

Weekly Perspective

Looking back

LOOKING BACK

By VIRGINIA WHITE TRANSEAU
August 1944

COUNTY'S NAME TO BE PLACED ON SHIP FOR ATTAINING WAR LOAN GOAL: For the outstanding success achieved here during the Fifth War Loan, Perquimans County has qualified for the honor of having the name of the county placed upon one of the newest LSM fighting ships now being constructed for the Navy, according to an announcement received here this week by R.M. Riddick, chairman of the County War Finance Committee.

FARMERS MAY OBTAIN CERTIFICATE TO BUY LUMBER FOR REPAIRS: Farmers who buy lumber in Perquimans County now may purchase small amounts for essential maintenance and repairs of farm service buildings or implements of for other approved uses essential to war-time food production by signing an application at the

lumber yard, according to Dr. E.S. White, chairman of the County AAA Committee.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT: Mr. and Mrs. Clifton Stallings announce the birth of a daughter, Jackie Lynn, on Monday, August 7th, 1944.

BOWLING ALLEY TO BE INSTALLED IN TOWN: Sports lovers will welcome the announcement made this week by A.W. Hefren and B.F. Ainsley that they have completed plans for installing a bowling alley in Hertford. The two men have purchased the Hollowell warehouse on Grubb Street and last week purchased the alleys now being installed. Mr. Hefren stated yesterday that the alleys would probably be opened to the public the first part of September.

ENS. RICHARD SPIVEY NAMED AS INSTRUCTOR: Ensign Richard Spivey, son of Mrs. Hattie Spivey, has been made a flight instructor at Pensacola, Fla.

The Winslows operate a fishery on Albemarle Sound

In the early 1890s Tudor F. Winslow and his brother Edward D. operated a fishery in Perquimans County.

Tudor's son, the late Francis E. Winslow of Rocky Mount, wrote an account of this business venture.

He wrote: "...in 1893, and a year before or after that, my father and Uncle Ned became interested in the fishing business.

"They acquired a tract of land on Menzies Creek near the mouth of the Yeopim River on the north side of Albemarle Sound, which was about two miles wide or more."

(Holiday Island development now occupies part of the fishery land.)

Winslow continued: "Before this fishery started, my father and uncle had to finance a clearing up of stumps and snags from the bottom of the Sound so that the seine would not be snagged up. That was a very expensive operation.

"How they got the money I do not know, but in some way they acquired it and bought two flat-bottom steamboats which they used at Menzies Creek to carry out the seine to the middle of the Sound.

"One-half of the seine was piled on the after deck of one if the steamboat and the other half on the after deck of the other.

"They would take the seine out to the middle of the Sound and turn tail to each other and pay out the seine.

"At each end of the seine was a long pole called the staff. The seine was supported at the top by large-size corks and the bottom was weighted down by lead weights.

"When the seine was paid out, the steamboats would bring the lines in to shore, where they were hooked on to drums powered by stationary steam engines.

"The one toward the east was called Sea End and the western one

called Land's End....

"When the shore engines and drums had pulled the lines in to shore as far as they could get them toward a ramp, there was a gang of men...who waded out in their hip boots and pulled the seine in toward the ramp.

"Sometimes as many as 50,000 herrings and shad would be caught in one haul...one time...a large sturgeon about ten or twelve feet long was in with the fish....

"After my father and uncle had invested all the money they could get in the fishery, the money panic of 1893 occurred.

"The lowest point of that depression was always afterwards referred to as 'Black Friday.'

"There were steamboats operating on the Sound which hauled the fish to market at Norfolk. When the money panic dried up all the money available to keep things moving, the fish could not be sold.

"I heard my father say that the fishery broke him and Uncle Ned....

