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SECTION II

ODEN WALKER SAYS

"Uncle Jack" Cordell Has Been Laughing At Life For 74 Full Years

By Oden Walker

Seventy-four years ago the 10th of this March James Albert Cordell looked upon life and laughed aloud, and has been laughing ever since, to the ruination of his waistline.

Mr. Cordell was born on Bee Tree in 1877 to Russell Cordell and Harriet Walker Cordell, near the site of the old Pittman homestead. He is the grandson of the renowned Baptist preacher, Uncle Joe Cordell, and "president" James W. Walker, "Ole Pappy" to all his progeny.

Mr. Cordell is known as "Jack" to everyone that has ever come in contact with him, in fact, few people know his real name. So we will refer to him as Jack from here on, so we will know who we are talking about.

He got a job in his early life from Wesley Patton braking log cars out of Laurel Branch. There was a tram line laid far up the cove, and the cars were loaded with logs and ran out on gravity. So a brakeman that knew his business was all that was needed. The cars were pulled back to the woods with mules. Jack soon learned to let the car gain speed in order to have momentum to go around the elevated curves and level places, and he soon had a reputation of being reckless. Wes Patton nicknamed his "Jack" after Jack Edwards, the famed Southern engineer, who drove the first locomotive through the Swannanoa tunnel. The name has followed since.

When Jack was about three years of age the Cordells moved to North Fork near Uncle Fate Burnett's water-powered corn and sawmill. They lived there until his father could build a house farther up the creek. From there they moved to the Hurricane Branch, where they lived until Jack was about 13-years-old, then they pulled up stakes and went to Greenlee in McDowell county where they lived about two years,

but the wanderlust had them so they headed west for Missouri where the elder Cordells have lived ever since. So much for family history—now for some highlights in the colorful life of this man.

Jack first went to school at the Randolph school which was near the present Wallace pool on North Fork. The older boys were allowed to go outside to study. One day Jack and Judson Burnett were lolling on the shady side of the school. They decided they had studied their lesson enough, and started a fast-moving marble game. Bascom Burnett glanced out the window and to put an end to the gaiety went up to ask Mr. Randolph the meaning of a word, and whispered a few other well-chosen words in the teacher's ear. The teacher came out with blood in his eye and a dogwood limb of such size, that if our present Black Mountain humane society caught a man whipping a horse with it they would hang him to a sour apple tree. He got Judson several good larrups, and set in on Jack. He, being a stalwart lad, resented such treatment and seized the brush, broke it in half, and struck the teacher across the cheek right on top of a lusciously ripe boil. The boil erupted like Vesuvius.

Jack later went to school at Greenlee, at Greenlee Academy, founded and operated by Hattie Greenlee Brown. Tuition had to be paid at both these schools.

Jack only stayed in Missouri about 18 months, and gypsied around while he was there, working on several jobs. The call of the mountains was too strong, so he caught a freight train and rolled eastward. Times were hard and railroads didn't mind fellows snatching rides, but the town cops had to be watched. Jack would get a brake stick and walk around as if he were a brakeman while the trains were switching. Between Knoxville and Morristown part of the hobos decided they wanted off, so as the train was going down grade they got down between the cars and uncoupled about half of it. The front end ran on to Morristown before the back end was missed. Jack was sitting atop a carload of horses as they came through Newport, and a cop ordered him down, but Jack told him he was caring for the horses and the gullible officer let him alone.

One of Jack's first jobs was driving a team for Jasper Souther, wealthy distiller of Old Fort. His

PLAY REVEALS OPPORTUNITY FOR MISSIONS

"Chant To The Living," a play portraying the conditions of the Moslem women in North Africa to reveal the great and urgent opportunities for Christian missions in North Africa today, was given at the meeting of the W.S.C.S. of the Methodist church Tuesday afternoon, March 6, at the church. Mrs. Mary E. Aleshire was in charge of the costumes and Mrs. L. C. Jumper and Miss Caroline Hall directed the play.

Those taking part were: Mrs. Stanley Garland, Brenda Garland, Mrs. Austin Dickens, Mrs. Kelly Bengé, Mrs. Gordon Greenwood, and Mrs. M. J. Wyrick.

Mrs. W. T. Wright presided during the business meeting. Hostesses for the afternoon were: Mrs. N. C. Shuford, Mrs. Harry Wade, Mrs. Finley Stepp, Mrs. Dickens, and Mrs. Thad McDonald. Moslem food consisting of kebabs, salata, dried fruits, crackers and coffee was served by the hostesses.

