and Clay County Progress

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If Only They Had Waited

realize, of course, that if you

marry, you can't go to the

university? It was going to be a tight squeeze anyway." Na-

than lifted his hands helples-

sly; he had counted so

proudly on his son's college

education. "You know that the

Crawfords won't be able to

help you. They can't even af-

ford to send Nancy to the wo-

men's college right here in

ly. "I'll get a good job-

money in the bank."

go to college, too."

of young love.

cumstances.

Paul's

for ourselves.

Paul's chin quivered slight-

and save money. And I've got

can't possibly earn enough to

be a husband and father and

shaken, Paul insisted that no

matter what the consequences.

he loved Nancy and wanted to

marry her. My heart ached for

his naive faith in the power

How often I had heard Na-

than speak publicly on the rise

of teenage marriages. Stud-

ies revealed, he pointed out,

that more girls now marry at

18 than at any other age; that

one out of six brides is al-

ready pregnant; that the di-

vorce rate for teenagers is

higher than that of any other

age group. Statistical odds

were overwhelmingly against

Nancy - - - under any cir-

Nathan phoned the Crawfords

and invited them to our house.

Oscar Crawford is a book -

keeper in our town. His wife,

Ethel, and I had become super-

ficially acquainted through

daughter, the oldest of four

children. I dreaded facing the

Crawfords. But when I saw

them coming slowly up our

front walk - -- Nancy, her head

down, walking between her

parents - - momentarily I felt

even sorrier for them than

changed embarrassed ameni-

ties. I had half-expected that

to tell Nancy and Paul what

their selfish act had done to

our two families. But her

brown eyes were as fearful

and beseeching as a wound-ed fawn's. I held my tongue.

Nathan asked the young cou-

"We're not here to

ple to leave us alone. Then

Oscar Crawford began tone-

insist on a shotgun wedding." Nathan's face colored, "You

can't insist. Paul is under-

age, and must have our per-

Mrs. Crawford sniffed.

Well your boy certainly did

"It always takes two,"

Suddenly Mrs. Crawford's

face softened. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean it that way. We're

all in this together.

A look of perceptive understanding passed between us.

We parents whose lives were being entangled groped and floundered to reach a rational

mission to marry.'

would want to speak out,

ALL FOUR ADULTS ex-

romance with her

marriage for Paul and

Eventually that awful night passed, and it was Sunday.

Nathan shook his head. "You

Though white faced and

town."

a tight squeeze anyway.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following story appears tually, we decided to let our in the January issue of "The Reader's Digest". With consent of that publication, it is being re- force, Nancy to choose having printed here for the benefit of Scout readers. Digest reprints are offered free to Scout readers at the Scout Office. If you prefer you may order one by mail enclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope for its return. The Scout's mailing address is P. O. Box 190, Murphy, N. C.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: I had to wait six months before I could write this article, even anonymously. The hurt was so deep that only time could partially out showing too much of the heal the wounds. Then with time came the insistent belief that perhaps, by telling our story, we might ions I couldn't answer. Paul help others avoid the senseless tragedy that has and Nancy had received sex twisted the lives of two families. For no matter how struction in a decent moral we try to avoid admitting it to ourselves, tragedy code from various sources, is what has occurred- - and we parents must share or what was to blame for our the blame.

It was a lovely moonlit Sat- pacing the floor. "Paul, you urday evening in May. My husband, Nathan, and I were reading in our modest home in a typical Midwestern town. Our 18-year-old son, Paul, had left a couple of hours earlier to escort his steady girl friend, Nancy Crawford, to their high school senior prom.

WHEN THE DOOR opened at 10:00 and Paul walked in alone, both Nathan and I looked up in surprise. Even before Paul spoke, I knew that something dreadful had happened. His large hands clenched at his sides, he said slowly, "Nancy is going to have a baby. We're getting married. We just told her family."

For a moment, as if I hadn't heard, I gazed at Paul's strong handsome face. Then what he had said began to penetrate my consciousness. Stunned, looked over at Nathan. He had raised his hands to cover his face.

