

Weekly Perspective

Southern hope for confederate victory was rumor

By the end of July, 1863, Perquimans County had heard the truth about Gettysburg. Early rumors of a Confederate victory, a forlorn Southern hope, were found to be wrong.

Coupled with news of the loss of Vicksburg, the outcome of the great battle in Pennsylvania was a clear warning that the Union would prevail.



When Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia collided with George G. Meade's Army of the Potomac, many Perquimans men were drawn into the conflict around the fields and hills of sleepy Gettysburg town.

During the first three days of July General Lee ordered repeated attacks on Meade's lines.

One of those attacks made its way into American folklore. Whether gallantry or folly, Pickett's Charge became one of the best known actions of the War Between the States.

North Carolina troops were prominent in the charge, and many war historians believe Brigadier General James Johnston Pettigrew of North Carolina was wrongly overlooked in the publicity given Pickett.

General Pettigrew's grandfather and father had resided in Perquimans for a time, and many of the County's soldiers were in regiments within his division.

Company F of the Eleventh North Carolina included several Perquimans men, of whom eight were captured at Gettysburg.

The eight were Thomas C. Harris, Thomas T. Haskett, Theophilus Jones, Caleb Lane, William Lane, Joseph S. Long, Joseph W. Trotman and Isaac N. White.

White later wrote that on the third day at Gettysburg he "was knocked down by piece of shell and left unconscious on the field as dead. When I regained consciousness was surrounded by the enemy, taken prisoner and carried to Fort Delaware."

Another prisoner taken the same day and sent to the same prison was Richard Q. Skinner of Company A, First North Carolina.

While White was soon paroled and returned to his command, Skinner traded prison for service in the Union Army, enlisting therein on October 1, 1863.

Serving in the First Connecticut Cavalry and later in the First Independent Company of U. S. Volunteers, Skinner did duty in and around Forts Ridgely and Snelling in the Indian country of Minnesota. He was mustered out in November, 1865, after which he lived in Minnesota a few years before returning to Hertford.

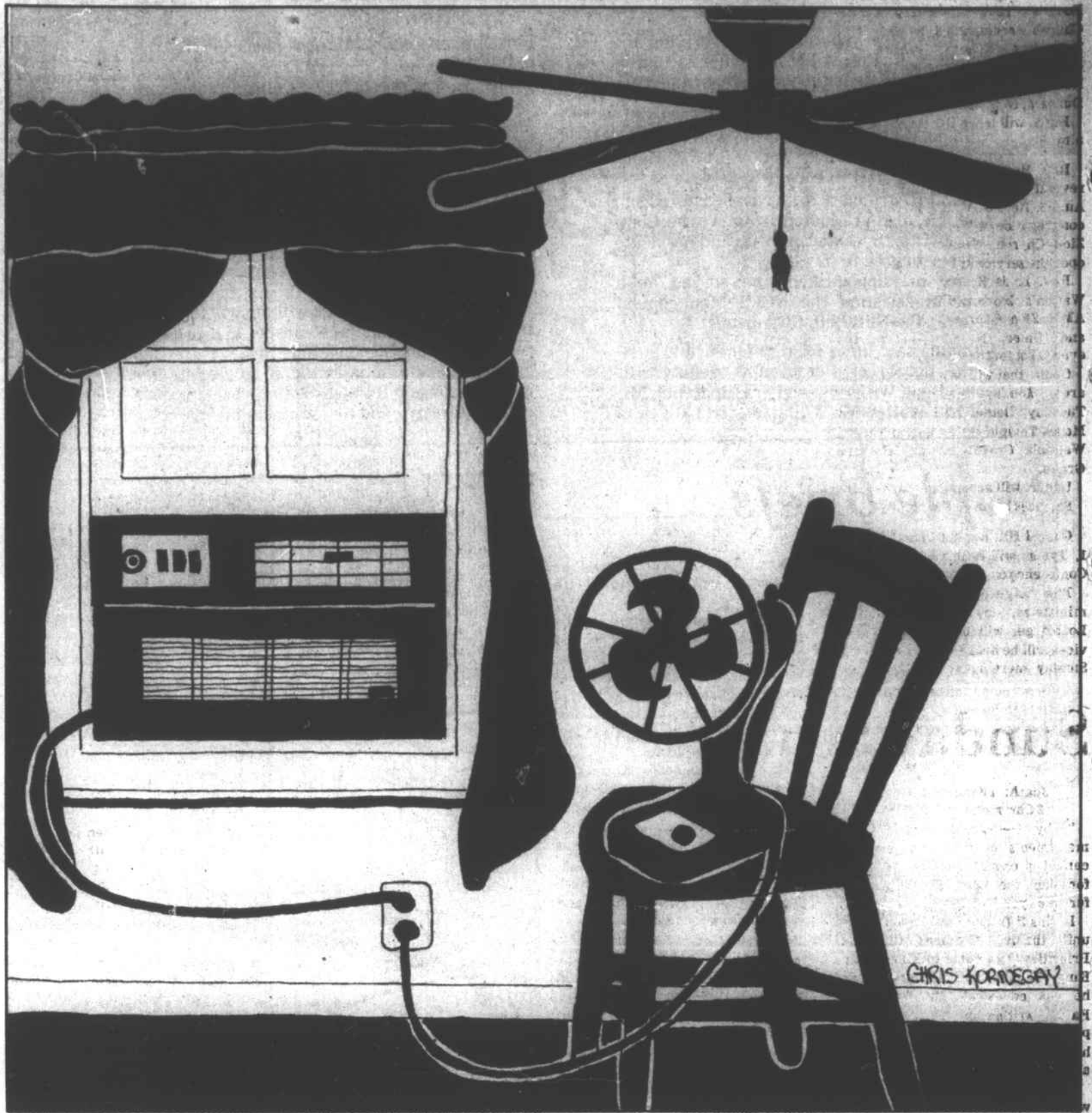
The aftermath of Gettysburg troubled Hertford more immediately. Union troops appeared in the town on August 17, 1863, their intention being to prevent the local militia from obtaining a war footing, and, perhaps, to retaliate for the capture of some Pennsylvania militia before Gettysburg.

