

BACKWARD Glances

20 YEARS AGO

When the election contests were complete at the biannual state Junior Cattlemen's meeting in Montgomery, Randolph County members had won three key state positions. Beth Messer of Wedowee was selected State Junior Cattlemen Queen. Tommie Sue Sledge was elected treasurer and Mark Rasbury was elected third vice-president.

40 YEARS AGO

Mrs. Alvin Boggs is in Clay County Hospital with a gunshot wound in her foot, injured when the gun of a burglar struggling with Mrs. Boggs' son discharged. The robbery attempt was in the Boggs' house west of Folsom and near the Clay County line.

For several months, the management of Canton Mills in Canton, Ga., has been engaged in a comprehensive

study to determine whether or not it could successfully reopen the former Handley Mill in Roanoke. During the course of the study, certain problems developed that it did not anticipate. It's unfortunate that more time is being required to solve the problems than had been expected when the study began. It is expected, however, that these problems will be successfully resolved, perhaps within the next 30 days. If so, the company's management anticipates an official announcement can be made, at an early date, to reopen the mill.

60 YEARS AGO

Corene Sheppard, on trial for the first-degree murder of her daughter, 4-year-old Geraldine Sheppard, was found guilty Monday by Randolph County Circuit Court and sentenced to life imprisonment. Two others charged with murder in this same case, Audrey Holloway and Aubrey

Holloway, entered pleas of guilty Tuesday morning and also received life sentences. Investigating rumors on the death of Geraldine a few months ago, Roanoke, county and state officers learned that the three defendants in the case had taken out several insurance policies on the little girl shortly before her death. Investigation indicated that the three defendants, all of whom occupied the same house, conspired together to poison Geraldine with ant poison.

W.A. Handley Manufacturing Company and Lowell Study Club are installing equipment for a lunchroom in Knight-Enloe School. The very best of equipment is being installed, and lunches will be served regularly for all teachers and pupils. Mrs. L.E. Moore will be supervisor of the lunchroom.

A ready-to-wear store is not unusual, but it is unusual for a college to own and operate one. The

Southern Union College Thrift Store is believed to be the only ready-to-wear store for men, women and children open to the general public that is operated by a college in the South.

80 YEARS AGO

The office of County Agent Hollingsworth has been moved out of the Randolph County Farm Bureau to the first floor of the courthouse and is now occupied by Mashburn's barbershop. The Farm Bureau office and warehouse remains in the same quarters, across the strip south of the courthouse.

The first bale of cotton of this year's crop was brought to Roanoke Wednesday, Aug. 26. It was grown on the farm of Mr. Al Grady near Stroud in Chambers County and was raised by Negro tenant Ab McClendon. The bale was middling and weighed 411 pounds. This bale came about a week later than the

first one last year. The new cotton was bought by Handley Manufacturing Company, which paid 10 cents per pound for it. This was supplemented by local businessmen, making the price \$12.55. The total amount paid was \$51.60.

100 YEARS AGO

A large crowd was on hand Saturday to witness the demonstration of the electrical burglar alarm at Roanoke Banking Co. The entire vault is lined with an electrified steel jacket, which rings the alarm's bells whenever an attempt is made to drill or blast a hole into the vault.

The first bale of new cotton brought to Roanoke this season was received Monday. It was grown by G.J. Boyd on W.H. Knight's place near Welch. The bale weighed 433 pounds and was purchased by T.L. Belcher & Co. for 15 cents per pound.

Letters TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor provide a public form for commentary about issues of public concern. Letters concerning private disputes will not be considered for publication. Letters may not contain false or malicious information. Letters must be signed and dated and include the author's address and phone number. The phone number is for verification purposes and will not be published. Letters may be no longer than 500 words. When space is limited, preference will be given to letters of 300 words or less. Letters may be edited for length and grammar.

News stories lead to good outcomes

Your recent stories on the animal rescues in Roanoke were written with great compassion for the owner and the animals. Readers, as us, understood the 'how' and we felt the owner's anguish. How brave he was to admit he needed to let them move on to another home. We are so glad he was not made out to be a villain.

As shelter volunteers we want you to know 'the rest of the story' as Paul Harvey says. Your coverage resulted in:

1. Many adoptions. For example; so far 8 of the 11 dogs the Randolph County Animal Shelter took in have been adopted!

2. Unexpected donations: We were showing your newspaper at a Leeds veterinary

clinic, and two strangers each handed us \$20 for our animals. Another person walked up with \$10 to give.

3. RCAS experienced a 50-percent increase in 'hits' at www.randolphshelter.org

4. A TV station reporter called for an interview.

5. Our friends at Prestige Pups groomed a few of the animals so they were more comfortable with the heat. (Thanks again, Angie.)

We want each Rescue Angel involved to know how much we appreciate your help, including this paper, which keeps us in the public eye. We are proud to live in such a great, caring community.

