

Perspectives

Thoughts of the "good ole days"

You've read in my columns from time to time my thoughts on what many refer to as "the good ole days." While most of us hold fond and dear memories of days gone by, and while the past wasn't without its good points, most of us, if given the chance, would probably not want to return to the "good ole days."

I've mentioned on many occasions that perhaps it was the values we remember so strongly rather than the material things we may or may not have had.

Of those values, one of the most important was the reliability of a man's word. Honesty meant a great deal in all aspects of our lives, and the ability to have faith in a promise or agreement, without fear, made life so much easier. Usually, all that was needed to close a deal or make an agreement was a simple handshake. Lengthy and wordy contracts, lawyers, and other legal steps were not necessary. When a man gave his word, he stood by it.

Over the years, as our society has become more complex and as values have changed, few of us would think of entering into even the simplest transaction without a written agreement. Nearly everything requires a contract.

Think about the simple task of purchasing food. Years ago, you visited your local merchant, picked the items you needed, and took them home. If a product was found to be defective, all that was necessary was to return the item to the store. You either received a refund or the item was replaced. And the merchant seemed genuinely concerned. No sales receipts were necessary, no manufacturers guarantee was needed, there was no hassle.

If you had a job that needed doing, you sought the best person possible, you told him or her what was needed, you agreed on a price, shook hands, and that was usually all that was necessary. If a problem developed, it was discussed openly between the parties involved and resolved without the services of others.

Another area that has changed drastically is the employee-employer relationship. Daddy and Mama taught us, as we became old enough



to work outside the home, the importance of a day's work for a day's pay. Regardless the amount agreed upon to do a job, once that agreement was made, we were expected to give our fullest. As children, we all worked at a variety of tasks to help support the family and provide ourselves with the extras we might want.

We spend a lot of time working on various farms. Whether it was chopping peanuts, pulling weeds out of soybeans, working in tobacco, or doing yardwork for neighbors, we knew we were expected to give 100 percent. That meant you didn't have to have someone standing over your shoulder to assure getting the job done. And when it came time to receive your pay, you knew you had earned it and so did the person who paid you.

Times are quite different today, and the attitudes of the modern worker is one of the reasons why the reputation of the American worker has become tarnished. Where once work was performed out of a sense of pride and obligation, today, too many workers are content only to do enough to "get by." Too much importance is directed to the rights of workers rather than the responsibility of the worker to do the best job possible. And you can be assured this attitude reflects in today's products.

It is very important that an individual take the steps necessary to protect himself from abuse. But society as a whole would benefit if more value was placed on a man's word rather than a piece of paper. There was a time when a man took great pride in the honesty of an oral promise. When he gave his word, he meant it, and nothing else was needed. That's a part of the "good ole days" we should all strive to return to.

John Beers named heart fund chairman

JOHN BEERS 1970 HEART FUND CHAIRMAN: John Beers will serve as Campaign Chairman of the 1970 Heart Fund Chairman in Perquimans County, it was announced by the president of the Heart Association. The campaign will be conducted throughout February and will have a goal of \$1,500.00.

HERTFORD FIRE DEPT. ACTIVITY REPORT: Department Status: 27 active Firemen operating four units of fire fighting equipment. The department answered 56 calls of which 15 were within the city limits, 39 rural calls and 2 calls outside Perquimans County. Men responding to calls - 765, Time spent on calls - 40 hours and 5 minutes, Man hours spent on calls - 753. Property value involved \$91,800.00, Estimated value of loss \$30,400.00, Injuries - 4. Department officers of 1970 are: Chief R. C. "Bobby" Elliott; Assistant Chief Francis B. Nixon; Secretary and Treasurer Charles Eley; Company I Captain Lloyd R. "Pete" Riddick; Company I Lieutenant C. T. Skinner, Jr.; Company 2 Captain Henry C. Stokes; Company 2 Lieutenant Z.D. "Jack" Robertson.

