

It's a regular Tower of Babel

Just before we moved from South Piedmont Ave. to North Piedmont Ave. last October we published a story about how The Mirror-Herald would build a new facility in 1979.

At the time I didn't know that the entire General Publishing Company employ roster would be called upon for ideas about what type of building we would construct. So, what started out as an ambitious, progressive plan suddenly turned into a Three-Stoges comedy.

Garland (that's Mr. Atkins to you) made arrangements for the staff to meet for breakfast and a work session at a neutral point. The day started badly because it was raining so hard the drops were bouncing knee-high off the pavement. Just getting

from our cars into the lobby of the restaurant was something akin to participating in a Grunion Run.

Next, the restaurant was out of everything they had listed on the menu. In frustration, Garland said, "Just bring us whatever you have."

I don't know about you, but I don't particularly like Chili-Con-Carne for breakfast. Not with chocolate milk, anyway.

After sweeping off the table we unfurled sketch pads and prepared to get to work. Problem number three then arose. The room we were settled in was lighted for disco dancing and not eye-straining detailed work.

"Don't worry about a thing," our waitress said. "I'll get the company electrician to rig something up."



TOM McINTYRE

She did and he did. So, with the benefit of two 60-watt bulbs hanging naked from dropceiling scotch-taped to the overhead, we set about sketching our

ideas on how the new building should look.

Garland drew a box, then dissected it with a single line.

"What's that?" Darrell Austin asked.

"This side is for reception, advertising, editorial offices, Johns and the pressroom," Garland said. "That side is my office."

"You're kidding!" Darrell shouted.

"How do you see it, then?" Darrell drew a box with a large circle in the middle. "I think everything should be built around the advertising department. That circle is the advertising department."

"Where you planning to put the newsroom and the darkroom?" I asked.

"Ya'll can find a corner somewhere to work in," Clyde Hill piped up. "After all advertising is the most important thing in the paper."

"They don't call it an advertising newspaper, Clyde," said Gary Stewart.

"They call it a newspaper. Personally, I think sports is more important, so I should have a large office all to myself."

"I hate to say anything," Ken Green, the pressman spoke up, "but I got a story and a

half high press that runs roughly half the length of a football field to locate somewhere in this new building. Then there are the light tables, plate burners and production darkroom facilities."

"Who asked you anything?" Garland said.

"Well, excu-whozee me!", Ken said.

"Boys, Boys!" I implored. I've always seen myself as a great arbitrator. "This is getting us nowhere."

"Arbitra . . . er, I mean Tom is right," Garland said. "Let's start all over again."

He drew another box and halved it with a single line.

And so it went until lunchbreak (More Chili-Con-Carne) and the decision that everyone would draw up his own ideas, then all the drawings would be put together.

The results were a 282,000 square foot structure to house various sidelines businesses as a duck-pin bowling alley, miniature golf course, a pizzeria, a motorcycle repair shop and a savings and loan.

And half of the building is to be Garland's office.

Public shocked at student test failures

"The public will be shocked at the number of North Carolina students failing the competency test, but the failure to adequately fund our schools in the past is now bearing bitter fruit," the North Carolina Association of Educators said today.

President C. Stewart Stafford of NCAE said the group's Board of Directors grappled recently with the competency test — which NCAE has endorsed — and with methods of helping those students who fail the test.

"What came through to me most clearly," said Stafford, "was the group's frustration that so many students will fail and that many of these failures could have been avoided had we been willing to pay the price for good schools."

He said the NCAE Board was particularly concerned that the failure rate will be highest in those areas which do not have the local property value to supplement the state school program.

"We know that children in our richer areas will fail the test, but we know also that the failure rate will be highest where the areas are poorest for that is where students have not been exposed to the broad curriculum they need in order to pass this test," Stafford said.

Stafford said that, on the average, the strongest teachers are also to be found in the richer areas which can afford to pay a salary supplement.

"We get outstanding teachers in all areas, but it is only normal that more of the top teachers migrate to those systems which pay supplements. We have more master's degree teachers in the richer systems. It's that simple," he said.

Stafford said NCAE is pleased that Dr. Craig Phillips has asked that competency test scores not be released until after the Christmas holidays. He said NCAE had feared that many students, confronted with a failure on the test, would not return to school after Christmas.

"If they are back in school and then learn that they have not passed the test, we will at least have an opportunity to do some counseling," Stafford said.

He added that NCAE's Board is "in thorough agreement that the competency test will result in an increase in the drop-out rate," and he said that the state must deal now with that problem.

"The kids still exist, whether they fail the competency test or not. They are still part of our society. I'm afraid many people have the mistaken impression that the competency test will automatically solve our problems. It will only identify them," Stafford said.