Patt High and Kees Collee Wedowee 36278



Rescued dogs from the Roanoke site included (clockwise, from upper left) Casper, Sasha, Mattie, Docker, Della, Lady Dot, Tucker and Annie. Mattie and Docker still need good homes.

Snakes, outhouses & other bits of lore

My niece Melissa out in California posted on Facebook a photo of a gopher snake, and after I had assured her that it was harmless and probably a good thing to have around, she assured me that she--or her husband, Travis--had killed the varmint.

It sent my thoughts down a trail that ultimately led to the outhouse--a piece of Southern culture now mercifully sleeping in the memory of my generation.

The Pacific gopher snake is indeed harmless and even beneficial, though at times it can resemble its nasty cousin, the rattlesnake. Its coloration is similar to that of the rattler, and when it shakes its tail in dry vegetation it may make a rattling sound. But the snake's narrow head indicates that it has no venom glands. It eats a variety of small animals--gophers, lizards, birds, birds' eggs, and even an occasional rattlesnake. So I'd say it's a good thing to have around.

The outhouse is almost extinct in the South, although just yesterday I saw an outbuilding in a respectable subdivision that closely resembled one. It was, I'm sure, a storage shed deliberately designed to look like that backyard comfort station of yore.

What does an outhouse have to do with snakes?

I'll get around to that eventually.

A friend of mine who was born Up North, but moved South as fast as he could, tried to tap into my storehouse of outhouse lore after he visited the Bellamy Mansion in Wilmington, N.C.

The mansion, in downtown Wilmington, was built just prior to the outbreak of the War Between the States. Its owners, expecting the South to defend its "peculiar institution" successfully, provided attractive slave housing on the grounds. It was a neat two-story brick structure that included a toilet facilities. My Yankee transplant friend was aghast to find that the toilet he saw was a five-holer.

"Are we to believe that on any one occasion five people sat... in this room?" he asked me.

A five-hole toilet didn't sound unreasonable to me. I've seen five-stall restroom facilities in hotels, hospitals, college dorms and Interstate rest areas, though the toilets were connected to plumbing, and there were partitions between the seats.

I passed the Yankee expatriate's question along to Braxton Williams, director of operations for the Bellamy Mansion, which is now a museum.

"Officially, we have no record as to how they were used," he said. But he was willing to speculate.

The slave quarters included two toilet facilities, and his assumption is that one was for men and the other was for women. The line between male and female was more rigid than the one between slave and master, he said, so

it's unlikely that the slaves were relegated to coed toilet facilities, especially since there were no barriers between the seats.

The five-holer had three adult-size holes and two smaller ones obviously intended for children. They were pit privies, but there was a ground-level window that allowed slaves to enter and clean them out.

It reminded me of the column I did some years ago on two-story outhouses. They once were common adjuncts to the best of homes in the best of neighborhoods. They actually were attached to the main dwelling, and the architecture was such, as I recall, that privies on separate floors could be used simultaneously. The privies were also used as garbage disposals. There actually was an organization of people who excavated the pits of ancient privies in search of artifacts such as old bottles, toys, combs and other detritus.

My naturalized Southern friend wanted to know the protocol for native Southerners in making full use of two-holers.

I can only answer from experience. If you and your buddy were out playing marbles, or kick-the-can, hide-and-seek or some other engrossing game, and both felt the call at once, you could repair to the two-holer and, sitting side by side, read the funnies and carry on comradely conversation. No interruption in your fellowship. Grown-ups of the same sex could do the same thing during breaks from their chores.

Next question: "Did you ever see a snake in a privy or encounter one going to or from said privy?"

Yes, to both questions.

My family once lived in a shotgun house on a sandy hill overlooking Horse Creek Valley in South Carolina. Since only the very rich had lawns in that day, our yard was covered in soft sand. We could often see the wavy tracks left by snakes as they slithered across the yard, and I occasionally saw them in the act of making tracks. They were definitely rattlesnakes (I don't think we have gopher snakes back East).

On a couple of occasions, I encountered one in the outhouse.

"The tension is mounting," quoth my friend. "What did you do when you saw the rattler in the privy?"

My memory is a little vague, but the usual procedure down South is to do exactly what Travis must have done to that gopher snake out West: grab a hoe or a big stick and kill it.

So I told my friend that I killed the snake. Then I went back to the house and changed my pants.

And that's about all I have to say about that.

Readers may write Gene Owens at 315 Lakeforest Circle, Anderson SC 29625, or e-mail him at WadesDixieco@AOL.com

Suggestions for the commission

Minutes from the Randolph County Commission meeting Feb. 10, 2000 state Commissioner Clark made a motion that when funds become available and projects already set up are finished County Road 65, Rock Stand to Big Springs, and County Road 56 from N4ew Hope to Omaha be set to use federal funds to asphalt. He stressed that these roads are not to be put ahead of any project currently in line to be asphalted with federal funds. Commissioner Amason seconded the motion. All members present voted "aye." Chairman Wysner declared the motion carried.

