

(Editor's Note: The following article was sent to the Duplin Times-Duplin Today by a former Duplin County native, Ralph Kenan Smith of Miami, Florida. Mr. Smith thought the people of Kenansville and Duplin would enjoy reading about Kenansville, Florida. The article appeared in the Miami Herald.)



Dreams grow big in Florida, and nowhere bigger than in Osceola County. In the north of the county, featureless, billion-dollar Disney World unfolds a World of Tomorrow and in the south at Kenansville you can buy Heartbreak Hotel, the remnant of an old Henry Flagler dream, for only \$30,000.

Between the two, there are 50 miles and more worlds than Florida has commercialized. Disney is a legend of fantasy and success; Heartbreak Hotel suggests history of another kind, about less heralded dreamers who found hard-knuckled practicality in the Florida fabric.

Heartbreak Hotel, a red-brick, two-story building with a porch and overhang balcony, stands empty, locked, the front door barricaded by old furniture, a sign posted saying the hotel and the story of James Webb's life — *Hang On, Mr. Webb* — are for sale. You can buy the self-published book, a note says, by giving three dollars to O. R. Bass who lives in the trailer next door.

James Webb probably is Kenansville's most widely known citizen. He has been a goer and a doer, traveling Baptist preacher, a storekeeper, hotel owner, a poet, a songwriter and an author. "I very likely know more Scripture than anybody," he said. "I can quote 10,000 verses. I make poetry and songs, too. That kind of thing, it gets in the center of your mind and stays until you write it."

Kenansville history goes back a century, but it did not get the name until 1912 when Henry Flagler made the village a stop on his railroad extension to Okeechobee. Flagler christened it in honor of his third wife, Mary Lily Kenan.

Kenansville rode the Florida Boom for a dozen years. The hotel, the First State Bank of Kenansville across the street and a number of other buildings went up in 1915. Nearly all closed 10 years later, and many of the residents moved away and abandoned their houses as the Depression began to hit Florida. Kenansville has not yet fully recovered.

Despite all that, the Webbs came in 1940 because of James, the seventh of 10 children, born in 1919 on Sourwood Mountain at Tates, Kentucky. Crippling arthritis struck James at 15; at 17 he decided to become a Baptist minister; at 20 an Indian doctor advised the Webbs to move him to Florida for his health.

The Webbs borrowed a neighbor's truck, put James and two other children in the back, and headed south. They stopped in Georgia for two months while Dad Roscoe went back home and worked for money to make it the rest of the way. He finally got

them to Kenansville in a trailer. James' book includes a poem about the trip, called *Family of Five* ("They had a milk cow and one beehive.")

Kenansville did not look exactly like paradise, but it was warm. "There wasn't any business much. The old highway (U.S. 441) was paved, but it was a mighty bad road," said James. "We moved into one of the abandoned houses, paid the taxes on it and homesteaded."

James travelled some, to sample various cures for his arthritis and to evangelize, but spent most of the next 40 years at Ke-



## Hanging on in Kenansville

nanansville. "Lordy Mercy, myself, I wouldn't have left for anything but to travel for the Lord," he said. With his older brother, Jennings, and his mother, James opened a general store on U.S. 441 where SR 523 crosses.

Jennings still runs the general store, which sells everything from crackers to guns. "We came right out of the mountains into the flatlands," Jennings said. "You could get land for taxes, or buy it for 25 cents an acre. That's how a lot of these cattlemen around here got rich."

James was lured from the store into the hotel business while the Florida Turnpike was being constructed from Orlando down the state to Fort Pierce. When the turnpike reached toward Yeehaw Junction in 1963, James recognized opportunity. He bought the hotel, then called the Pinesy Woods Inn, fixed it up and had a virtual monopoly on business from the turnpike workers.

"I had a young city out there while that turnpike was going," James said. "I could put up 200 workers. The hotel had only 14 rooms, but I had eight trailers and two cabins and we used the old bank building"

In those days, Elvie Peasley was singing about Heartbreak Hotel on a blue called Lonely Street. Youngsters in Kenansville dubbed James' place Heartbreak Hotel, and he painted the name across the red brick in big white letters. It became Kenansville's number one tourist attraction. "Not hardly a day passes right now that some tourist don't stop there and take a picture," James said. The hotel got a renewed shot of fame a year ago when Rolling Stone magazine mentioned it.

James' hotel career ran out about four years ago. Business dwindled and he closed the place. Then he had a heart attack, and his spent recent months in Orlando either hospitalized or recuperating at his sister's

home. He dreams of getting a truck and getting back out on the road to evangelize. "The Lord's in the matter now," he said. "He can bring me up and put me out again if He wants to."

Kenansville, too, dreams on. It got a new post office three years ago, and the new residents around Lake Marian have raised the number of patrons to nearly 600. Recently, plans for the construction of a \$2.75 million recreation and trailer park at the lake were announced. Kenansville has a Baptist church, three stores, two restaurants, a bar and two fish camps. It laments the fact that two busloads of its children must ride the 34 miles to St. Cloud each day for school, and that the nearest doctors are there and in Kissimmee.

