

2005

## Stories to Warm the Heart Part Two

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### Recommended Citation

Mabry, Kemp N. and Phillips, Tony, "Stories to Warm the Heart Part Two" (2005). *Bulloch County Historical Society Publications*. 16.  
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# Stories to Warm the Heart

Part Two

Based on Articles by

**Kemp Mabry**

Originally Published in the  
***Statesboro Herald***

**Edited by Tony Phillips**

**Published by Phillips McDuff Public Relations**

**Auspices**

**Bulloch County Historical Society**

**Post Office Box 42, Statesboro, GA 30459**

**2005**

# Stories to Warm the Heart

## Part Two

From Part One; edited by Dr. Delma E. Presley:

*Kemp Mabry's reputation as a local historian is well known. His columns have given our readers warm recollection, insight and humor. I will always admire his knowledge, sharp wit and talent for holding the reader.*

Randy Morton, Publisher  
Statesboro Herald

*A rare person who has insight into how people are linked together. He remembers families, places and events, and he invites all of us to share in his stories.*

Betty Lane, Professor Emerita  
Georgia Southern University

*For many years I have been a great admirer of Dr. Kemp Mabry. He is without peer when writing stories that interest a large range of people. To have these columns preserved will be a great contribution to Bulloch County History and a well earned tribute to their author.*

Isaac Bunce  
Provenance  
Statesboro

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# *Funny*

## **Malapropisms**

What did he say? It was almost correct but not quite. It was a malapropism which is part of our languish ~ even for the one who made a speech and received a standing probation.

He should have gone to the yellow cautious light and turned left. The highway petroleum was blowing his syringe!

After my mother had her second cadillac operation, she said that she hoped she wouldn't have to go through that again. (She had only two eyes.)

We try to be patriotic, some singing, "My country tis a bee, sweet land of livery." Others sing, "God bless America...guide her through the night with the light from a bulb."

I don't know if it is sung on odd or evil days. (Adapted from Nelson Price in Marietta Daily Journal.)

## **From the inner sanctum**

And then there are church people who have trouble getting their words in proper order and grammatically correct. From the depths of Statesboro Crybaby's inner sanctum come these church bulletin excerpts.

"Don't let worry kill you. The church can help."

"Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community."

"For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs."

"Pastor is on vacation. Massages can be given to the church secretary."

"Weight Watchers: Please use the large double door at the side entrance."

"At the evening service, the sermon topic will be 'What is hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice."

"Thursday night potluck supper. Prayer and medication to follow."

### Speeding along with Pops

I was involved in a high-speed chase in a city in another state. We had made the obligatory appearance at a wedding and were further obligated to attend the reception somewhere across the city.

A young couple offered to lead us to the wedding reception. We were barely seated in our car when our leader shot out into the street in his little car. We followed in hot pursuit.

Soon we found ourselves on a busy turnpike, not wasting any time. The leader didn't want us to be late for the reception. We were traveling 60 mph. 10 miles over the legal limit.

Then, I suppose he thought we were driving too slow. I noted that we were now traveling 70 mph and our leader was pulling away from us.

It had been 30 years since I had been in that city. It was just a big town back then. Now it was a sprawling metropolis and I had no idea where we were going.

Suddenly, our leader found an exit and zoomed off the turnpike, never looking behind to check our progress. You remember the famous admonition. "Don't look back, somebody might be gaining on you." We arrived at the reception site breathless and all shook up.

Before we could find a parking space, our leader had bolted from the little lead car and both he and his companion disappeared. I never saw them again to issue dubious thanks.

Did I dream of this? Was he a ghost driver? Was I fortunate not to have spent the night in the clink for excessive speeding?

After the reception, we somehow found our way back to the motel. Fortunately, we were on the ground floor. I am still haunted by the Winecoff Hotel fire.

In a more relaxed moment, a young bronze beauty came into view. She was dancing with the laundry cart! This I had not seen before. (Fred Astaire had been known to dance with a broom or was it Gene Kelly who danced with a broom?)

She came closer and I realized that she had a transistor radio on the cart. And it was a really good rhythm she had going.

I asked her the name of the song. "Let the music begin." she said. "It makes the work go easier."

"And how are you, Pops?" "Pops?" So many new things were happening in the city!

I asked where she was from. "Jamaica," she said. Well, they do have their own brand of rhythm in the Caribbean, but "Pops?"

