

Jones Journal

"A BETTER COUNTY THROUGH IMPROVED FARM PRACTICES"

Volume 5

TRENTON, N. C. Thursday, July 16, 1953.

Number 10

Romance Gone From Tobacco Curing But the Job is Easier

Since the time more than 20 years ago when Forrest Smith of Kinston began fiddling around with what eventually was the first successful oil-burning tobacco curer a great many changes have taken place in the business of growing and curing tobacco. Smith as a boy on a Duplin County farm knew the back-breaking labors of tobacco priming that were followed by the sleepless nights of "curing." He sought to end those sleepless nights.

Smith finally succeeded and still today as President of Smith Heating, Inc., of Kinston, he is continuing to release tobacco farmers from the tedious task of "firing barns." But in this process which has brought almost-fool-proof mechanical curing to the tobacco barn much of the "romance" of tobacco housing time has been lost. Perhaps this loss is more acutely felt by city folks who were occasional visitors to the barns at curing time who did not know the full story of hard work and sleepless nights.

Today the percentage of wood-fired barns in this great fire-cured tobacco area is small and getting smaller every season. But for the few left this is an almost-final word of last fond greetings.

Those nights around the barn when little folks and big ones gathered to hear the pop and crackle of the wood in the furnace, to smell the beautiful sweet aroma of the tobacco as it "yellowed" and was finally "killed out," the chicken stews and roasted ears of corn, the



Above Leander King, and his father, Matthew King, who has been a tenant on the Henry Canady farm for more than 40 years and two young Riders, Jan and Libby, watch the glowing embers in the furnace of one of the few remaining wood-burning tobacco barns in this section. (Polaroid Photo in a Minute by Jack Rider)

dew covered watermelons were the happy part of that time of hard labor.

The patter of rain on a tin roof, the pitch dark of countryside when one left the glow of the furnace or the small light of the lantern, the stories that went on and on until everybody had fallen into a guano-sack and the tobacco thick and off to sleep were part of the lore that made nights "at

the barn" the stuff that dreams are made of. Now such nights are a memory to the older and much of the present generation never knew and can never appreciate what they were like.

The tricks played on the "first one asleep," the chill in the air after midnight, the snake stories, the ghost stories, the tremendous tall tales of what "I'm gonna buy when tobacco-selling time comes," older

boys telling gigantic lies of their conquests in the female world, the bug-eyed youngster watching snake thrown in the barn furnace to "see his legs pop out," the smell of a pipe full of old "RJR," the first taste of "chewing tobacco," and some times, around some barns—for the older folks, a jar of "white likker" which not only braced one against the chill night air but added flavor, and fancy to

Postal Extensions

The Post Office Department in Washington, finally got aroused out of the lethargy of the usual summer swelter along the Potomac, has put its "OK" on extension of postal service for new areas around Kinston, the first such extension in three years in spite of great growth in these areas. Kinston Postmaster "Buck" Wooten announced Tuesday that three new areas would be added for daily door-to-door delivery, including 150 houses that will receive at-the-porch delivery and considerably more that will get curbside delivery. The three areas to get this new service include Greenmeade, Green Acres and Club Pines. Wooten gave Congressman L. H. Fountain a pat on the back for his help in awakening the folks in Washington.

the tall tales being told "at the barn."

Alas; Mr. Smith, you served us well. Tobacco cures better, more safely and more cheaply with your oil-burning gadget, but there's no way to roast an ear of corn about its blaze, no fragrant odor of pine and oak wood burning to tempt the appetite and to make even a fair chicken or fish stew taste like the purest ambrosia.

Oh Time! Turn Backward in Your Flight, if only for one night.

In 1940 it took the American farmer 47 hours to produce a bushel of wheat; now it takes only 31 hours.

