

Opinion

JIM HEFFNER

Guest Columnist



Wild Bill got start by killing a Tar Heel

I know everyone is going to be deliriously happy about this. It's time for my annual cowboy story. Well, not really a cowboy story, but more like western history. My youngest, Jeff, knows western history is one of my interests, so when my birthday rolled around in August he gave me a large book called "The Gunfighters" by James D. Horan.

Horan is the historian who wrote "Desperate Men" around 1949, a book that dealt with many of the famous men of the early west. The popular movie "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" was based on that book. Horan, during the '30s and '40s interviewed many people involved in famous historical events in the west. I don't know when he died, but "The Gunfighters" was written in 1976.

Anyway, as I was reading the book, I found out the shocking truth about Wild Bill Hickok. The noted lawman started out as a cold-blooded killer, and the first man he murdered was a native North Carolinian named David McCandles, a man born in Iredell County, and elected sheriff of Watauga County at the age of 21.

McCandles had owned a sort of relay station called Rock Creek Station in southeastern Nebraska. The station was used as a stopover for homesteaders and a place where Pony Express riders and stage coaches changed horses. As McCandles expanded his enterprises he decided Rock Creek Station was taking up too much of his time so he sold it to the company that operated the Overland Stage and they hired Horace Wellman and his common-law wife to run it. The Wellmans had a youngster from Troy Grove, Illinois named James Butler Hickok who tended their stock.

Hickok had a prominent upper lip that he eventually disguised with a flowing mustache. McCandles, a tough hard-bitten man called Hickok "Duck Bill." Obviously the two weren't on the best of terms.

McCandles found that Overland was in financial difficulty and was going to have trouble meeting their payments to him, so he went to the station to check with Wellman. He took along his 12 year old son Monroe, a cousin, James Woods, also from North Carolina and a farmhand, James Gordon.

Standing on the porch of the station, McCandles got into a heated argument with Wellman, and Hickok shot him down from behind a curtain. Woods and Gordon rushed to McCandles' aid and Hickok also plugged them. The Wellmans ran out of the building, the woman yelling, "Kill them all!" Her husband grabbed a hoe and clubbed Woods to death. Gordon and young Monroe McCandles took to the woods. Gordon was tracked down by Wellman and Hickok and finished off as he begged for his life. Monroe McCandles got away and lived at least into his late '70s. He became a prominent Kansas City attorney.

Back then many of the large Eastern newspapers and magazines sent reporters to the west and the stories they brought back were outrageous. One of them, a man named George Ward Nichols, interviewed Hickok for the February 1867 issue of Harper's Magazine. Hickok told Nichols he killed "all 10" of the McCandles gang with his rifle, knife and pistols. He told the reporter he received 11 buckshot and 13 knife wounds in the fray, and Nichols bought it all. Before all the reporters were finished, McCandles' group was a band of terrorists who once dragged a preacher behind a horse until he was dead.

That Nichols article was the beginning of the Wild Bill Hickok legend, and even when Monroe McCandles told the true story several times during his life, nobody believed him.