The next day, she came by again. I was still shook up from the day before and it showed. "Hey Pops," she said. "You forgot to close your car door!"

Pops!

### This old girl was a pet

Annabelle and several of her children gathered around us. She is 29 and already beginning to show gray in her sleek dark hair.

We were surprised by the attention they rendered us during our brief first visit to the Raymond Todds' farm at the edge of Bulloch County. The Todds once had 28 living there, the most in Georgia. Now only 19 reside with them.

Although, they each define the word "stubborn," they approached us to offer friendship. With the exception of a young one who stayed away from us and on the other side of his mama, they all came around to acknowledge our visit. They all wanted attention from us.

There are more than 20 references to them in the Bible, mostly in the Old Testament. Moses denied wrong doing. He said, "I have not taken one ... nor have I hurt one."

We asked about the black markings on some of their coats. Raymond Todd related the legend that when Mary rode into Bethlehem, the black cross appeared on the coat. The cross is on dark coats but it is evident only on lighter coats.

Mr. Todd raises donkeys to sell. It appeared to us that many of his donkeys are pets, especially the older ones. Indeed, they make very good pets but all of them can be extremely stubborn. They have to be handled with diplomacy.

Smart donkeys!

# Wonders of Nature

## Amicalola Falls beckon every season

Fifty years ago, my parents and I, together with Dr. and Mrs. J.W. Stanford, embarked on one of many trips which my father originated for my education and our enjoyment.

The object of our search was Amicalola Falls in Dawson County, Ga. In those days, much of the north Georgia mountain area had not been discovered by Atlanta suburbanites. The sturdy mountain folk had been mostly isolated for nearly 200 years. For that matter, counties adjacent to Atlanta were very rural, and there were only 270,000 people in the city itself. All Georgia was rural and the north Georgia mountains were very remote.

There we were in a Model A Ford car traveling north on the recently paved "Canton Highway" (State Route 5). We turned right at Jasper, resisting the temptation to ask origins of Wolf Scratch. Ga., Emma Post Office, and Juno, and other colorful placenames. We traveled toward Dawsonville on a dirt road.

Upon reaching the intersection with the Ellijay ~ Dawsonville Road, we found ourselves in The Meadow, pronounced locally as "The Medder." We obtained permission to drive our Model A Ford through the hall of a barn and into the owner's pasture to its farthest corner.

We alighted and proceeded on foot. There were no roads anywhere near the spectacular Amicalola Falls. Dense growth of mountain flora was everywhere.

Amicalola Creek runs along the top of a mountain, suddenly falling off through several cascades over 700 feet much higher than Niagara but carrying a tiny fraction of the volume of the Niagara River, of course.

I climbed the left side of the falls, stopping about half way where I turned and tried my newly learned Boy Scout skill with semaphore flags, signaling the adults below. Fortunately, I did not try to climb on the rocks of the Falls ~ themselves.

Seven persons have fallen to their deaths doing just that.

It was late Sunday afternoon. Night comes early in the mountains. Besides, it looked like rain. We returned via pasture to our little Ford auto, drove back through the man's barn, thanked our "host" and made our way back onto the red clay road.

It was now raining in earnest.

In those days, we learned to drive on dirt roads, in and over deep ruts in rainy weather ~ often getting stuck in the mud. Now it was night and we were stuck in the ditch on a small hill when another car approached from the rear but could not pass. Four husky mountaineers literally lifted our little car out of the ditch and set it on the road, refusing offers of pay.

We made our way back to Jasper and the hard road. The rain pounded on the car and the road. Then on the side of the road we saw a car in the ditch and a man beside it, flagging us.

Grateful for the help we had received we stopped in time to see an inebriated mountaineer with his jug crooked under his arm. My father asked the man to step back so he could drive off the pavement, which he did 65 miles away in Marietta.

## PART II

Amicalola is the highest waterfall east of the Mississippi River. Amicalola Creek (early maps listed Amicalola River) plunges 729 feet in seven cascades, flowing through state-owned Amicalola Corridor to the Etowah River. The state owns 4,715 acres along the 13 mile Amicalola River Corridor.

As with many placenames in north Georgia, Amicalola is a Cherokee Indian word. It means "tumbling waters." (For interesting background on the Indian pronunciation and on Cherokee Bread Town downstream, see John Goff's "Placenames in Georgia," University of Georgia Press.)

