



Hoke County Commissioner Mabel Riley presenting Alexander McQueen with his certificate of membership in Gov. James Hunt's 100 Year Club. The day he was honored also was Mrs. Riley's birthday, and the audience gave her special attention for it, singing "Happy Birthday to You."

Alexander McQueen joined the 100 Year Club Thursday.

The club was established only a few months ago with the support of Gov. James Hunt, and it's for everybody who has reached the age of 100 and over.

McQueen would have become eligible if the club had been formed 13 years ago.

He reached 113 on his most recent birthday, September 23.

His becoming a member of the club was the occasion for the special program held at the Hoke County Public Library to honor him.

He was accompanied by two of his daughters and a son-in-law -- Willie and Rebecca McPhaul, and Mrs. Rosie Lee McKoy, with whom he lives a few miles beyond South Hoke School. The McPhauls live across the road from them.

McQueen didn't need them to help him get around, except for the driving, which his son-in-law did. He walked around quite well by himself, though a bit slower than somebody healthy who is about 30.

Mrs. McKoy said he walks around quite well at home and works around the house also. Occasionally one of his legs bothers him, but that's all that interferes with his walking.

His only physical trouble is his hearing, though he's not deaf, and Mrs. McKoy says he blames this on his working as a blacksmith, with all the loud noise that goes with that, in his earlier years.

When McQueen smiles, he also shows though unconsciously, that he still has all of his own teeth, with the possible exception of one (there is a gap in front).

Ernest Messer, chief of the State Division on Aging, came for the occasion, and congratulated McQueen on the services he has given to his community throughout his life. Messer also praised the people and the county commissioners of Hoke for their help to the older people. He said a successful program for the elders cannot be put together without the support of the local people and the county board, and he congratulated the Hoke

County people in this community for their programs for older people.

Messer, who has served in the General Assembly as state representative for Haywood County for 19 years, said, "We have to see that they (the older people) stay in good condition." Earlier, he said the aim of the state under the authority of the federal Older Americans Act is to make life better for older people, try to convert money into services and material benefits for older people.

He said the quality of life of the elder's is the state's concern.

Messer said McQueen is the example "we want to publicize all over North Carolina" of the person who is old but is up and about -- doing the things that need to be done for himself, instead of being waited on."

Messer authorized legislation enacted into laws that help the older people of the state.

He also told the audience that when the 100 Year Club, known also as Gov. Hunt's Century Club, was formed, North Carolina had

## County's Oldest Citizen Honored

285 people who were 100 years old or over. But in a short time afterward, he said, many more reached 100. He predicted that in 20 years from now many more North Carolinians will reach 100.

The certificate of membership in the club was presented to McQueen by Hoke County Commissioner Mabel Riley, whose birthday was Thursday. Later, the audience sang "Happy Birthday to You" to her. When a reporter asked her how old she was, she said that she was 20 at one time.

Lloyd Horne, chairman of the Advisory Council on Aging for the Lumber River Council of Governments and director of the Hoke County Health Department, served as master of ceremonies.

The Rev. Neil McPhatter, a Hoke County commissioner, gave the invocation, and John Balfour, chairman of the Board of Hoke County Commissioners, welcomed the visitors. Horne gave the special recognition to the guests, and County Commissioner Danny DeVane, scheduled for certain

election to the State House of Representatives for lack of opposition in the November general election, introduced Messer.

County Manager James Martin also was among those who attended.

Members of the Raeford Junior Woman's Club served the refreshments after the program ended.

McQueen's parents were former slaves. McQueen was born in Scotland County, at Laurinburg, and his family moved to southern Hoke County but in what was then still part of Scotland County. He remembers the days when they had a roof over their heads but little else -- no plates or spoons or knives or forks, not even a mattress to sleep on, and not a mule to help with the farm work. When they needed a fire, the only way they could make one was striking two rocks together to make sparks to ignite the kindling.

Besides blacksmithing, McQueen farmed most of his life, growing his own crops -- tobacco, cotton, vegetables -- and working tobacco crops around Smithfield, Lillington and Raleigh but always coming back to the home place in southern Hoke.

He also did other work. He helped build the Hoke County Courthouse. That was in 1911 when Hoke was first formed.

Mrs. McKoy was the "youngster" of the family at Thursday's program. She's 61. Her sister, Mrs. McPhaul, is 73. McQueen has 50 grandchildren and 35 great-grandchildren. All but three of his 13 children are still living. Mrs. McKoy's two children and Mrs. McPhaul's 13 are among the 50 grandchildren.

Mrs. Riley thought that McQueen might be the oldest living North Carolinian, but it turned out that Mrs. Elizabeth Liles, who is living in a Rockingham rest home, is ahead of him by four years, making her the oldest person in North Carolina.

The reporter found McQueen to be an active, mentally alert 113, though, with a strong handshake -- just like a blacksmith's. At home besides his daughter are his dog, whose name is John, and his cat. Mrs. McKoy said he's "crazy about" both of them, and he and John take a lot of walks together.

McQueen also has done his part voting in elections. That's been in Allendale Township. Mrs. McPhaul thought he was too old to vote, but she was informed that, though people can be too young to vote, that nobody's too old to vote. So McQueen probably will be casting his vote on November 2 in the general election.

After being with McQueen for a while, you get the feeling that he isn't too old for anything. Except maybe running through the decathlon in the Olympics. But even that he probably could do, with a little training.

He's living proof of the truth that it's not the age, it's the condition.



Ernest Messer, head of the State Division of Aging, addressing the audience honoring Alexander McQueen Thursday afternoon.



L-R, Alexander McQueen, Mrs. Rebecca McPhaul, one of his daughters, and Willie McPhaul, her husband; and Mrs. Rosie Lee McKoy, another of his daughters, with whom he makes his home.



At the meeting honoring 113-year-old Alexander McQueen; front, John Balfour, chairman of the Board of Hoke County Commissioners; in the next row just beside him, L-R -- County Commissioner Neil McPhatter, County Manager James Martin, and County Commissioner Danny DeVane.

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