

Looking west across Southern RR toward Mountain View Hotel on Railroad Ave. in 1915

Kings Mountain Mirror

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Thursday, March 14, 1974

## editorials

### Something new in education

There is something new in education.

It's something like an old dream come true.

Remember when you sat in the classroom with your behind eating up the seat and your mind slowly drifting into limbo? Remember how you wished you could strangle the guy who invented this course or that course; and never understood what was so earthshakingly important about it?

Students today still do that. But today the student can find relief. The method is called Optional School.

Thirty students at Kings Mountain high are members of the optional school there. Just thirty so far, so you can see the concept isn't for everyone. Not even a handful here when you consider there are 1,200 students at the high school. Consider also there is nothing wrong with the learning capabilities of the minds of these students. For those with learning handicaps there are different systems. We're talking about students who cannot cope with nor function within the regular public

educational system.

Until now these individuals were statistics in a data book. We called them dropouts.

Under the optional school concept these individuals now have a chance to become responsible human beings and contributing citizens.

The cost of this special and additional school is great.

But, how about if the students themselves help defray these costs? That's what they are doing, you know. To enroll in the optional school the student must be employed, and that means he or she must pay taxes and a portion of those taxes foots the bill for public education.

Thirty students out of 1,200. Seems almost numerically insignificant. To the majority of people, the ones who did, do and shall function magnificently within the system, perhaps this is true. But not to the local thirty because they will not be listed numerically nor pigeon-holed categorically. They cannot be.

If the optional school continues to be successful we have hit the daily double; double winners. The student and society.

## late night tv (yawn)

It was quite late.

Everyone else was asleep.

I was wide awake. Having just finished an interesting novel I wasn't ready to hit the sack. Still, it was too late to begin another novel (I am one of those people that prefers reading a book in one sitting). So, I decided to warm up the tube.

Consulting the TV Guide I saw where Johnny Carson was on NBC, one of those taped in England mystery shows was on ABC and the CBS offering was a movie, as was Channel 36s.

The color came on brilliantly and a green Ed McMahon was saying ".....and heerrrrreeeee's Johnny!"

Carson came on wearing one of his own name-brand suits, made a remark about Doc Severinson's outfit, Doc made an equally inane comment. Ed laughed. After Johnny's unfunny monologue viewers were asked to stay tuned to see that night's guests.

"...Ferd Nurd, a man who plays his arm, Stella Bistarlette, who's latest picture is the wov of the porno theaters, and the great Thad Pembroke, in one of his rare TV appearances..."

I flipped the channel to ABC in time to hear and see a guy you wouldn't buy a used car from telling me to contact some company I never heard of if I wanted to get my invention manufactured and into the stores so I could become a millionaire.

I made a note to call the Consumer Protection Agency and again flipped the channel, to CBS. Raymond Milton-Hyde, that famous English actor, was emoting in a scene from the late movie. He was seated in a dunky restaurant beside some artificial flowers when an artificial bee flew out and stung him savagely on the eyelid. He was immediately transformed into a gigantic honeycomb and began dripping artificial, but deadly, honey all over the maître d'hotel....

## journal

by tom mcintyre

I flipped the channel to 36.

An announcer who sounded like it was all he could do to keep from throwing up was telling me how I could become a truck driver, then the same announcer (they only have one at 36) wanted me to rush in my money for some albums or tapes of those great golden oldies of 1812.

I flipped it back to Johnny Carson. ".....pppphhhhhhgggggyyyyyy!" It was Ferd Nurd and he was playing "On A Clear Day" on his arm.

Back to ABC. Melba Schwartz and Stewart Smith-Anthony were emoting in a scene from the taped in England mystery.

"You're such a boor," Melba was saying. "How dreadful of you Agatha," Stewart replied.

"You silly boy. Of course Uncle Cedric removed you from his will."

"Uncle Cedric never liked me." "And with good cause. After all, you set fire to his wooden leg not once, but four times."

"(Chuckle) It was the first time the old boy had moved that fast in years."

"Uncle Cedric failed to see the humor in that vicious act."

"Now who's being a boor?" "Pour me a sherry and do sit down."