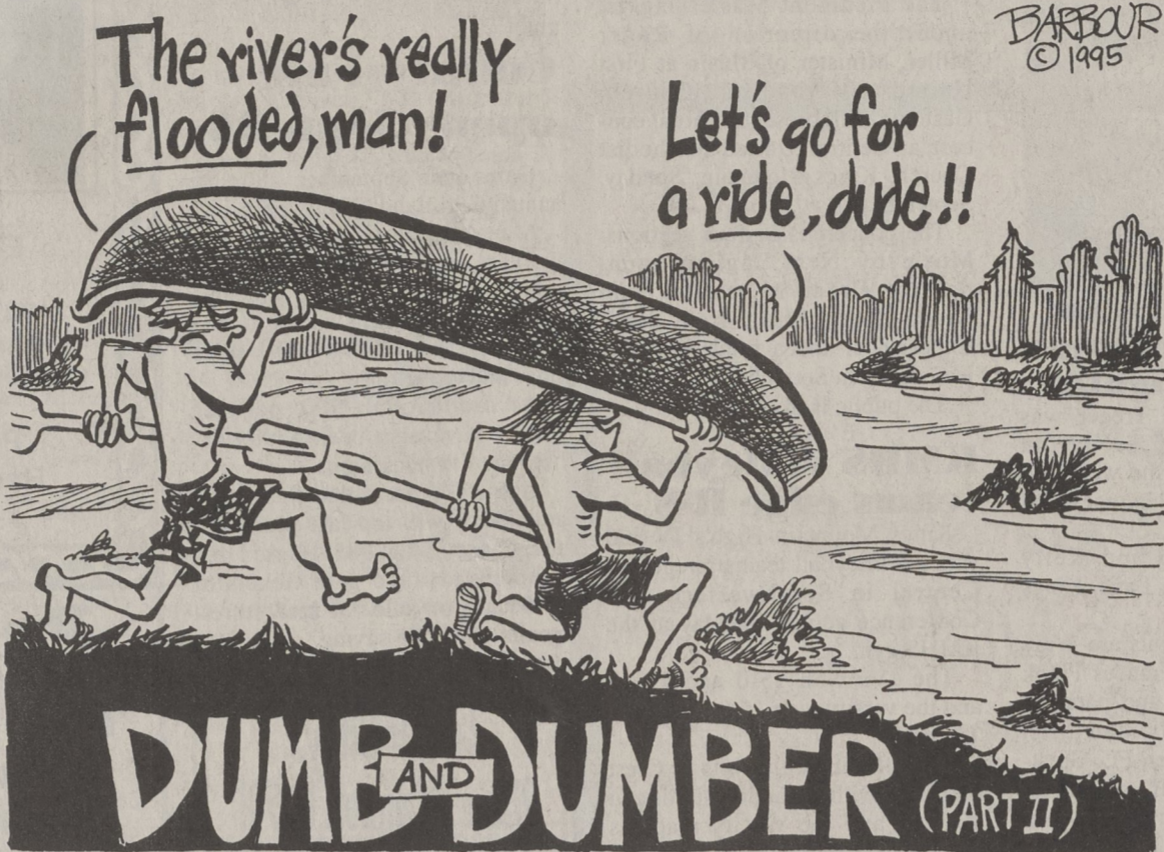
Old Wild Bill was wild all right, and he got his start by killing a Tar Heel.

Kings Mountain Weather Report

(Compiled by Kenneth Kitzmiller)

| | Aug. 30-Sept. 5 | Year Ago |
|---------------------|-----------------|----------|
| Total precipitation | .21 | .95 |
| Maximum one day | .21 (1) | .95 (1) |
| Year to date | 43.11 | 45.01 |
| Minimum temp. | 55 (1,2) | 53 (4) |
| Maximum temp. | 87 (1) | 89 (1) |
| Average temp. | 71.6 | 70.1 |

Cartoonitorial



Help people feel respected

A publication from St. Paul, Minnesota entitled Aha! recently reported a story about the great Scottish theologian, writer and minister, William Barclay.

Barclay was deaf, and often didn't hear comments, especially when the speaker was too far away for him to lip read.

One Sunday on the way out of church, a man came up and said, "Dr. Barclay, I want to thank you for saving my life."

Barclay scratched his head. He couldn't remember ever seeing the man before. "I'm sorry," said Barclay, "but I don't remember."

"About a year ago, one evening at dusk, I was sitting on the steps of the church feeling desperately dejected about my life. I called to you as you walked out of the church and said, 'Life is terrible. I'm going to throw myself in the river and drown myself.' You waved to me cheerily and said, 'Well, the best of luck to you.' That comment brought me back to reality, and today, life is good."

I chuckle to myself every time I hear that story. Because even though it reveals a lighter side of life, it speaks just as well to our lives in the midst of the congregations in which we serve God. Though most of us are not deaf, we sometimes act as if we were. Our minds are cluttered, our agendas full, the cup of life overflows. And when that happens, we are prone to fail to hear the voices of genuine need around us. And unlike Dr. Barclay's experience, the result is not always so rewarding.