The Union force captured the ranking officers of the Perquimans County militia, Col. Joseph G. Granbery and Lt. Col. Charles W. Wood. (The officers' wives, Isa G. Granbery and Mary E. Wood, had both recently given birth.)

After a humiliating parade through Hertford's streets, Granbery and Wood were marched northward into captivity.

Prior to July, 1863, few in Perquimans had heard of Gettysburg, Pa. Afterward few could forget it.

Move that air any way you can.



Looking back

20 Years Ago

VIRGINIA WHITE TRANSEAU CORBIN LEE CHERRY ORDAINED MINISTER: The Rev. Corbin Lee Cherry, son of Mrs. W. C. Cherry of Church Street and the late Mr. Cherry, and a graduate of Emory University, was ordained in June at the Methodist Conference held in Greenville.

The Rev. Mr. Cherry was appointed to three churches in the Elizabeth City Methodist District and serves churches at Bath, Bethany and Pantego, N. C.

The young minister is a graduate of Perquimans county High School and graduated from Emory University class of 1963, where he received a Bachelor of Divinity degree.

JACKSON WINS NATIONAL AWARD: George W. Jackson, special representative for the Jefferson Standard Life Insurance company in Hertford and Elizabeth City, has been granted the National Quality Award from the Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company.

The institutional citation is awarded to qualifying representatives in recognition of a superior quality of life insurance service to the public.

The award, in the form of a certificate, is made by the National Association of Life Underwriters and the Life Insurance Agency Management Association.

COUNTY INVITED TO ENTER CRAB CONTEST: Perquimans County has been invited to enter its fastest and meanest hard blue crab in the third annual North Carolina Crab Derby to be held in Morehead City August 24.

The crab representing this county will compete against those representing the other 16 crab-producing counties along the North Carolina coast.

The Derby will be the highlight of a three-day fun and entertainment program at Morehead City.

The crab-producing counties in the state are: Beaufort, Craven, Onslow, Dare, Pamlico, Pender, Hyde, New Hanover, Brunswick, Tyrrell, Washington, Chowan, Pasquotank, Currituck, Carteret, Perquimans and Camden.

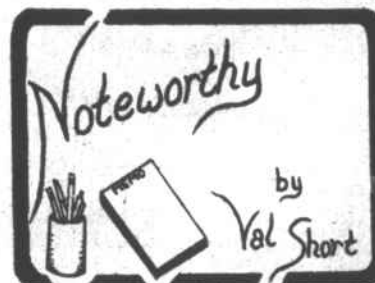
Freedom of the press misunderstood

It's not often that a newspaper has the opportunity or the cause to give itself "bad press." Last week in THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY the opportunity arose, but not the cause.

In the lead story on page one last week we reported a group of Snug Harbor residents "blasted" this newspaper during a county commissioners meeting for failing to report an apparent shooting in their community.

The accusations made during the meeting that we are suppressing the news and are "under orders" from the sheriff are unfounded, unfair and far from true.