"Only if you promise to speak to Aunt Myra on my behalf."

"(Chuckle) Now who's being a boor?"

## when rr was king

By TOM MCINTYRE  
Editor, The Mirror

Mules came first.

Dull-eyed. Stubbornly determined.

Driven from sunup til sundown, day after day, week after week, month after month muscles bulging beneath shaggy, sweat-streaked hides until rivers and streams, fertile land and forest had yielded.

Men replaced mules.

Men with pick and spade flashing in the sun, slashing the soil. Men with backs straining under their labors. Men with croscut and hammer.

The builders.

Builders who destroyed as they built. Who destroyed one way of life and replaced it with another.

The railroad men.

They couldn't have known. Those tillers of the land around White Plains couldn't have known where it was leading. Not those men, their gaunt faces

burned and creased by the wind and sun of 1870. Their universe was measured in acres, their journeys in circles.

They couldn't have known that gleaming steel paralleling to a point in the distance meant people were on the way; men who strutted in hard boots, men with pale eyes that had seen what lay beyond the forest, beyond the mountains, who talked of places and things strange to White Plains; and women. Women who smelled of pink soap and wore meetin' clothes on weekdays.

They couldn't have known people were on the way, carried by a foul-smelling steel monster as big as a barn that clung to those ribbons of steel tighter than a mule to a furrow; a monster that shattered peace of mind like a soul wrenched from living bowels and cast screaming and kicking into the fires of hell.

But in the fall of 1872 they knew.

The Charlotte-Atlanta Airline Railway (later Southern) was in White Plains.

It was a jumping off place.

A few months prior to the coming of the railroad Capt. Freno Dilling tore his roots out of the Cherryville clay and came to this clearing in the wilderness. In short order his sawmill was humming, Virgin timber quickly became crossties for the coming railroad. The captain's deep well furnished water to the engines, later.

And so it began.

The railroad, with its facilities for transporting people and materials, ignited the spark that heated the forge from which was shaped the solid foundation on which Kings Mountain was built.

And it was the railroad that brought the farsighted young men and women to this settlement. And it was their children and their grandchildren and great-grandchildren who found delight in hot-footing it down to the depot to watch the trains coming and going.

And since all the budding businesses were centered around the railroad the depot was a natural hub of activity. Many a youngster, and adult for that matter, idled the hours away sitting in the shade watching the passing parade; the new faces that were quickly to become familiar faces; the wagons pulling to the siding to unload merchandise and materials; drummers in tight suits lugging heavy sample cases filled with modern day miracles of industry.

The railroad.

It was modern before its time.

It was fascinating and it was fearsome. It was a circus; a fourth of July parade.

And it was sad.

In the dead of night it rattled through and long after the tremor of its passing was only a memory its whistle-shrill could be heard echoing across the landscape like a melancholy ghost in search of its mate.

During World Wars one and two the depot was a launching pad for hundreds of young men on their way to adventure and service. Bands played. The older people cheered and remained at home. And waited.

And sometimes that launching pad to adventure became the cradle of heart-break. Some of the young men came home. No bands played. They couldn't have heard them if they had.

But the railroad brought other people to Kings Mountain; people who only came to visit. People Kings Mountians might never have ever had a chance to meet otherwise.

People such as Senator Folk of Missouri, Senator Copeland of New York, Senator George of Georgia, William Jennings Bryan and President Herbert Hoover.

These and many more came to Kings Mountain to help celebrate the anniversaries of one of the most famous battles of America's original fight for independence.

For more years than not the railroad was king.

It was.

Automobiles and airplanes dethroned the king.

Today a train bisecting a community has become an annoyance, especially if the community has neither an under nor overpass. Motorist arrive at their destinations with teeth on edge after waiting, waiting, waiting for a train to clear the crossing.

And the noise is never-racking when you are trying to carry on a telephone conversation.

What do we need with trains today?

We have automobiles. We have airplanes.

We answered our own question recently. We ran out of gas.