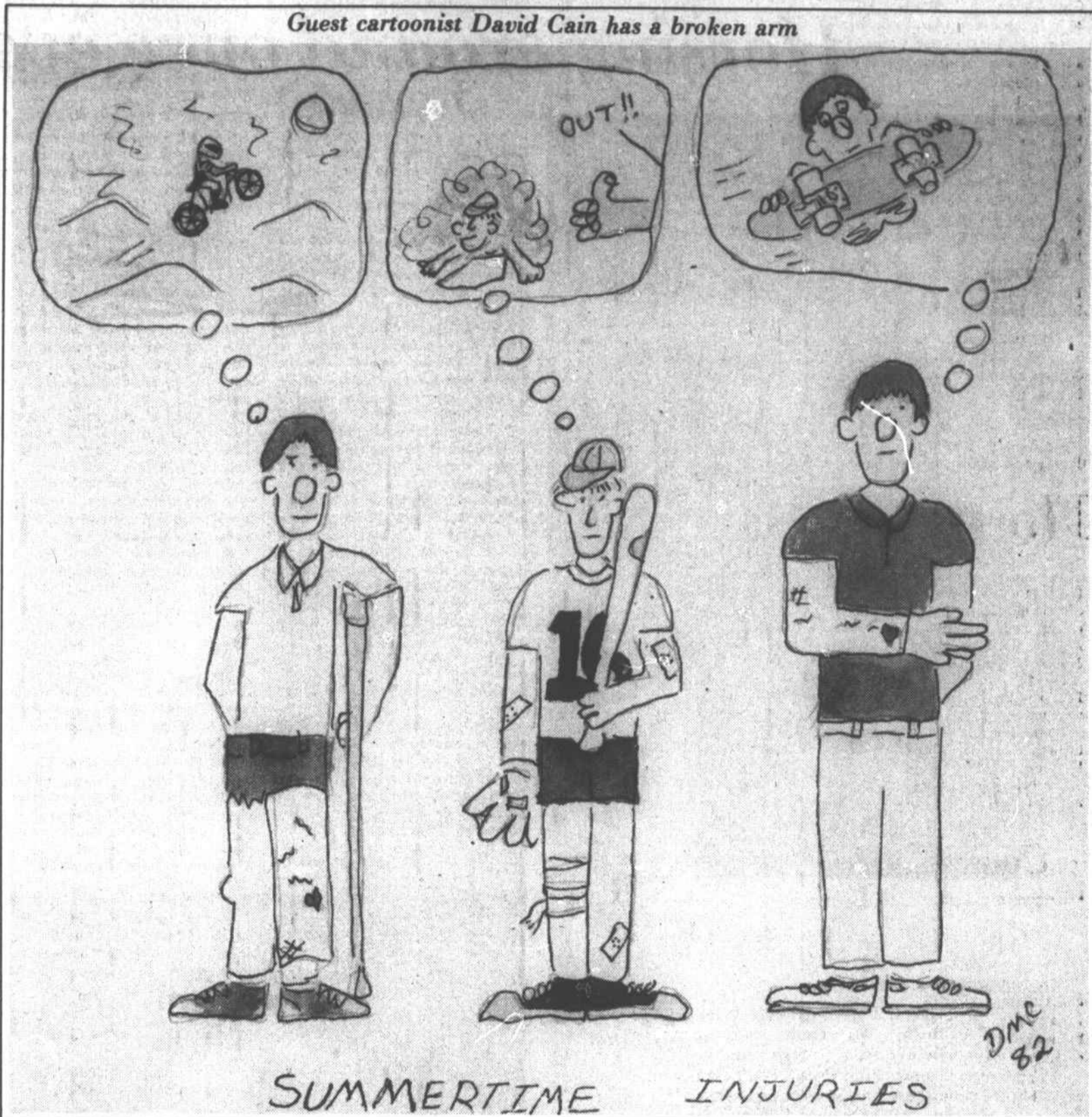
"While we were operating the fishery, it was a favorite spot for the young people of Hertford on their hayrides, and there would be Easter Monday picnics."

(Francis Winslow was a native of this county and was much interested in its history. Our gratitude is to Dr. John Crawford for furnishing a copy of this account.)



Ray Winslow

Guest cartoonist David Cain has a broken arm



More tall tales about distant relatives

It's storytime again.

This is a story I've been saving up for a day when I couldn't think of anything else to write about. It's about my great-great-uncle's adopted son Peter, who lived in Arkansas about eighty or ninety years ago.

In order to understand this story, I should mention right off the bat that Peter was not very bright. In fact, I would go so far as to say he was really quite stupid. It's important to note this from the beginning, or else the rest of the story won't make as much sense.

At any rate, one particular summer day Peter decided to sell one of his cows. So he tied a rope around the cow's neck and led him off to the market, which was about five miles away.

Now Peter was one of those poor, frustrated fools who won't say a word when in the company of other people, but the moment everyone is out of earshot, he immediately begins to strike up a conversation with himself.

No, that's wrong. He doesn't strike up a conversation with himself, but rather with anything nearby, animate or inanimate, be it a dog or a tree or a bucket of rainwater or whatever. By talking to something, anything, that made talking to yourself alright. Walking along

towards the market, Peter was talking to himself under the pretense of talking to the cow.

"I figure I can get at least fifty or sixty dollars for you," he said to the cow, though in fact he had no earthly idea what he could get. "Then, I figure I can buy me a few calves, fatten 'em up, and sell 'em at a big profit. That way, I figure I can be rich in maybe four or five months."

While Peter went on telling all this foolishness to his cow, a couple of young guys with nothing constructive to do spotted him from a nearby hill. If you'd have asked them, they'd have told you they were hunting, but they were doing no such thing. In fact, they were looking for trouble. And they found it in the silly fellow talking to himself while leading along a cow.

The two young pranksters came up with an idea, and proceeded to sneak up behind Peter. One of them took the rope off from around the cow's neck and hustled the beast into the woods, while the other put the rope around his own neck.

Peter didn't notice a thing at first, and continued walking along, talking to himself and leading one of the young rascals along behind him.

Finally, Peter happened to look behind him, and saw the young man with his rope around his neck.