But everyone, except the Osceola cousins up at Disney World, has problems. Kenansville keeps looking ahead. Census projections say Osceola's population may double over the next 20 years. Maybe Disney has long cottails, and maybe James Webb has influence. He has the right idea, anyway. Hang on, Kenansville.

## Low Cost Food Program

It was in the fall of 1975 that the Duplin County Child Support Enforcement Office of the Department of Social Services, under the auspices of Public Law 93-647 and N.C. General Statutes 130, launched a drive to locate runaway parents and get them to contribute to their children's support.

The IV-D program has been in effect for 3 years with these results: approximately 400 absent parents have been located; approximately 300 support obligations have been established; and approximately 100 paternity cases were established for children born out of wedlock.

It is assumed that thousands of dollars have been saved by Duplin County due to the caretaker having not applied for public assistance because of the requirements of the IV-D program.

When the IV-D program was initiated, it was felt that most runaway parents would be unable to pay child support if located and that most of these absent parents could not be located. The majority of the absent parents located are either within Duplin County or within the state of North Carolina. However, some are found as far away as California.

Upon location of an absent parent by the local IV-D office, a voluntary support agreement is joined into. This is accomplished in the privacy of the local office, and approved by one of the District Court Judges. Monies collected for child support are done so by the Office of the Clerk of Superior Court for Duplin County. For those parents who refuse to acknowledge paternity and to join into a voluntary support agreement, the IV-D office is prepared to go to court with the assistance of the county attorney, Russell J. Lanier, Jr.

Where there is an order for child support and the supporting parent defaults in payment, the IV-D office attempts to get the responsible parent to catch up arrearages and continue to make his/her support payments. If the supporting parent fails or is erratic in complying with the court order, the IV-D office initiates civil or criminal contempt proceedings through the office of the Clerk of Superior Court. Duplin has had approximately 75 persons jailed due to default in child support payments under the program.

There has been approximately \$150,000 collected as of January 31, 1979, in Duplin County for the sup-

port of dependent children. The collection have increased from a low \$145,000 in December 1975 to a high \$189,000 in September 1978.

The Duplin County Child Support Enforcement Office is supervised by Millie L. Brown, Director of the Duplin Department of Social Services. The office has 10 IV-D agents, Brannie Jones and Connie G. Outley. The success and accomplishments established by the program in the county has been with the cooperation and assistance of the Social Services staff, John A. Johnson and staff, Clerk of Superior Court, the office of the district attorney, judges of the Fourth Judicial District, and the local law enforcement officers of the county.

Protein, carbohydrate and fat are the only nutrients that supply energy (Calories or kilocalories). Fats supply twice as many calories (9 Calories/gram) as do protein and carbohydrates (4 Calories/gram). Carbohydrates and fat are the least expensive sources of energy and should be consumed for this purpose. Many nutritionists suggest that one-third of the daily calories be obtained from fat, but no more than this amount. Current intakes range from 40% to 45% in the United States. For more nutrition information send for a free copy of *Guidelines to Good Health* from the "Consumer's Right To Know" Program, Kraft, Inc., Dept. FS, Box 4611, Chicago, Illinois 60677.

Variety is a major factor in meal planning. No ordinary food provides 100% of essential nutrients. Foods vary in the amounts and kinds of nutrients they provide. For menu planning tips, nutrient nutrition labeling information, send for a free copy of *Guidelines to Good Health* from the "Consumer's Right To Know" Program, Kraft, Inc., Dept. FS, Box 4611, Chicago, Illinois 60677.

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## ARE YOU IN AGRICULTURE?

The Census of Agriculture has been underway since January 1st and the Bureau of the Census is asking agricultural operators: "WILL YOU BE COUNTED?"

If you engaged in agriculture operations in 1978, then you should have already received a 1978 Census of Agriculture report form. Agriculture Census report forms have been mailed to all known agriculture operations, yet some will be missed.

It is important to you that the 1978 Census of Agriculture be complete and accurate. Farm organizations; local, State, and Federal policymakers; farm suppliers; and many others use this information to make decisions. Complete and accurate data lead to better decisionmaking that affects you and your neighbors.

If you can answer "Yes" to any one of the following questions, you should have received a Census of Agriculture report form. If you did not, please complete the coupon below and a census form will be mailed to you.

Did you have day-to-day control in 1978 of an individual agricultural operation from which agricultural products were sold?

Did you have any crops or livestock for other than home use?

Did you own or rent land and operate this land yourself for agricultural purposes?

5 Name of operator — First, middle, last			
6 Name of farm or business			
7 Street or route			
8 City		State	ZIP code
County		Telephone number	Area code
Census Use Only			

Mail this coupon to

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NOTE: If all of your land is rented to others, or you have only a garden, it is not necessary to file an Agricultural Census form.

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