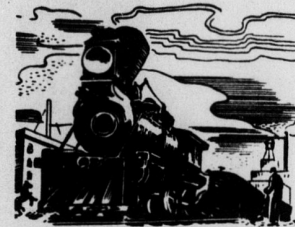
Does that mean the railroad, like a diardictator in exile, is going to make a comeback? Railroad officials are skeptical. Southern, for instance, reports some increased interest, but the SR officials attribute that strictly to the gas shortage. They do not see this as a long term trend by any means.

Passenger revenue constitutes less than one half of one percent in the Southern coffers. The railroad long ago accepted its new role.

Now, Southern, which winds its way from Washington, D.C. to New Orleans, is like all of its sister rail systems - earning the daily bread on freight consignments.

The railroad has become a beast of burden.

Like the mules that helped clear the way through Kings Mountain for that modern invention more than 100 summers ago.



## dialogue

What is the best method for checking a community's pulse? Through an exchange of dialogue. Through a reader's dialogue within these columns his or her point of view will be made clear on whatever issue he or she chooses. The Mirror values your viewpoint. Address your letters to: Kings Mountain Mirror DIALOGUE, P.O. Box 6, Kings Mountain, N.C., 28086. All letters must be signed and include full address and phone number. Pens ready? Then begin.....

### Thanks.....

To The Editor;

I want to thank you for your recent articles concerning the crisis in the Police Department which our city has just gone through. I think we are through the crisis now and much of the credit must go to you for fair and impartial reporting. The manner in which you have handled the matters of city government in the past few months has restored much of the faith in mass-media which, I confess, I had lost during the past few years. The recent interview you published with the new Chief of Police was urgently needed and perfectly timed to give the citizens of Kings Mountain a positive statement by which we might receive encouragement. While others in the communications field were having a "Heyday" by spreading rumor, giving a biased view, not including all the facts and even, in some cases, using the situation for personal advantage, you seemed to have the welfare of all concerned at heart. And I am grateful for that.

I knew the former Police Chief as a fine man whom I believe did a good job while I have been in the city. I also know the present Chief and have confidence that the job will be well-filled by him. I have had personal dealings with many of the policemen on the force in my capacity as a Minister, I have found them to be seriously dedicated men. I see no reason why our police force cannot continue to be one of the finest in the state.

Your positive attitude in reporting and in editorial comments have been refreshing. May God help you to continue to be a force and voice for the good of all the citizens of our city. It is good to read a newspaper that knows the difference between the news page and the editorial page and doesn't confuse opinion with facts in news reporting.

I don't know if your state news association has an award for good citizenship or not but I sure do think you deserve to be recognized for your attempts to bring about a more healthy attitude toward city government in the minds of all peoples.

We have had good leadership in the past in our city, we have men whom I think are serious in their devotion to making our city a better place to live, work and worship. The same is true about the present administration, in my opinion. If all of us were to rally with the officials instead of "nit-picking" and trying to find the mote in their eye, they would be able to do the task they need to do.

Here is hoping and praying that we will put all past hurts, griefs and preconceived ideas behind us and that we will all work together for the good of each other to the Glory of God. After all, we still have open elections and the ballot box is the best place in the world to protest. Disagreements between the people and their elected officials are bound to come, and if we don't think the officials are doing their job properly we have the option of electing some one to take their position. But it just isn't fair to ham-string, pressure, question the motives of and in general fight all an administration tries to do. That isn't even sensible besides not being to the best interests of all the citizens.

Let's get on with going on! Let's all put selfish interests behind us and seek the good of our fellow man.

God bless you in your attempts to report the news fairly and in your attitude of unity and progress which you show in your editorials.

EUGENE W. LAND  
Pastor, Second Baptist Church

### One Good Deed Deserves....

To the editor;

One of the things Girl Scouts are known for is the good deeds they do, but this time our troop would like to thank someone for doing a good deed for us.

A carload of Girl Scouts and leaders on the way from Gastonia to Kings Mountain on a recent Saturday had a blowout. After not being able to obtain help from a nearby service station (which had no customers at the time, but said they were waiting for a pileup of gas business), Johnny Whetstone of Rt. 4, Kings Mountain, stopped and changed the tire for us.

Even though this happens often, we are much appreciative of his "good deed" and would like to see this good news printed.

TROOP 70  
First Presbyterian Church,  
Gastonia