Seeking peace and forgiveness

"Why us, Lord" was the tearful prayer of a mother after her rage over the news that her small daughter was molested.

"Our world just came crashing down and I was so angry that I wanted to kill the man," said the woman whose blonde blue-eyed daughter came to her and told her that the friend she trusted had touched her intimately.

The five year-old girl had suffered nightmares for several years, crying out in her sleep "stop, stop."

"We gently eased her nightmares away and thought they were no more than bad dreams," said the pretty housewife whose face shows the anguish she feels about a subject that she had only read about other people facing.

The witches and purple goblins that some children fear in the dark were replaced by a real fear that psychologists are hoping the child will forget with therapy and as the years pass.

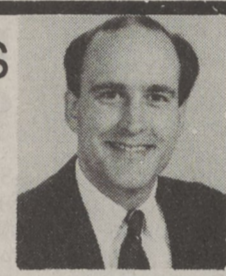
What do you do when an incident like this happens in a close family? How does a parent survive the guilt and the betrayal?

Mothers, unfortunately, can't kiss away all hurt and pain. And the anger doesn't go away.

Grandma was the strong one who held the little girl,

REFLECTIONS on Religion and Life

Rev. Dick Newsome
Pastor
First Presbyterian Church



I think about that especially as the new school year rolls around. In most congregations, the beginning of September brings a few fresh faces to worship. Something about the freshness of the year, the newness of it all, offers "permission" to those who have wanted to get plugged into faith community but haven't done so yet. They might come in order to test an experience about which they have heard. They might come for their children. They might come because a friend attends as well. But whatever the reason, this season is a starting point for many, a time to make the commitment they have always wanted to make. So the task for all of us who are already a part of a congregation is to keep our eyes and ears open. Our task is to be listeners first and speakers second. For only when people feel valued and respected will they trust the words we would wish them to hear. And in the end, our commitment to them would serve not simply the visitor, but the God who is at the center of it all to begin with.

LIB STEWART News Editor



played games with her and made her laugh while Mother cried alone in the bathroom.

Self-blame is an accepted thing, said the counselor who is working with mother and daughter.

But somehow the mother felt she had betrayed the child because she had not seen the signs.

Now the mother watches her child constantly at play with other children.

Mrs. Jones, not her real name, said she continues to pray to find peace in her heart and peace to forgive.

She asks for prayers for her child, her family and for justice in an often cruel world where children are the victims.

BOB McRAE

Superintendent
Kings Mountain Schools



Stress attendance, discipline, academics

In my previous column I reviewed the four goals the Kings Mountain District Board of Education has developed for the 1995-96 school year. I also mentioned that I would devote my next column discussing in greater detail the second of those goals, "Communicate to the school community high expectations for students attendance, ethics and behavior, and academic vigor."

This goal and its understanding by our community is vital to our continued success. We simply do not see the priority being placed on school which we used to enjoy by a rapidly growing number of students and their families. If we are to provide the kind of success in school which this community has come to expect, we must turn this trend around. The Kings Mountain school community holds its schools to a high standard, and it should. In turn it is only fair that the school system can expect the same high standards from those who are our students.

First, let's examine the attendance issue. Our elementary attendance is respectable. In fact out of 1822 public schools in North Carolina, East and West rank in the top seven percent in regards to 1992-95 average attendance. However, our middle and high school numbers are not impressive. Our high school three-year average is ranked 249 out of 339 high schools in the state, and the 1994-95 attendance mark was significantly lower than the previous two years. Our middle school ranks 218 out of 275 middle schools in North Carolina for the three-year average.

I know that both of these schools work diligently to get their students to attend. Parents, you are our key to success. Emphasize regular attendance to your children and place a high priority on it. Don't send them on errands for you during the school day. Don't routinely schedule pleasure trips on school days. Don't allow them to leave school early to go to work. The list goes on. For the 180 days during which school is in session, the highest priority for students, barring sickness or family emergency, should be school.