CHANGES MADE BY SCHOOL BOARD FOR 1970-71 TERM: After a



lengthy and serious study of the matter the Board of Perquimans County Education, Monday night, voted to approve the following plan of organization for the County schools for 1970-71 term: All students in grades 1 through 8 on the Hertford side of Perquimans River are assigned to Hertford Grammar School. All students in grades 1 through 4 on the Winfall side of the Perquimans River are assigned to Perquimans Central Grammar School. All students in grades 5 through 8 on the Winfall side of Perquimans River are assigned to Perquimans Union School. All high school students in grades 9 through 12 in the County are assigned to Perquimans High School. The present King Street School will become part of Perquimans High School and will be used for Vocational Education.

Letter to the editor

As a transplanted Hertfordian (?) of some 38 years ago (and who hopes someday to return) and a recent subscriber to the 'weekly', I must tell you how much I enjoy the column 'Historical Notes', by Mr. Winslow.

Both in content and in quality of writing, his work is first rate. I look forward to it each week.

Sincerely,
Arthur Woods



An armadillo can walk underwater.

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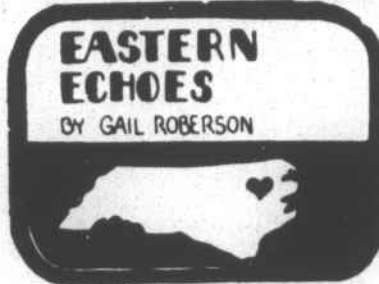
Reflections on wisdom and hot cornbread

WISDOM, AND HOT CORN BREAD

When I was barely more than a girl, there was an old black woman down the road a ways who shared tales from the past and morals for the future with me quite often. I can still see her beautiful face aglow with smiles, and remember the gentleness of her voice and the soothing manner of her laugh. I'll never forget the day we sat at her kitchen table watching corn bread frying on the wood stove. I was feeling "right pert" she had noticed, due to the fact that I had acquired my business degree, a job, and sold three major short stories all in the same week.

"I've got it now," I said to Aunt Myrtle. "I've got the knowledge I need to set the world on fire. I'm going places, auntie. I've been digging in my heels and studying hard, and I've finally reached the starting line."

The legs of the chair scraped across the mellow, uneven floor boards beneath her feet as she pushed herself from the table and headed for the wood stove. When she returned with a fork in her hand, spearing sizzling corn bread, I



reached out and took it without even thinking. I immediately dropped it when the burning corn meal blistered my palm. As I searched the floor for the hot bread, old Aunt Myrtle said to me...

"Yeah, you got the knowledge alright girlie. Them books kin give ya thet. But you got a ways to go fer ya git wisdom 'nuf to match it. They don't teach none of thet in them books of your'n. You got to git it from life, girl. From LIFE. And you ain't lived 'nuf of thet yet or else'n you'd ah never reached out fer thet hot corn bread."

I now know the difference between knowledge and wisdom. I've learned what old Aunt Myrtle was talking

about that day in her kitchen. I started cutting my wisdom teeth the day I bit off more than I could chew, and I've been sharpening them ever since. I've learned that the biggest step toward knowledge is becoming conscious of my own ignorance. Nobody ever became wise by chance. Most wisdom comes from experience, and most ignorance from fear of experience. There are few of us left anymore like Vance Haver, who admitted that: "I grew up so far out in the country that not only did I not know anything, I didn't even suspect anything." Today we've been touched enough by the modern world brought to us by various forms of the media, that we've got "right smart" enough of knowledge, as old Aunt Myrtle would have put it.

But, the wisdom "nuff to match it," is still floundering around out of reach sometimes. It's sort of like Kirk Kirkpatrick said: "Intelligence is spotting a flaw in your boss's reasoning; wisdom is not mentioning it."