I turned back to our son, the dependable Paul we had been so proud of, the senior voted Most Likely to Succeed, the basketball star. How delighted we had been when Paul settled down to going steady with Nancy -- a beauty with brains and character, president of her class. We had attributed Paul's improved grades to Nancy's influence. Now he said huskily, "Mother, Dad- - -I'm sorry to hurt you. I'm so terribly sorry."

I heard my words tumbling out: "So this is how you proved you loved Nancyl Just how can you support a wife? And we trusted you! Oh, Paul, how could you do such a thing?"

Nathan, a high-school history teacher, has often acted as counselor for students in trouble. But this time the student was, with bitter irony, his own son. Paul responded forthrightly to his father's questioning. A few days before he had taken Nancy to our family doctor. Earlier that evening, they had phoned for the results of the pregnancy test. Nancy was two months pregnant. The doctor had

made them promise to inform their parents during the week-

Suddenly, I was thankful that our 12-year-old son, Tony, was away on a Boy Scout camping trip. "What did the Crawfords say?" Nathan was asking.

Paul ran his fingers through his crew cut. "Mrs. Crawford didn't say much. She just cried."

Then he went on quickly, "Nancy's dad was awfully mad. But he said I didn't have to marry Nancy, and I--"

"Yes," I interrupted. fool me. I thought Nancy was safe with him." "Nancy can go to a home and have the baby and give it up

to an adoption agency."
Paul shook his head, "Oh,
nol" he said, almost in a
whisper. "I wouldn't let Nancy do that. At first, we were going to run away, but we knew that wouldn't solve anything." His face was so serious, so pitifully immature; the words so sincere: "We want to get floundered to reach a rational married and make it right." level of communication. What Abruptly, Nathan stopped exactly were we to do? Even-

children marry, for it seemed unrealistic to expect, or to

an illegitimate baby over mar-

rying Paul.

During the next three weeks before school ended, we tried to behave as though it were normal to arrange for a sudden wedding of 18-year-olds. But one day a perplexed Tony confronted me. "Some kids at school said that Paul has to marry Nancy. What does that mean?"

It was the most disturbing question I had ever had to answer. I hope I nandled it withresentment I felt toward Paul.

There were so many questeducation in school and inincluding their parents. Who two seemingly nice adoles cents getting into trouble?

It was easy to point a finger at society, with the mass media emphasizing gratification of sexual drives as natural and glamorous. Or perhaps at the 20th century, in which so many people fear that there may be no tomorrow- - -only today. It was easy to blame the prevalence of attitudes that ridicule chastity as oldfashioned.

It was harder to blame myself. But when I honestly reviewed my life as Paul's mother. certain scenes emerged into focus.

Long ago, I had given up attending church, assuming that Paul could learn the difference between right and wrong at home, could select his own religion when he was older. Naturally, he had soon abandoned Sunday School. But what spiritual inspiration had I given him as a substitute for

And I had been ridiculously eager to have him date, to most will never be the same, succeed on a social level. I will never be as contented or had encouraged him to earn happy or hopeful as they once money to buy a jalopy. I had coerced him into growing up too fast. Now, inevitably, he must grow up faster than I family, to your societyhad ever dreamed would be and to yourself.

A recurring argument between Nathan and me returned to haunt me. Nathan had worried that Paul and Nancy were together too much, had pointed our the well-known pitfalls of 'going steady". When he questioned me about their

studying together for hours in our basement playroom. scoffed. Now, too late, I realized that our playroom was the place where the tragedy had started.