Others present were: Mrs. C. C. Godfrey, Miss Ruby Hall, Mrs. D. G. Guess, Mrs. Georgia Brown, Mrs. C. R. Longcoy, Mrs. H. B. Kerlee, Mrs. Morris Gardner, Mrs. William Hickey, Mrs. Charles Carpenter, Mrs. W. E. McDougle, and Mrs. F. C. Schnelz.

FIND IT IN THE CLASSIFIEDS!

job was hauling in grain, and hauling away spirits.

Jack was married Oct. 31, 1899, to Gabriella Walker, and went to housekeeping in a log house near where Mr. and Mrs. Howard Willott live at present.

Children came to the couple as herbs come in rich mountain soil, seven girls and three boys. Jack worked most of the time on timber jobs, but years ago he took a crew of men and made a trail from Montreat to Mt. Mitchell over which he guided tourists for several years, driving a "hack" in between times. Jack always had a ready answer for the tourists' questions. One lady asked how Greybeard got its name, and Jack told her it was the oldest mountain in this country. Our Wicker sisters were Jack's best customers in those days. He says they were the "hikinest" women he ever saw. He let Miss Isabel ride an unbroken, white-faced mule to Mt. Mitchell once without an accident.

While logging on Hail Creek in the Smoky Mountains Jack got a broken leg while trying to release a jack-pot of logs. The doctors did not get it set right and it had to be rebroken. He stayed in the Mission hospital so long that he got homesick when he got well and left. He was stable boss on the Mt. Mitchell job for a number of years and broke his other leg while logging on Long Branch on North Fork. The late Dr. Knoefel and Dr. Woodcock set the bone this time and Jack did his convalescing at home and read every book in the community. Needless to say, all this left Jack with a limp.

He was a steam skidder boss on Wilson's Creek under Grandfather Mountain for some time, and worked as a timber foreman —Turn to Page 3, this Sec.

Students Told Of Closing Date For Contest

Attention, High schools of Black Mountain, Montreat, Swannanoa, and Warren Wilson:

Students who are planning to enter poems, essays, or short stories in the 1951 creative writing group contest, are reminded that the deadline is the last Friday of April.

Time is passing swiftly. Let each one try to win the honor in his high school.

Mrs. Thomas S. Sharp, chairman
Miss Edith Chatterton, associate chairman.

Thimble Club Meets With Mrs. Connelly

Mrs. Dixon Connelly was hostess to the Thimble Club for a covered dish luncheon, Wednesday, March 7, at her home in Grove-mont. Members present were Mrs. Arthur Bannerman, Mrs. John Miller, and Mrs. Adolph, all of Warren Wilson college, Mrs. Justin McSweeney, Mrs. H. D. Crawford, Mrs. Charles Britton, Mrs. S. M. Bittinger, Miss Isabel Sayers, Mrs. H. E. Stinchcomb, and Mrs. C. E. Spencer. Miss Mary Bittinger, sister-in-law of Mrs. Bittinger, was a guest at the meeting.

BACK IN STATES

Glenn W. Fortune of the U. S. Navy is now in San Diego, Calif., after having been out of the States for some time.

Gastonia Visitor Is Honored At Party

Mrs. John J. O'Connor honored Miss Emily Hilliard of Gastonia with a party at her home on Church street last Saturday night. Arrangements of spring flowers were used to decorate. After scores were added Mrs. Ruth Cunningham held high, Mrs. Woodrow Beddingfield, low, and the floating prize went to Mrs. W. A. Allison.

A dessert course was served to Miss Hilliard, Mrs. Worth Burgess, Mrs. Cunningham, Mrs. Beddingfield, Mrs. Max Flack, Mrs. Allison, Mrs. Harry Barkley, and the hostess.

SUNDAY GUEST

Miss Elaine Allison had as a Sunday guest, Miss Mary Frank Brown of Troutman.

VICTORY CAB



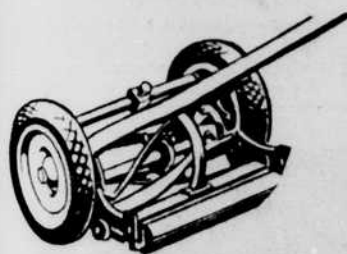
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