Poets Corner

GOD IS NOT DEAD

Some folks say there is no God
Others say He's dead.
I wonder if they ever stop
To think what they have said.
What do they think each morning,
When the sun begins to rise?
What do they think could give it power
To light the Eastern skies?
I wonder what they think could make
The flowers bloom in spring
Or, does it ever cross their minds,
Just how the birds do sing?
I wonder who they think could give
The breath of life to them?
Just how could they ever fail to
Realize it's Him?
I have news for all of those
Who such things would say,
There is a God, He is not dead.
I've talked to Him today.

CALVIN WRIGHT
Kings Mountain

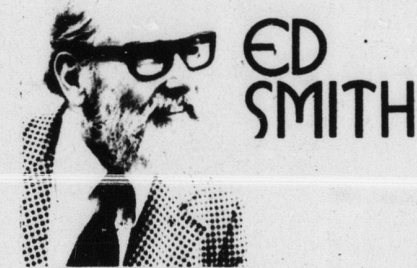
This Week In Tar Heel History

Johnson remarkable tar heel

Andrew Johnson, the seventeenth President of the United States, was born in Raleigh, N. C., December 29, 1794. His story is one of the most truly remarkable ones in American history.

Johnson was born in poverty and orphaned as a small boy. He grew up uneducated, a tailor's apprentice, until he fled this state as a teenager and moved to Tennessee. (He was even a fugitive from justice at the time, since apprentices were bound to their masters for a certain number of years.) His birthplace, a tiny clapboard cottage which has been located behind the inn where his parents worked, has been preserved in Raleigh, though moved from its original location.

The controversy of Reconstruction Period politics and Johnson's impeachment trial on trumped-up charges has obscured the fact



ED SMITH

that he was a better President than generally supposed. His narrow (one-vote) acquittal by the Senate and his later return to that body as a Senator from Tennessee represented a real triumph of the democratic process over political expediency.

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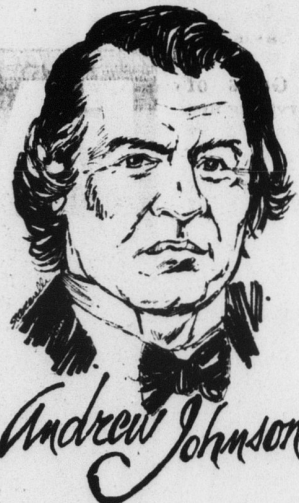
One of the stormiest and most climactic sessions in the history of the North Carolina General Assembly took place on Christmas Eve, 1884. It involved a controversy so bitter that it destroyed the state's one-party political system (the old "Republican" Party created by Thomas Jefferson and others in 1800) and created two new parties, the Democrats and the Whigs. And as is so often the case, it did not involve an issue that was of immediate concern to the average citizens, such as taxes, highways or education. At issue was the question of whether or not the state legislature should be able to "instruct" the state's two U. S. Senators on how to vote on certain issues. Specifically involved was an upcoming vote in the U. S. Senate to remove or retain a censure resolution passed against President Jackson a year earlier. The resolution condemned Jackson for "exceeding" the

power of his office by withdrawing all U. S. government funds from the Bank of the United States (in essence destroying the bank).

One of this state's Senators, Willie P. Mangum, had voted in favor of the original censure motion, and it was well understood that he would resign his seat rather than reverse that vote. The other Senator, Bedford Brown, a strong Jackson supporter, had already announced his intention to vote for removing censure, but the anti-Jackson forces in the legislature (the soon-to-be Whigs) were fighting bitterly to keep Mangum from being "instructed" to join Brown's side.

For over a month the legislature wrangled over the matter, accomplishing little else. On Christmas Eve, long past the usual holiday recess, the battle continued, with repeated efforts by the anti-Jackson forces to adjourn being voted down. Tempers frayed, and the language was later reported, became more raucous than ever before in history. Finally the measure to instruct both Senators passed, by a narrow margin, and Senator Mangum had been given, in essence, a ticket home for his Christmas present.

Ironically, it would be the losers in that night's debate who triumphed in the long run. Mangum later returned to the Senate, where he served as President of that body, and as Acting Vice President during the Tyler Administration (thus making him the highest office-holder from this state in history). And the leader in that historic fight against instructing the Senators, William A. Graham, as a Whig, went on to become perhaps the state's most political figure of his time, Governor, U. S. Senator, Secretary of the Navy and Vice Presidential candidate.



Andrew Johnson

He taught people, not school

"When I'm teaching, it doesn't matter if I'm teaching a fifth grader or a candidate for the Ph.D. degree. I try to show my students something about themselves and how they fit into this world."