They were good youngsters. But, as parents, we should have talked to them directly, candidly about the tremendous power sex has to quiet conscience. We should have made clear to them how aware they must be of the dangers - - before passion took over. We had given them no concrete wall to lean on when their emotions started run-

ning strong. Gradually, I recognized myself as a guilty member of the lax society I condemned. ON GRADUATION NIGHT, Nathan and I listened to the oratory extolling the glorious future for youth. Paul received his diploma, and as we clapped we tried not to

think of how thrilled we would

have been- - -if. Two days later Paul's '55 Ford roared into the driveway of our home and he burst into the kitchen. "Ive got a swell fulltime job at Blakely's garagel" His eyes shone. course, I'll be just a gas jockey at first. But I know I can work up to a mechanic." Excitedly he described how much money

he could save. As enthusiastically as I could, I said, "That's fine,

I watched him as he flipped through the pages of the morning paper. Only momen-tarily did his eyes scan the feature listing the colleges

sen by his classmates.

'Where's that ad- --nifty one room furnished apart-

Clay County 4-H Corner Cherokee Scout & Clay County Progress, Thurs. Feb. 11, 1965 He dialed a number and

By 4-H Agents

ment with kitchenette?**

check."

talked briefly. Crestfallen, he

turned from the telephone.

'The rent is \$125- - -more

than half my month's pay-

Paul sat down heavily at the

kitchen table. He rested his

chin on his hand. "Mom, we

are sure to fine something nice soon- - -don't you think?

I watched Paul go slowly

down the hall to his room and

shut the door. I knew then that

my son realized, for the first

time, that life had closed in

on him, that the door of the

THE WEDDING DAY ar-

rived- - -a day I had once

dreamed of; now I dreaded

it. Twenty - one people

crowded into the Crawford's

Besides the immediate fami-

lies, the only guests were schoolmates of Paul's and

Nancy's. The room seemed

hot and close as a girl sang

in a thin soprano, "I Love You Truly."

Paul, so straight and hand-

some, stepped up to stand in

front of the minister. How

proud I would have been -- -

was Nancy, coming slowly

down the short hall on her

father's arm. Her lovely face

was somehow sad. Then she

and her stoic father were be-

"Dearly Beloved, we are gathered together- - " I

focused my mind on empti-

ness. Not even one tear would

escape. Nathan nudged me. I

rose for the final prayer.

cut the wedding cake, we all

had punch. Soon afterward the

wedding party assembled on

husband and wife emerged

opened its door with a flourish.

long way to go."

earned college fund.

ner.

waited!

said fervently.

'Come on, wife, we have a

We all waved vigorously as

they drove off on a five-day honeymood. And that would

be the end of Paul's hard -

house. Nathan and I stood at

the curb until the car had

disappeared around the cor-

"The Lord help them

-and us, too," Nathan

He put his arm around me.

We walked forlornly back to

the house. I knew that we

were both thinking the same

thought. If they had only

today are the words I have

not been able to say to Paul.

I say them now, not out of

because they will help our

some boy, some girl, some-

time may remember them be-

no tricky sophistry, no "mod-

ern" moral twists can change

the fact that your life and the

lives of those who love you

were, because for one selfish

moment you ignored your re-

sponsibility to Nancy, to your

(Reprinted with permis-

sion from the January 1965

1964 by the Reader's Digest

C. L. Alverson, Tr., et als

for First Methodist Church to

Emily Davidson, Maybelle

Easley, Jean White, Kather-

ine Stewart, Louise Bayless

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Murphy Chapter of Daugh -

ters of American Revolution)

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Posey J. and Catherine

J. N., Frances, A. J., Madie,

Crisp to Dock and Edith Gib-

Madelyn, Marie, T. D., and R.

D. Cole et als to Lorraine

Brooks, property in Hothouse

Fred M. and Joyce Davis,

property in Valleytown Town-

Trustee, to Trustees for

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lution, property in Murphy

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American Revolution, pro-

perty in Murphy Township.

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Evans, property in Cherokee

and Betty Jo Elrod, property

in Shoal Creek Township

David and Oma Elrod to Gale

Alvin and Evelyn Gladson to Delbert and Marcia Kreps, property in Cherokee County

Jerry Hatchett, Trustee, et

al, to Trustees for Daughters

of American Revolution, pro-

perty in Murphy Township.
Lloyd and Mae Kephart Loving et als to Dovie Kephart,
property in Cherokee County.