At the time this was approved, county engineer Jim Sentel was in the meeting. County Road 65 from Rock Stand to Hwy. 22 had previ-

ously been resurfaced using asphalt and federal funds. Commissioner Wright resides on this portion of CR 65. There was no doubt CR 65 was deemed a major connector when it was approved for resurfacing. It is appalling to me that a county commissioner can then say "let's don't do either County Road 65 or 88" or "let the engineer decide."

Mr. Fincher, as you can see by the minutes of the February 2000 meeting, County Road 65 was voted to be resurfaced and hasn't been tarred and graveled since 1989. County Road 88 was approved in July 2008 and was also chip-sealed the same year. There was no breaking in line. Randolph County Highway Department cleared the right of way on CR 65 and CR 88.

My recommendation is let the county engineer and DOT grade the road and make suggestions to the commission which road needs improvements using federal funds, no matter which district it is in.

The commission could be more transparent with a work board listing projects that are going on. List them so that citizens could view the possible tentative completion date, and discuss them at each commission meeting.

A further recommendation would be to eliminate a fifth commissioner that was forced on the county years ago. With four commissioners and the probate judge as the chairman this would eliminate much of the politics that cause unneeded complications. This would also allow each commissioner to get credit for work done in

his or her district.

I further recommend that each commissioner run countywide as the sheriff and probate judge do to eliminate the rest of the undue complications during the meetings. The commissioners would serve all the citizens of Randolph County. These recommendations would possible save the taxpayers \$75,000 to \$100,000 over a four-year period.

One additional thought, the county administration noted Randolph County is \$250,000 in the hole for past projects. Please don't let Randolph County be another Washington, D.C. You can't spend more than you take in.

Larry Clark
Former Commissioner
7646 CR 65
Roanoke 36274

Have pulpit? Will travel

It's good to be back in Alabama the Beautiful for a while.

I grew up in Wedowee, but have been in Texas for most of the last 30 years, and it's great to see that this little town is still a rare jewel.

They still have old favorites like Perry's Foods and the Hub Restaurant, but there are also: great shops all over town, a coffee shop with fried apple pies like Grandma made, hot wings at the Lakeside Marina that will make you get up on a table and dance, and the fitness center is the best I've ever worked out in. Everybody around Wedowee, regardless of age, ought to use that fitness center. It improves the quality of your life, and there is good fellow-

ship while you are there.

Everywhere I go out here, people come up to me and say, "I quail hunted with your daddy," and "I fished with your daddy." Or they will say, "I sewed quilts with your mother," and "I prayed with your mother"--all that blesses my soul. This is home. This is home.

I came back to Alabama for the funeral of a blessed aunt who lived 89 happy years serving the Lord. Then I stayed around for a Steen reunion on top of Cheaha.

During that time, I had many people tell me that between Valley and Oxford there were lots of churches without pastors who needed fill-in preachers from time to

time; so I rented a cabin in the woods next to a landscape nursery north of town, and I'm going to stay around and preach a while.

Thirty years ago, when I resigned the church I was pastoring in Wadley, there were some fancy, self-righteous preachers who said I was a quitter. All I can say to that is that there are two wonderful girls in Texas who grew up knowing their daddy loved them; and that is more important than any sermon I could preach--If a man doesn't take care of his own, he has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.

I preached some in Texas, but mostly I lived and worked wherever I had to, to stay close to my kids. And those two girls

started every game in four years for TCU women's basketball, and their senior year was the greatest in school history; 25-8 with a win over Penn State in the NCAA Tournament--but I'll stop before I start braggin'.

If any churches need a fill-in preacher, I don't care what denomination you are. I don't care what color you are. I don't care if you watch CNN or FOX. I don't care if you pull for Alabama or Auburn--I'll pray hard, and preach the Gospel with everything in me; and I won't charge you a penny for it.

I wish I could preach two times a day for the rest of my life.

Mike Sutton
pilgrim249@aol.com

Farewell to the county's veterans

I am writing this farewell letter to inform the veterans of Randolph County that as of Wednesday, Aug. 31, I will no longer be serving as the County Veterans Service Officer. Due to personal reasons beyond my control, I am unable to fulfill the duties of a

service officer. The last four years have been very rewarding for me. It was a pleasure and an honor to serve as Randolph County's VSA. I will truly miss all of you.

Beginning Friday, Sept. 2, Rochelle Osbourn will be providing services for this

county. Her office hours will be 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. on Fridays. She is a great service officer who also provides services for Clay and Cleburne counties. I encourage you to phone the office to confirm dates and times. The number is (256) 357-

4775.

Please know that you have made a tremendous impact on my life and I pray that I have left an impact on yours as well.

Lynn Houston
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Wedowee 36278