Dr. Hollis Rogers, associate professor of biology at UNC-G.

By BOB CAVIN
UNC-G News Bureau

(Special To The Mirror-Herald)

GREENSBORO — Several years ago, when Dr. Hollis Rogers of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro was attending a national teachers' convention he was drawn into conversation by a new acquaintance.

"And what do you teach, Dr. Rogers?" she asked.

"Why, people, of course," he replied. Although brief, the story tells a lot about Dr. Rogers and his long career as an educator.

Rogers, who will officially retire as an associate professor of biology at UNC-G on Dec. 31, estimates he has taught in the neighborhood of 17,000 people during his 32 years on the Greensboro campus.

"I don't teach subjects," he explained. "I use subjects to teach people about life because life is what it's all about."

Although a large portion of those 17,000 people taught directly by Rogers have been college biology students, there have been many elementary and high school students as well as many senior citizens influenced by his deep love of nature and science.

It doesn't matter if he teaches in a classroom or on a nature trail, or if the

student is nine years old or 60, Rogers teaches with the same goal in mind.

"When I'm teaching, it doesn't matter if I'm teaching a fifth grader or a candidate for the Ph.D. degree," he explained. "I try to show my students something about themselves and how they fit into this world."

"After all, biology is the science of life and that is what I try to teach people — something about their lives that will make them a better person," he added.

"And it doesn't matter what age group I teach. I teach the same way — I just use a different vocabulary," Rogers said.

"People operate under the mistaken idea that they acquire brains by getting older, but pre-schoolers are just as smart as they will be when they are 40, 60 or 80 years old."

In frequent demand as a speaker and lecturer on nature topics, Dr. Rogers was a leader in the field of environmental conservation decades before it became fashionable.

Several years ago, Rogers joined other environmentalists in working to save Bald Head Island from development. While that effort was not successful, Rogers does feel that they helped raise governmental awareness of the need to preserve more state parks. Since that time, 20 parks have been added to the state system, he said.

Rogers credits much of what has been done to ecology-minded young people. "The young people today are more interested than ever about environmental issues," he commented. "They are not jumping up and down like they did five years ago, but they are taking action."

In addition to the numbers of people Rogers has taught directly, there are many

others who have been touched indirectly by his work as a leader in ecological conservation, as a photographer and film maker, and as a consultant to the National Science Foundation in an effort to upgrade the quality of biology taught in high schools.

He was instrumental in organizing the present system of high school science fairs in 1955 which has encouraged thousands of students to develop scientific interests before they reach college.

For many years Rogers served as director of UNC-G's Summer Science Training Program, which provided educational training for talented high school students in math, chemistry and biology.

Born in Lynn Grove, Ky., Rogers received his undergraduate degree from Murray State College in Kentucky and his master's degree from the University of Kentucky.

His work toward the Ph.D. degree in biology at Duke University was interrupted by World War II and three years service as a photographer with the U. S. Army Air Corps in the rain forests of New Guinea.

After the war, Rogers finished work on his doctorate and continued his photography in an effort to record the beauty of North Carolina's flowers, forests and wildlife from the seashore to the mountains.

He also produced two films, "Effects of Climate on Vegetation in North Carolina" and "Natural Gardens of North Carolina," the latter of which was based on a book written by retired Wake County botanist Dr. B. W. Wells.

In his UNC-G office, which contains an oak filing cabinet and a maple chair serving as reminders of his first days as a college instructor Rogers is frequently visited by

former students.

"There have been 17,000 successes," he concluded. "If I enriched the lives of each of my students, then everyone of them was a success for me."

"Many of my students were failing when they came to me," Rogers recalled. "But something they learned must have helped because a majority of them went on to become successes at life."

"These are the successes he likes to emphasize, but among the many other honors he has received are the 1974 UNC-G Alumni Teaching Excellence Award and the American Association for the Advancement of Science Award in 1960.

Looking ahead, Dr. Rogers isn't sure how long retirement will last. "Right now, I'm going to try it for a year," he said. "But if I run out of things to do, I might be back to teach one semester a year."

Already his leisure time is being sought, however. He has been approached to become a consultant with an environmental agency and next spring he's taking 25 nursing students on a three-week survival camping trip.

"Plus, I'm going to be doing a lot more nature photography," he promised.

What's your opinion?

We want to hear your opinion on things of interest to you. Address all correspondence for this page to Reader Dialogue, Mirror-Herald, P. O. Drawer 752, Kings Mountain, N. C., 28086. Be sure and sign proper name and include your address. Unsigned letters will not be published.

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