But the comments of the Snug Harbor people indicate to us, however, that some misunderstandings exist about both the press and county government.



Many people interpret our freedom of the press as the right to print anything and everything, regardless of accuracy or substantiation. Others feel we should print only the good news — or only the bad news about "someone else."

The way we interpret our freedom of the press is to report all the news and events (that we receive) accurately and responsibly — guarding against sensationalism, gossip and rumor. In news stories involving crime, we must have substantiation from law enforcement officials to ensure an accurate recording of events and people involved.

In the case of the alleged Snug Harbor shooting, we have received only rumors and conflicting reports and no substantiation from the appropriate authorities.

Another misunderstanding which came to our attention after the Snug Harbor residents' confrontation with the county commissioners is that some may believe the county sheriff is under the supervision of the county commissioners.

Though the sheriff's department is included in the county budget, and though all members of the department are considered county employees, the position of sheriff is an elected one. The sheriff, just like any other elected official is accountable to the public.

We appreciate the interest and concern of our readers, and we respect their need and right for good, responsible journalism. We are disturbed by criticism and "bad press" that is inaccurate and unfair — just as anyone would be.

Facing South

a syndicated column voices of tradition in a changing region

BOUCETTE, Tex. — No story about the Big Thicket Preserve, "the biological crossroads of North America," is complete without the name Geraldine Watson. The preserve stretches across 300,000 acres in southeast Texas, which also is a heart of the timber industry.

The two cannot survive in the same domain. When the timber industry started whittling away the Big Thicket, one local woman, Geraldine Watson, along with several others put up a fight and won.

Geraldine was the daughter of a Boucette, Texas, timber mill worker. "We lived on a little farm at the edge of town. There were virgin pine hillsides around and a little creek ran right in front of the house with virgin beech and magnolia," she recalls with fondness.

Geraldine adds that, as a child, she often sadly observed the timber companies cutting away the holdings of the little sawmill towns that dotted southeast Texas, forcing out the mill workers and their families.

"It was a matter of watching all the places I loved destroyed one after the other, but you accepted it because there was nothing you could do."

Years later she moved her own family to the country so that her children could have the woods. "We had five acres of beautiful woods and I planted fern and azaleas. I put a trail though it for my children's tricycles, but then came a big freeway and wiped it out."

At that point, Geraldine decided to fight for the woods she loved.

The Big Thicket once covered 3.5 million acres, an area the size of the state of Connecticut. Usually only one forest group exists over millions of acres, but in the Big Thicket nine forest associations flourish.

Animals from biological extremes, from the prairie lands to the woodlands, coexist in the biologically unique Big Thicket.

A botanist by trade, Geraldine helped reactivate the Big Thicket Association to preserve the mere 300,000 acres that remained of this area. She did everything from assisting conservationist groups, serving as a guide to visiting politicians, to testifying and lobbying in Congress.

Fifty eight years old with long gray hair tied neatly up in a bun, Geraldine is actually a very private person. Confronting the timber in-

dustry, she encountered many businessmen and politicians whose paths she would otherwise never have crossed.

At one point, discouraged with the Texas conservationist movement and feeling overwhelmed, she retreated and announced a defeat.

But Ned Fritz, a close friend and environmentalist from Dallas, told her, "Yes dear, I know it's hopeless. The way the population pressure is going it won't be long before there won't be any natural areas left."

But when the end comes, which side would you have rather been on?" His words, though not comforting, put her back in the ring.

Geraldine and her colleagues also faced resistance from a majority of the local people, who relied heavily on the forest products industry. They put up a vicious fight to protect their one-product economy.

Very softly Geraldine states that her family — especially her children — suffered brutal harassment and abuse by her opponents. These wounds are still open, but instead of casting blame Geraldine chooses to keep silent about the incidents.

However, the local people rapidly changed when the newly established

Big Thicket Preserve became a source of economic wealth with the influx of tourists. The same people who ostracized and attacked her made Geraldine a heroine.

With some bitterness in her voice Geraldine expresses compassion for them: "People tell me that being an activist in southeast Texas is the same as being one in the coal mining areas."

"The local people are manipulated into thinking that they're going to lose their jobs if we save a little bit of land. It's misinformation."

Now with the Preserve well established since 1976, Geraldine is a plant taxonomist with the National Park Service. She catalogues the plant vegetation and delineates the vegetation zones of the Big Thicket.

Looking back she says: "I don't like fighting or even having to take a stand, but I simply cannot stand by and see injustice. Even if I get shot down on the spot, I have to say, 'This isn't right; we've got to change things.'"

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Hertford, N.C.

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