Herb True once remarked: "Blessed are the ignorant, for they

are happy thinking they know everything." I believe Herb must be acquainted with a few of the same folks as me, for most of them are convinced that they know it all. They take a thimble full of knowledge and then off they go to slay the world. What they will learn, instead, by the wisdom that will come their way while they're out there learning from experience and trying to take the world down a notch or two, is that "knowledge fills a large brain; and merely inflates a small one." Without a doubt, somebody will eventually point out to them that, "if intelligence were crankcase oil, their's would not wet the tip of the dipstick, let alone reach the add-one-quart mark."

The true test of intelligence is not how much we know how to do, but how we behave when we DON'T know what to do. A teacher asked a little boy to define ignorance. "It's when you don't know something and somebody finds it out," he replied. He was wise for his age, wasn't he? Just common sense in an uncommon degree...better known as wisdom.

Perquimans River proven an obstacle

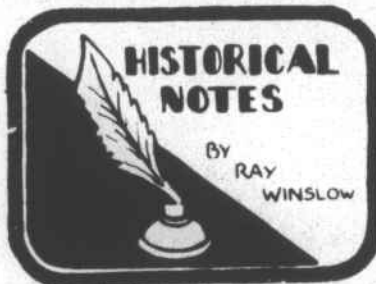
Perquimans River gives its name to the county which surrounds it and depends upon it. Nevertheless, through most of our history the river has presented the inhabitants some major problems.

The river was never a greater problem than the time one hundred twenty-five years ago when it served as an easy entry for enemies and simultaneously furnished them an equally easy opportunity to make mischief.

It was near the midpoint of the Civil War which divided Perquimans into two opposing camps just as the nation as a whole was sundered. The river provided the means by which United States authorities kept some control over an area still linked otherwise to the Confederacy.

On January 11th, 1863, Lieutenant-Commander Charles W. Flusser of the United States Navy brought the steamboat "U.S.S. Commodore Perry" up the river to Hertford. As a blow to contraband traffic passing through the county, he destroyed the float bridge at Hertford.

The Sunday peace would have been broken further, as Flusser also had his eyes on Blanchard's Bridge. He had to report, however: "I should have destroyed on Sunday night an-



other bridge, some 6 miles above Hertford by the river, but my steamer was run upon a stump abreast of the town, and the men were so much exhausted by the hard heaving necessary to get her off that I postponed it to a later date."

The later date turned out to be January 30th. Early in the morning Flusser left Plymouth bringing with his sailors some fifty soldiers of the Twenty-seventh Massachusetts Regiment under Captain Charles D. Sanford.

The joint navel-military expedition anchored off Hertford at 10:30 that morning. The soldiers and thirty sailors were landed and proceeded toward the bridge Flusser had previously targeted. For good measure they also headed for Newby's Bridge at Belvidere as well.

It was about 1:00 p.m. when the

party reached Blanchard's Bridge. While most of the men spent the afternoon breaking up the bridge, some stole some clothes and tobacco from the nearby Blanchard store. An officer chased them out when they entered Blanchard's residence.

Newby's Bridge was destroyed the same day and by midnight of that

long and frightening Friday the invaders had returned to the "Commodore Perry". It was then impossible to cross Perquimans River to reach Hertford, except by boat. The river would for a time prove how broad an obstacle to travel it could be, as it had in the days before technology provided the capability of erecting a bridge across so wide a water.

NEWS COUPON

The news and editorial staff of the Perquimans Weekly would like you to tell us what kind of stories you like to see in the paper. If there is something or someone you feel is important — or some provocative issue you would like us to examine — please, let us know.

Just clip and fill out this coupon. Include as many details as possible (Names, addresses, telephone numbers, etc.)

It may not be possible for us to use some of the stories suggested but we are always looking for new ideas.

So, next time you think of something you feel would make a good story, send it to: News Coupon, Perquimans Weekly, P.O. Box 277, Hertford, N.C. 27944.

STORY IDEA:

COMMENTS:

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