

TATES: hold Valentine tradition reading love letters



Helen and Oliver Tate leave the church after saying "I do" on Sept. 12, 1948.

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censored. Helen joined Oliver in Cheyenne for a portion of his last tour of duty. She said she hoped to never see a blizzard like the blizzard of 1949 in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

The love letters, tied with a yellow ribbon, were a conversation piece at the couple's 40th and 50th anniversary parties. Friends wanted to read them but Oliver said "no."

Both agree that the secret of a happy marriage involves lots of "give and take and love."

"We've got a good marriage," said Oliver, adding some of the words of the hymn, "Amazing Grace," in the verse that applies: "grace has brought us safe thus far and grace will lead us home."

After returning home from service Tate attended textile school on the GI Bill and passed a postal examination.

Tate retired from the

Kings Mountain Post Office Aug. 1, 1988 after 37 years and four months. His first job on March 1, 1951 was dispatching mail, delivering it by truck downtown and relaying it to carriers. At the retirement of Luco Falls, he was the mailman on the city carrier route for a number of years and then completed his career as a rural carrier on route 4, the Dixon and Bethlehem communities, delivering mail to 650 boxes.

"We sorted the mail in a much different way by case in a sequence of numbers," Tate explained. There were few house numbers. Tate was on a first name basis with his customers. "I knew the people on my routes," he said.

Kings Mountain native Oliver is the son of the late Brooks and Leola Tate. His two brothers- Gene Tate and Fred Tate, also served in the USAF and Fred also retired from the Kings Mountain Post Office as a rural carrier. Born in Gaffney, SC,

Helen moved to Kings Mountain with her parents, Howard and Beulah Robbs at age 10. Both she and Oliver were members of the Class of 1947 at Kings Mountain High School. Helen retired from Mauney Hosiery after 22 years. They are active members of First Baptist Church.

Family is priority for the Tates who have four children: Gloria Tate Hardin, Jim

Tate, Brad Tate, all of Kings Mountain, and Lynn Tate Yates of Dallas; three grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Valentine's Day on Monday is the one day out of the year when we get to show those we care about how much they mean to us.

Obviously for Helen and Oliver Tate love lasts all year long, not only on Valentine's Day.

JOYRIDE: ends after 31 mailboxes are beaten

FROM Page 1

Police questioned the boys and called their parents about the property damage on East Ridge Street, Sherwood Lane, Sharon Drive and Cloninger Street. In several of the incidents, mailboxes were smashed on both sides of a street.

"Their enjoyment (if that's what it was) is not enjoyment for these property owners," said Johnson. He added that "when juvenile charges come forth these boys will face their day in court."

He said that Juvenile Services will determine the charges the suspects will face.

The History of Valentine's Day

Every February candy, flowers, and gifts are exchanged between loved ones, all in the name of St. Valentine. But who is this mysterious saint and why do we celebrate this holiday? The history of Valentine's Day — and its patron saint — is shrouded in mystery. But we do know that February has long been a month of romance. St. Valentine's Day, as we know it today, contains vestiges of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition.

One legend contends that Valentine was a priest during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with families, he outlawed marriage for young men. Valentine defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death.

According to one legend, Valentine actually sent the first 'valentine' greeting himself. While in prison, it is believed that Valentine fell in love with a young girl — possibly his jailor's daughter — who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter, which he signed 'From your Valentine,' an expression

that is still in use today.

While some believe that Valentine's Day is celebrated in the middle of February to commemorate the anniversary of Valentine's death or burial others claim that the Christian church may have decided to celebrate Valentine's feast day in the middle of February in an effort to 'christianize' celebrations of the pagan Lupercalia festival.

In ancient Rome, February was the official beginning of spring and was considered a time for purification. Houses were ritually cleansed by sweeping them out and then sprinkling salt and a type of wheat called spelt throughout their interiors. Lupercalia, which began at the ides of February, February 15, was a fertility festival dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture, as well as to the Roman founders Romulus and Remus.

The boys sliced goat's hide into strips, dipped them in the sacrificial blood and took to the streets, gently slapping both women and fields of crops with the goathide strips. Far from being fearful, Roman women welcomed being touched with the hides because it was believed the strips would make them more fertile in the coming year. Later in the day, according to legend, all the young women in the city would place their names in a big urn. The city's bachelors would then each choose a name out of the urn and become paired for the year with his chosen

woman. These matches often ended in marriage.

The oldest known valentine still in existence today was a poem written by Charles, Duke of Orleans in 1415 to his wife while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London following his capture at the Battle of Agincourt.

In Great Britain, Valentine's Day began to be popularly celebrated around the seventeenth century. By the middle of the eighteenth century, it was common for friends and lovers in all social classes to exchange small tokens of affection or handwritten notes.

By the end of the century, printed cards began to replace written letters due to improvements in printing technology. Ready-made cards were an easy way for people to express their emotions in a time when direct expression of one's feelings was discouraged. Americans probably began exchanging hand-made valentines in the early 1700s. In the 1840s, Esther A. Howland began to sell the first mass-produced valentines in America.



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