged thief of a name plate belonging to Mrs. Estelle Lawson Page of golf renown.

RECOMMENDATION: Sterilize infirmity thermometers in gin or some other palatable alcohol instead of the tongue-shriveling poison now used.

## churches...

Sunday worship services at Chapel Hill churches this week will be as follows: at the Episcopal church, holy communion, 8 o'clock; morning worship, Bishop Gribbin, administration of the rite of confirmation and sermon, 11 o'clock; and prayers and organ recital, 8 o'clock.

At the Presbyterian church, Sunday school, 9:45; morning worship, Rev. Charles M. Jones, 11 o'clock; and student group, Bible study, 7 o'clock.

At the Baptist church, Sunday school for all ages, 9:45; morning worship, Rev. Gaylord P. Albaugh, 11 o'clock; and high school and student forums, 7 o'clock.

At the Methodist church, Church school, 9:45; adult and student class, Robert B. House, 10 o'clock; morning worship, Rev. J. Marvin Culbreth, 11 o'clock; and student fellowship group, 7 o'clock.

At the United church, Sunday school, 9:45; and morning worship, Dr. W. J. McKee, 11 o'clock; no evening service.

At Gerrard hall, Catholic services, Rev. Francis J. Morrissey, 10 o'clock; and week-day services, 719 Gingham Road, 7:15 in the morning.

At Graham Memorial, a Friends' meeting, 11 o'clock. Those who would like a period of quiet meditation, with freedom for expression, are invited. Lutheran services, conducted by Rev. Henry A. Schroder, pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Durham, at the Methodist Church, Sunday afternoon at 5 o'clock.

## TRAFFIC TIPS AND QUIPS



NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL

## keyboard... By The Staff

We sometimes wonder what ever happened to the Dies Committee (that bloodthirsty bunch which was ag'in everything and smelled a rat in every woodpile in the country). One time they were coming down here to investigate communistic activities (they had the same phobia Mr. Davey Clark has, so a Freudian told us recently); but either they were afraid they would get pushed out of town and red-tarred and red-feathered or else they were converted before they got off to a good start. The truth is that Mr. Dies put in his two cents' worth so often that he recently had to declare an intellectual bankruptcy. Yes, we said intellectual. It just goes to show that if we can work hand in glove with Russia we can watch a man blush without trying to deport him.

Three elderly ladies in a recent cartoon were calmly talking over this matter of Civilian Defense. What they couldn't understand was that their husbands were out on Air Raid duty every night though there had been no air raid alarms and no blackouts. It is peculiar, come to think of it, that though there is a lot of talk about Civilian Defense Training not many people are paying any attention to it. And those that do take the training seem to think it's all one great, big joke. It's sort of like one of these intellectual Ladies' Aid societies which meets every week or so to discuss something like Triakaidokophobia in the League of Nations' Activities. Civilian Defense Training is something more than "the thing to do." Maybe when Goebbel sets up his offices in Rockefeller Center more interest will be displayed; but then New York is still five hundred sixty (560) miles away, according to the most recent figures.

Following a lower quadrangle precedent, the Men of Steele have announced plans for the entertainment of fifty of the South's leading beauties at a houseparty during the week-end of the Interdormitory Dances. Mac Norwood, Steele president, presented the idea at a recent dorm meeting, and the suggestion received unanimous approval. The plans, as outlined by Norwood, call for an open house in Steele on Friday evening before the dance, and a buffet luncheon on Saturday. Steele hopes to secure Willie Hargraves and his Bull City Night Hawks to play during the luncheon. Working committee chairmen have been appointed as follows: Open House, Ed Easter; Room Supervision, Dixon Richardson; Banquet, Norman Harper; Collection, Howard Andrews and Hadley Cash; Chaperones, Dick Jones. Here is one more evidence that dorm men can get together at dances if they want to. You see the men on your floor and in your dorm every day. "A good time can be had by all" who want it, if they will just cooperate with those around them.

This is how H. Moore and H. Carruth, "Gyre and Gimble" authors, ordered their dinner yesterday noon at Graham Memorial Grill:

- "40c Luncheon
- Bring one order of beef stew, Peas and carrots, 'taters too. Grapefruit and salad also, I think, And some milk for us to drink. P. S. Dear waiter, Dessert later— Gyran Gimble"

## it happens here...

4:00—CICA gives dance on second floor of Graham Memorial.  
7:30—"Cheapskate" party in front of YMCA.  
9:30—"Shrapnel Scamper" in banquet hall of Graham Memorial.

## carolina ferris wheel

By Billy Pearson

I do not know who it was who so effectively took my name in vain in a letter to the Editor yesterday morning. The person did not sign his name. And as usual in a case of anonymity, I am inclined to believe that the letter was written at the solicitation of certain other persons. But that is neither here nor there. I am accused of sectionalism. Now that's just a little peculiar; for sectionalism was the one thing I was criticizing.

If M. B. C. had read or re-read last Sunday's Carolina Merry-Go-Round, perhaps he would have seen that an attempt by its writers to laud the North as perfect and the South as the nation's war liability, demanded a reply. The pages of the Daily Tar Heel are no place for half-truths. The article in last Sunday's Daily Tar Heel entitled the Carolina-Merry-Go-Round was full of half-truths. I am not saying that any section of this country is better than another. On the contrary, I have denied that any section of the country is better than another. Especially in regard to the nation's war-effort. The Carolina-Merry-Go-Round attempted to persuade this campus that Civilian Defense was being ham-strung by Southern politics. I said that the big up-East centers were in much worse Civilian Defense shape and just as bad political shape. I think that is the truth.

I said also that enlistment into active service in the South far surpassed that of other sections. I think that is the truth. And I also said that any attempt to say that this section of the country was a war liability was preposterous. And I know that is the truth. I'd venture to say that North Carolina has as good a Civilian Defense organization as any state in the nation.

Now as for my having spoken of the origin of one of the writers of the Carolina-Merry-Go-Round. It is my belief that Northern birth and home is a better and more desirable explanation for attempting to raise one section of the country against the other, or persuading that section that it is worse than the others, than any number of less American reasons.

## letter to...

To The Editor:

In our new war every American is doing his best to defeat the enemy. We're all sure of the victory that will be ours. There are hundreds of ways of displaying the V for victory, but I've hit upon a new one which I think will reach the people in a unique way.

Thousands of letters leave Chapel Hill each week on their way to points all over the United States. The one and two cent stamps can be placed on the envelope at an angle so that they form a V, and in this empty space on the envelope the words "for victory" can be written. If the students cooperate, we can have the whole nation doing it; and we, ourselves, will know that it originated at the University of North Carolina. Is it a good idea, or am I just eccentric?

Very truly yours,  
Louis Kaplan

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