Columbus S. and Belzie

L. M. and Kate Davis to

M. Davis, Et Als.

Township.

Township.

son, property in Andrews.

and Jane C. Crawford, pro-

perty in Cherokee County.

Reader's Digest. Copyright

Deed Transfers

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Paul, no rationalizations,

Paul; but rather, because

fore it's too late.

Forever seared on my heart

At last the ordeal was over.

When Paul had helped Nancy

began,

The minister

The out-of-tune piano fal-

otherwise.

My heart quickened when

I narrow, spotless living room.

future had shut- - -hard.

Are you interested in electricity and electrical gadgets? If you are, the 4-H electric project offers a real opportunity for you to learn more about electricity. In addition you have the opportunity to win various expense-paid trips, awards, and to participate in many 4-H activities. We are planning to organize a county 4-H electric group. Any 4-H club member carrying the 4-H electric project is eligible to be a member of this group.

Woodard Kenneth agreed to serve as advisor for the group.

Another project which should be of interest to many 4-H'ers is the individual crops project. Crops in this project include

corn, tobacco, forage crops, and commercial vegetables, (peppers and tomatoes). All expense-paid trips to National 4-H club congress are sponsored for the state winners in corn, tobacco, and commercial vegetables.

tered bravely through "Here Comes the Bride." And there Now is the time to start making plans for the crops projects for 1965.

> The 4-H Demonstration Program is one of the most important parts of the overall 4-H program. In giving a demonstration, club members show and tell how to do something, pertaining to their 4-H project work. Begin planning now to give

demonstration this year. The district contest will be held June 22 at Asheville. You can get a lot of ideas on demonstrations from your project manuals and record books, magazines, and newsthe front lawn. Finally, the new papers. Talk with your leaders about a 4-H demonstra-

from the doorway amid tion. a shower of rice. They hur-If we can be of any help, a shower of rice. They nur-ried toward Paul's jalopy. He let us know.

Clay County 4-H Council

License To Wed

Buel Clinton Ward, 18, and Patticia Jean Jordan, 18, both The others went into the of Memphis, Tenn.

Bobby E. Hogan, 21, and Barbara Sue Davis, 18, both of Andrews, N. C.

David Vance Welch, 22, Waynesville, N. C., and Joyce Lee Sneed, 21, Murphy, N. C.

Mr. and Mrs. George Keasler Murphy spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Suit. -SC-

Rev. J. C. Swanson is to preach at Liberty Baptist Church Sunday morning. The service will be followed by a bitterness or anger, and not baptizing weather permitting.

delegates met on January 30 in the Agricultural Assembly Room at 10:00 a.m.

The delegates elected Council officers for 1965. They

Larry Groves, president; Sara Mease, vice-president; Steve Armstrong, secretary -treasurer; Becky Ledford, reporter; and Greg Howell, Bong leader.

Other club members at tending were Joy Smart, Chris Ressell, Betty Faye Coffey, and Nancy England. The council will meet regularly on the last Saturday of each month at 10:00 a.m.

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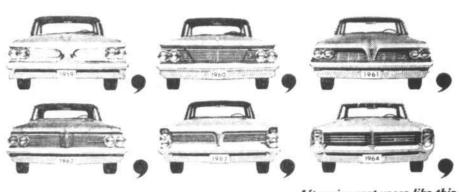
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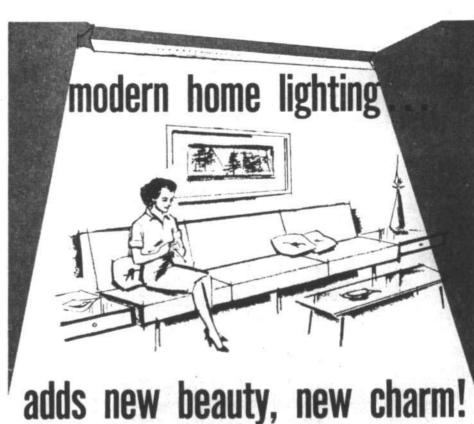
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