Alcoholism a Disease, Not a Crime As It Is Viewed Today



The old, pitiful man sitting here in the dog fennels one hot day last week on the banks of Neuse River, is but one more of the pitiful band of alcoholics that seem to thrive in this fringe section of Kinston. A frightened phone call to the police station, said, "A man's been knocked in the head around here back of the Mathis Motor Company." Police and news-men charged out and after minutes of searching found this 71-year-old man sprawled in the six-foot high weeds, dirty, drunk, starved, sick but pitiful. A

crowd gathered. Police walked him to the jail rather than putting him in the police car due to his filthy condition. After looking at the old man, talking to him and pondering over the problem of "what to do with him" he said that he had enough money to buy a bus ticket as far as Goldsboro. His offer was accepted and the police, with some relief, let him go, probably to plague the police and the conscience of folks in Wayne County. (Polaroid Photo in a Minute by Jack Rider)

In the brief five and a fraction years since this paper was begun in Kinston something like 30 men have died in Kinston from chronic alcoholism. Wretching from poison, punctured ulcers aggravated by the strongest drink, burning to ashes in fires, drowning in Neuse River and walking blindly into cars and trucks have been some of the ways in which this group died but their fundamental disease was alcoholism.

Paradoxically these sick men ever seem to increase along the river bank, in Happersville and on the 100 block of North Heritage Street where they gather to compare "notes" and wait for their next drink.

For as long as this writer can remember these derelicts have been approached with a feeling of disgust, perhaps infrequently mingled with a little pity. Never has any intelligent effort been made by local society to retrieve these men from the disease that plagues them.

Recent advances in medical science now make it possible to retrieve many of these men from the awful shadow-world in which they live. In the past the process has been to sober a drunk up violently and suddenly and then hope for the best, with principal emphasis placed on the man's mind.

Today, however, there is medicine available that "dries up the thirst for alcohol. Soon some forward looking court is going to sentence an alcoholic to receiving this medicine once a week for a year, or five years and then with that much "good time" behind him the drunk has a chance to condition his mind, his environment and his finances in such a way that a return to the bottle is less likely.

The blue-nosed, bigoted, un-

Christian approach to the drunk in the past in this North Carolina area has been far too mixed up with religion and political emotionalism. This does not mean, however, that the church does not have a large responsibility in helping the drunk find the way back to safe ground. It does mean, however, that pulpit-pounding and high blown resolutions made by groups that never take, or understand a drink is comparable to curing polio with a medicine man's tom-tom.

This enlightened civilization of the 20th Century laughs at the savage medicine man with his hollering, dancing and stomp thumping; yet until recent years this wild and fanatical "medicine" has been about all the poor drunk could expect from his fellow man.

The Du Pont Company announced this week that the director of its medical research in Wilmington, Del., is assisting greatly, but not in an official manner, with the setting up of a clinic in that city for intensive work in this field of medicine. Perhaps reflections from this ray of light will penetrate this far into the wilderness and remove some of the ignorance and some of the blind hypocrisy that surrounds the approach to alcoholism. It will eventually. The tragic question is: How long will it take?

There are religious sects among us today who refuse to permit medicine or men of medicine to treat even their children. Such sects forget that "All things are God given." The intelligence and experience of a doctor, the pharmacist, the scientist are as much "God given" as a preacher's ability to put words and prayers together. To deny one is to deny the other.

People such as the pitiful old man pictured with this article need not forever be an embarrassment and dead weight on the community. Their crime is being sick. Society does not throw other incurables into jail because science has lagged in developing a cure and because society refuses to accept facts for facts and prefers to deal in richly worded platitudes.

For untold generations venereal disease was allowed to run rampant in the same bigoted and ignorant fashion. But today, after less than 10 years of all-out attack on these diseases they have been reduced almost to the vanishing point and the little that remains is due to the bottomless ignorance of the sufferer.

Comfort Man Hurt

Joseph Metts of near Comfort suffered a severely mangled left collar bone area, considerable loss of blood and possible other internal injuries Monday night when his tractor was forced off the fill leading to Cypress Creek Bridge. Haywood Philyaw, who was on the tractor with Metts and who was also pinned down, escaped with minor cuts and bruises. It was believed that a large truck-trailer forced the tractor off the fill and kept on going. The two men remained pinned under the tractor for some time before they were found.

During the first five months of 1953 North Carolina hatcheries produced 34,124,000 chicks, 3.8 per cent more than during the same period last year.