The Board of Education is also concerned about the behavior of our students. A recent employee survey which we administered showed that over 75% of our employees believe that managing student behavior is increasingly difficult. I frequently hear reports of decreased student respect for other students and for school employees. Unfortunately, I also hear reports of behavior which is, for lack of a better word, common. A growing number of students seem to think they have little accountability for the way they behave.

Our goal will never be to suspend or expel students. However, I want you to know that I have told our principals not to tolerate acts of misbehavior. If repeated efforts at getting students to act maturely fail and if those students are keeping others from getting their education, we will move them out of the school system. Again, this is not our goal, but we will maintain a firm stand on this matter. Parents, please talk with your students about their behavior at school and stress your expectation that they act appropriately while there. We cannot allow a few disruptive students to keep their classmates from learning.

We also are asking that parents stress academic effort. Teaching is a difficult job, made even more so when students are disinterested. We are working very hard to be successful with each of our students. Parents can help us by stressing high expectations for work at school to their children. Too many students are not held accountable by their parents for academic success. Yet, we all agree that education is, more than ever, the key to success after school. Please help us be successful by emphasizing the importance of an education to our students and by making certain, both through observation at home and through conversation with the schools, that your students are working diligently to be successful.

It takes an entire community to raise its children. Our pledge to you is that you will get our best effort - that we will be committed to the education of each student. Please understand that we cannot be successful without your help.

Kings Mountain Herald
Established 1889

Published Thursday at East King Street at Canterbury Road, Kings Mountain, North Carolina 28086
USPS 951-040. by Republic Newspapers, Inc. 2nd Class postage paid in Kings Mountain

| | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Darrell Austin | Associate Publisher | Sarah Griffin | Business Manager |
| Gary Stewart | Editor | Fran Black | Bookkeeper |
| Elizabeth Stewart | News Editor | Debbie Welsh | Production Manager |
| Aron R. Coss | Advertising Director/Circulation Manager | Kimberly Conley | Graphic Artist |
| Shirley Austin | Advertising Representative | Julie Long | Graphic Artist |
| Bill Fulton | Advertising Representative | | |

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: In Gaston & Cleveland Counties: 1 Year \$17.00; 6 Months \$10.00. Other NC Counties: 1 Year \$19.00; 6 Months \$11.00. Outside NC: 1 Year \$22.00; 6 Months \$12.50.

REPUBLIC NEWSPAPERS, INC.

Member North Carolina Press Association

Postmaster: Send Address Changes to:
Kings Mountain Herald: P.O. Box 769, Kings Mountain, NC 28086

Back issues, one month or older, when available, are 70¢ per copy.

FEED OF THE WEEK!

50 lb.
Omolene 100 Sweet Feed \$7.36

50 lb.
Alfalfa Pellets \$6.24

Good thru 9-9-95

BRIDGES HARDWARE AND HOME CENTER
100 S. Cansler Street at East King Street • 739-5461

Is it really worth it? Not the tuition — I'm pretty sure I can swing that. I guess I'm thinking about the study time. And I'm wondering about an "associate" degree. I mean, what is a 2-year degree really worth? Is it as good as a 4-year degree? Is it better? It would be faster, that's a plus. And any degree is better than what I have now which is no degree. And I could always go on to get the bachelor's later. But I guess I could survive without any college. Plenty of people do. Or, I could just do it later. I'm doing ok. But will later ever come? How do I know if it's really worth it?

THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR PREDICTS THAT BY AS EARLY AS NEXT YEAR, 70 PERCENT OF ALL JOBS WILL REQUIRE SKILLS BEYOND THE LEVEL PROVIDED IN HIGH SCHOOL. YET, ONLY 15 PERCENT WILL REQUIRE A 4-YEAR DEGREE.

GASTON COLLEGE HAS OVER 50 PROGRAMS TO GIVE YOU WHAT YOU NEED TO SUCCEED IN THE JOB MARKET OF THE FUTURE. DAY AND EVENING CLASSES, JOB PLACEMENT, AND FINANCIAL AID CAN HELP YOU GET THERE. CALL TODAY. 922-6214

Fall Registration: Tuesday, September 5

GASTON COLLEGE