



ED SMITH

O'Henry another famous Tar Heel

William Sidney Porter ("O. Henry"), one of this nation's most famous writers, died at his home near Weaverville, N. C., on June 10, 1910. He is buried in Asheville's Riverside Cemetery, not far from the grave of North Carolina's other most-famous author, Thomas Wolfe.

Porter was born in Guilford County, in 1862. He was raised and educated in Greensboro, and worked briefly there in his uncle's drugstore. At the age of 19, seeking

adventure, he moved to Texas to work on a ranch owned by family friends from this state. Later convicted of bank fraud (on circumstantial evidence now considered suspect by his biographers), Porter served a sentence in a Federal prison in Ohio, then moved to New York City to pursue his writing career. It is said that the shame of his conviction marked his personality for life.

One of America's most prolific writers, he often produced a short story per week for newspapers, usually containing the surprise ending that became his trade mark.

On June 5, 1917, a nationwide registration was held for the draft during World War One. North Carolina set an example in patriotism that day for the nation to follow, an example that contrasts sharply with the experiences of our more recent past.

There were parades instead of demonstrations, and six percent more men (ages 21-30) registered for the draft than census records had indicated were in the state's population. A total of 480,491 men signed up,

causing draft officials to speculate that many had actually lied about their ages in order to register!

Benjamin Hawkins of Warrenton, one of North Carolina's original U. S. Senators, died on June 6, 1816. Hawkins had earlier served in the Continental Congress. He resigned his Senate seat in 1795, after ser-

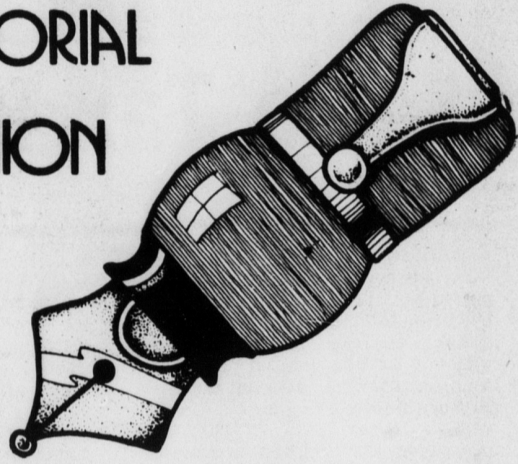
ving only briefly, when appointed by President Washington as Indian Agent to the Creek Nation.

Hawkins' career among the Indians was in marked contrast to the behavior of many of the white officials this nation has inflicted upon the red man. Sincerely interested in the welfare of these original Americans, Hawkins served for twenty years as agent, earning from the Indians the title of "Beloved Man of Four Nations," the Creek, Choctaw, Cherokee and Chickasaw tribes. His nephew, William Hawkins, acted as his assistant for several years, then returned to North Carolina, serving as Governor of the state during the War of 1812.

On June 10, 1861, Henry Lawson Wyatt of Edgecombe County earned the unfortunate distinction of becoming the first Confederate soldier killed in the Civil War. He died at Big Bethel, Va., in the war's first battle, a Confederate victory now described by historians as a "minor, scrambling contact."

North Carolina supplied more men to the war than any other Southern state, 125,000 in all. It also suffered by far the greatest casualties, some 40,000 killed.

EDITORIAL OPINION



Looks like area airport is dead

Last week we editorialized on the prospects of a regional airport being good despite the fact that the City of Gastonia had turned thumbs down on the project.

We based our opinion on the fact that a airport study committee meeting was scheduled after the Gastonia city board decision.

It looks as if Gastonia's decision not to participate might very well have sounded the death knell for the proposal. Why? Because the Federal Aviation Administration indicates it has no interest in pursuing the matter if Gastonia is counting itself out.

An FAA representative also indicated at the meeting that the administration wants to see a regional airport in this area, but that getting federal funds would be next to impossible for the project with Gastonia out of the picture.

This is a case of the Gastonia board pursuing the impossible dream — expansion of the present municipal airport — rather than the possible and more sensible dream — a regional airport.

The Gastonia Municipal Airport is not serving fully the needs of the community presently and expansion or development of that facility to provide the needed service is next to impossible because of the heavy residential development surrounding the facility.

Now the question remains — will Kings Mountain pursue its original idea, a local airport facility?

Burial service both distasteful, disrespectful

Many citizens have remarked lately on a practice concerning burials that they find distasteful and disrespectful.

The practice is that of city cemetery workers coming in to fill the graves before the entire funeral cortege has left the scene. The remarks have also covered the fact that the workers lurk on the outer perimeter while the graveside services are being performed. One person remarked that it was like "vultures waiting for the traffic to thin out so they can swoop down."