"Who are you?" Peter asked, "And

would be a cow for exactly ten years, and then I would turned back to myself again. And he was right you know. Today would be exactly ten years."



Tom Ostrosky

what have you done with my cow?" The young prankster didn't say a thing for a moment, then suddenly look at himself and yelled "He was right! He kept his promise. Lord, I thought I'd never get out of this mess!"

"What are you talking about?" said Peter, a little annoyed by now. "I'm your cow," said the young man.

"Huh?" said Peter, annoyed but curious now. "What are you talking about?"

"Well," said the young rascal, taking the rope from around his neck, "You know where that Indian reservation is, don't you?" Peter indicated that he did. "Well," said the young man, "the witch doctor there caught me fooling around with his wife, and he did this little dance, you know, and before I knew it, he had turned me into a cow.

"And that witch doctor said that I

Peter looked the fellow over closely, and then said, "That's the most fantastic story I've ever heard. You mean you've been a cow for ten years?"

"That's right," said the young prankster. "And if you don't mind, I'd like to get back to my family."

"Oh, go right ahead," said Peter. "I'm not going to stop you." So the young troublemaker sauntered off, and although Peter no longer had a cow to sell, he decided that he might as well go to the market anyway.

Peter wandered about the market, looking things over, until he got to a merchant selling cattle. And sure enough, Peter looked into one of the stalls, and there stood his cow.

Peter looked the cow over until he was sure, and then asked the merchant where he got that cow.

"Two guys came in here just a few minutes ago," said the merchant. "Sold it to me cheap."

Hearing that, Peter got this knowing grin on his face, walked over to the cow, bent over and looked straight into that cow's eyes.

"Eh, eh, eh, you've been fooling around with the witch doctor's wife again, haven't you," he said.

Teaching behind bars

COLUMBIA S.C. — Crime and its costs — to the victims, to society in general and to the criminals themselves — are a major source of fear and worry for citizens of this country today.

What points certain people towards a deadly cycle of destructive behavior, degrading jail terms and more crime?

The theories vary as widely as the backgrounds of the experts; but James Cantrell — an inmate at the Watkins Pre-Release Center in Columbia — believes that for himself, at least, one answer is lack of education.

As a developer of adult literacy programs at Watkins and at South

Carolina's Central Corrections prison, he's been acting on this belief to help himself and other prisoners.

Cantrell dropped out of school in the ninth grade, and after a successful stint in the Navy was in and out of prison for several years, never able to keep a job for long.

Then his downward spiral bottomed out: he was sentenced to life imprisonment for killing a man in a bar room brawl.

Angry and bitter, Cantrell entered South Carolina's Central Corrections Institute in 1975. Soon afterwards, however, he began reshaping his life.

From inside the prison walls, he fought for and won a high school equivalency diploma in 1976, and went on to take a bachelors degree from the University of South Carolina.

"There came a point in my life," Cantrell says, "that I realized my lack of suitable employment was connected directly to my lack of

education."

"I decided I had better turn things around." Cantrell blossomed in his newly discovered academic environment. He became president of the prison's USC student body; he published articles, attended workshops and was elected inmate of the year.

But he was shocked by the huge numbers of other prisoners who had never learned to read or write. He began to see them as being imprisoned as much by their lack of communications skills as by the prison walls.

Many, he says, needed help simply to write a letter home to their families.

Becoming more and more concerned with adult basic education, Cantrell helped organize Central Correction's first classroom for illiterates.

"It made sense," he says, "that I was being given help, and I should

pass this on." The classes met in a basement tunnel, where, recalls Cantrell, "we had to work around guys who were sweeping and mopping and turning over buckets of water on our feet. But we managed and we survived."

Soon prisoners interested in improving their language skills lined both sides of the tunnel. Cantrell's group trained more tutors and eventually gained access to better facilities.

The prison authorities began to recognize the program's value, and slated it to become part of a modern educational complex which was just beginning to be built when Cantrell was transferred to the Watkins Pre-Release Center in 1980.

The complex is now complete. Because of his background, Cantrell was assigned as assistant administrator to the Watkins education department.

Yet he was allowed to teach only

four hours a week. "This was very frustrating," he says. He negotiated with the authorities to improve and expand the program, and began offering classes five days and four nights a week.

He recruited tutors and students, and developed contacts with agencies outside the prison — including a volunteer literacy organization which now helps train about 18 prisoner-tutors each year at Watkins. Thanks largely to Cantrell's leadership, the Watkins program now teaches basic literacy skills to up to 45 prisoners at a time.

In addition, staff and inmates hold Adult Basic Education classes geared towards high school equivalency diplomas, and a college extension program is also available.

Cantrell and the other inmates — as well as the prison authorities — feel that the literacy program at this pre-probation institution increases the odds for a successful life outside

the prison walls. Cantrell is proud of the program he helped develop at Central Corrections and Watkins, and hopes he can help make further improvements.

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