Attending the last rites of a loved one or dear friend is perhaps the second most emotional experience the living is asked to go through. The first would be at the moment of the loved one's passing. It is not a happy occasion and everyday events seen in other circumstances without a second thought are not so easily dismissed on this occasion.

Why, then, do city cemetery workers make themselves so conspicuous in the background at these times? The answer is simple. At 4 p. m. city cemetery costs are increased, which means the funeral expenses for the funeral director goes up and ultimately so do the costs the family of the deceased. In order to keep the expenses down the cemetery employees remain on the scene to begin work immediately. Most of the time these employees do show proper respect in allowing the family members and friends time to leave the scene. But the closer to 4 p. m. the services are held, the faster the work is done, even before the entire funeral cortege has left the scene.

Charging overtime fees after 4 p. m. was a city commissioner action at the request of the cemetery department supervisor.

We suggest other arrangements be made in this case. It is one thing to make an enterprise feasible economically, but under circumstances where such actions offends and shows disrespect it's quite another.

'Angel Dust', a dangerous drug

Angel Dust, supergrass, Peace Pill.

Those words don't sound bad, but they mean "bad" when used by human beings. These are nice sounding names of a particular tranquilizer, but it also has names of Killer Weed, crystal cyclone, elephant grass, and hog. This tranquilizer is PCP or more specifically, phencyclidine.

In action by the N. C. Drug Commission May 25, PCP was placed in schedule two, which means that in North Carolina the illegal possession by anyone of more than one-half gram of PCP will face a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a fine of \$10,000 for each offense upon conviction in the courts.

Earl W. Griffith, Assistant Secretary for Alcohol and Drug Abuse, N. C. Department of Human Resources, said, "I am pleased with the decision of the Drug Commission concerning PCP, because it is such a destructive and unpredictable drug. A little PCP is a dangerous thing."

PCP was first developed in the late 1950's. Originally, PCP was used as an anesthetic agent in surgical procedures and, although it was found to be generally effective, the drug often produced unpleasant side effects. Because of the bad side effects, in early 1967 it was removed from the market for human use.

However, it continued to be marketed as an animal anesthetic and tranquilizer, especially among larger animals such as elephants. Veterinarians can continue to acquire PCP under controlled circumstances.

PCP comes in different forms — as a powder, tablet or capsule in a variety of colors, shapes and sizes. The drug abusers have developed several ways of using PCP — by smoking, snorting, swallowing or injecting it.

Any way PCP is used, the results are bad. In the May 3, 1978 issue of "Narcotics

Control Digest," it stated: "The illicit use of PCP, developed in the late 1950's, is fast becoming a nationwide problem. The National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) estimates that as much as 80 percent of all admissions to mental hospitals may be PCP-related. In Michigan alone, over 360 deaths were caused by PCP overdose in the past three years."

In a brochure put out by the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration Department of HEW, it states: "More PCP users die from accidents caused by the strange behavior the drug produces in them than from the actual chemical itself. People on PCP have drowned in shallow water because they are so disoriented they can't tell which way is up."

"Others have had auto accidents, fallen off of roofs and out of windows because of the drug's intoxicating effects. Some have died in fires because PCP made them insensitive to the pain of burning and so confused and disoriented they couldn't escape from the flames."

If PCP is so bad, then why do people take it? For one thing, many beginning drug users don't know what they're getting. Often dealers will cut more expensive products with PCP or actually sell PCP as THC (the active ingredient of marijuana), mescaline or cocaine. PCP is easy to manufacture and that is why the elements necessary to make PCP have also been placed on Schedule Two by the Drug Commission.

PCP, or Angel Dust has been sprinkled on marijuana and sold to unsuspecting users. People who do get involved with PCP should get to the hospital's emergency room as soon as possible, especially those drug users who are experiencing unusual or different effects or becoming disoriented.

For counseling and treatment of a drug related problem, the local Mental Health Center or Drug Action Council can provide valuable assistance. The Crisis Center in the local community can also advise anyone where they can get treatment and emergency service for any drug or alcohol problem.

Everybody needs a few comebacks

After careful study and relentless pursuit, I have come to the conclusion that literally everyone needs a comeback now and then. A comeback (or topper, as they call it in show business) is a line that devastates someone who has just cut you down, offended you, bored you or said something totally stupid.

All parents need comebacks. For instance:

When your sibling announces, "I am 18. I'm my own man. I will do as I please and legally there is nothing you can do about it."

Try coming back with, "Yeah. Well, what do you think I might be able to do illegally?"

When the sibling says, "I didn't ask to be born."

Answer back with, "I know. You were my mistake."

When the sibling shows you a lousy report card and states, "My teachers all hate me."

Try answering, "Well, I'm not too fond of you myself at this point."

When your eight-year old son announces he's just told the longshoreman next door, "My daddy will beat you up..."

Look innocent and say, "What did you say, stranger?"

When you hear someone say, "Get off my back, old man, or I'm leaving home!"

Enjoy your trip.

"I've invited the gang over for a spend the night party Saturday."

"That's swell. I guess my Bubonic Plague will be cured by then."

How many times have you heard or read a line that you ache to be able to pull on someone, under legitimate circumstances?

Like when a god-awful ugly person remarks, "You're a disgusting drunk!"

You answer, "Yeah, but tomorrow I'll be sober."

How about when the pesky lady says, "Won't you join me?"

You say, "Why? Are you coming apart?"

"You're not going to say no to a lady, are you?"

"I don't know why not. They all say no to me."

How about the old politician comment, "I want to do my best for all the little people."

Haven't you wanted to say, "That takes care of the midgets, now what about the rest of us?"

A guy I know completely disarmed another cat seated at a bar in Charlotte one night. And he did it while being bombed.

The guy I know stumbled and fell all over the man at the bar, wrapping his arms around him in the process. The man became indignant. "Hey! Get away from me you fruit!"

The comeback was quick and deadly. "Don't get upset. I'm not trying to start a romance. I'm just trying to get to the head."

He never would tell me how long he had been saving that one.

An actor friend of mine named John McComb told me about the lines from an old Marx Brothers movie he had been dying to use on someone for twenty years.

John said he got his chance. At the time he was working for an advertising agency in Florida. He said one morning a fellow em-



TOM MCINTYRE

ployee setup the situation so beautifully you would have thought it was rehearsed.

"You wouldn't guess in a million years what I found on Jacksonville Beach Saturday," the man said.

"What was it?" John asked.

"A tusk."

John said his face flushed and his mind went reeling. He grabbed the guy before he could say another word. "Wait a minute! You mean to tell me you found a tusk on Jacksonville Beach?"

"Yeah. A tusk. I had a hard time digging it out of the sand, too."

John said he could hardly believe his ears. He could hardly keep from bursting out laughing, but he restrained himself and calmly asked, "Why didn't you do it in Alabama?"

"Why?" asked the guy.

"Because in Alabama the Tuskaloosa!" John said, "It was the greatest feeling in the world being able to pull that line off so perfectly. Groucho Marx would have been proud of me."

Gene White, executive director of the Kings Mountain Redevelopment Commission, wiped me out at the last council meeting with a one-liner. What made me lose control was the fact that he had set me up for the line earlier that same day.

We were looking at the three-dimensional of the proposed annex to St. Paul's United Methodist Church. I said, "I wonder where the architect got the idea for this design?"

"It came from a Lutheran church in Yuma, Arizona," Gene said.

That night at the board meeting one of the commissioners asked architect Jim Martin of Shelby where the design for the church annex came from.

"A church in Bowling Springs," Martin answered.

I looked at Gene and before I could say anything, he leaned over and said, "I knew it was either there or Yuma, Arizona."

I had tears rolling down my cheeks and I had to try to laugh with my own fist stuffed in my mouth to keep from disrupting the meeting.

And that, as Groucho would say, could you get you ten years at Leavenworth or eleven years at Tenworth or five or ten years at Woolworths.

Poet's Corner



WHAT PURPOSE HAS LIFE?

What purpose has life
If not to share?
Or to go on living
And yet not care?
Worry about tomorrow
That we may not live
Can never justify
The little we give
Can fill the stomachs
Of those who crave,
Nor portray love
In the way we behave.
Concern for our future
Serves no useful end.
Save when seeking for others
Their needs to attend.

By Bill Twomey

MATHEMATICS OF SHARING

Sharing of mirth doubles a laugh.
Sharing of burdens divides them in half.
Sharing of love adds to goodwill.
Sharing of knowledge, multiplies skill.
Sharing of bread, subtracts from need.
Making all a total that's blessed indeed.

For-Get-Me-Not

When to flowers so beautiful
The Father gave a name,
Back came a little blue eyed one—
All timidly it came,
And standing at its Father's feet,
And gazing in His face,
It said in low and trembling tones,
With sweet and gentle grace,
"Dear God, the name thou gavest me,
Alas! I have forgot."
Then kindly looked the Father down,
And said, "Forget-Me-Not."

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