All seasons are beautiful in Amicalola Falls State Park.

There are 701 acres in the park now, with spring and summer wildflowers, dogwood, mountain laurel and rhododendron in abundance.

Within the past few days, north Georgia leaf tours have hit their peak. Traveling north on I-75, take I-575 north of Marietta which becomes the Appalachian Highway north of Canton. (Be prepared for a dazzling dis-

play of fall colors when the Blue Ridge Mountains come into view outside Canton on I-575.) Proceed to Jasper. Take Highway 53 east. Signs point the way to the Falls. Until recently these signs spelled Amicalola three different ways! Turn left on Highway 183, then left on Highway 136 and right on Highway 52. "The Medder" will be on your left.

The Falls are 85 miles north of Atlanta and 2,600 feet above sea level. Mailing address: Amicalola Falls State Park, Star Route, Dawsonville, GA 30534. Telephone (404) 265-2885 or Atlanta headquarters (800) 342-7275.

There are four well established hiking trails in the Falls area. The East Ridge Spring Trail is the seven mile approach to the 2,052 mile Appalachian Trail beginning at Springer Mountain, GA. The northern terminus is Mount Katahdin, Maine.

The Appalachian Trail is the brainchild of Benton MacKaye, forester, philosopher and dreamer who, in 1921, envisioned a footpath along the crest of the Appalachian Mountains. It is now maintained by several government agencies and volunteer hiking clubs and coordinated by the Appalachian Conference.

Camping and picnicking are permitted in designated areas at Amicalola. Please clean up when you leave. I have had my watchful eye on Amicalola more than 50 years.

It is one of God's great gifts to us.

### **Jambo!**

That's Swahili for the welcome Phyllis Thompson and her parents, Dr. and Mrs. Frank Hardeman, received upon their arrival in Nairobi, Kenya, the former British East Africa.

They had flown from New York to Rome, Italy, to Nairobi in anticipation of the experience of a lifetime. Dr. Hardeman, a Savannah surgeon, had just observed his 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a physician.

On to Nakuru their first day in Kenya, Phyllis' reaction to the flora ~ "overgrown houseplants" ~ at the Safari Complex was repeated many times during their 10 day trip.

"Out of Africa" was written here by Karen Blixen under the pen name

of Isaac Dennison.

Kenya sits astride the Equator which Phyllis and her parents crossed many times during their visit but the first crossing merited the presentation of the traditional Crossing Certificate.

On to the Aberdare Region in the Southern Hemisphere where Princess Elizabeth (now Queen), on a royal visit, learned of the death of her father, Great Britain's King George VI.

Phyllis said that they stayed in the Ark in the Aberdare. It was a large wooden building shaped like Noah's Ark with meager overnight accommodations. The people were inside and the animals were outside.

And, oh those animals! A natural salt lick attracted zebra, leopard, onyx, gazelle, the majestic giraffe and on Phyllis' birthday, July 26, the annual migration from Tanzania of two and one half million wildebeest!

There were observation decks to view those magnificent creatures ~ no camera flash allowed. "Observe but do not attempt to interact with the wildlife."

"Africa assaults the senses," Phyllis Thompson now knows. While in Kenya they saw the Big Five of big game hunters: rhino, elephant, buffalo, leopard, and lion; they also saw hippo, all in the wild.

In semi-arid Samburu Game Reserve, when they drove onto the plain, they were told, "When you have seen this, you have seen Africa," including the fast cat, the cheetah.

North of Nairobi, in the Northern Hemisphere, they gained altitude to 7,000 feet at the Mount Kenya Safari Club with Mount Kenya (elevation 17,000 feet) looming in the distance.

Although Africa is still considered the Dark Continent by some, at the Safari Club in Nanyuki, fires were lit each evening in the suites at 6 o'clock, the signal to dress for dinner.

Another assault on the senses was the menu at the Carnavore Restaurant where they were served domestic zebra, ostrich, eland, lamb, pork, and chicken!

They flew over the northern fringe of the romantic Serengeti Plain and the legendary Great Rift Valley where the Leakeys and others have made



stupendous anthropological and archaeological discoveries.

Landing on the deep red murrain (clay) runway, they watched the Kenya sun rise. More assault on the senses!

Traveling with them was Willie, their guide, Willie Gitonga ~ knowledgeable, personable, professional ~ who spoke British English quite well.

He soon discerned his passengers' personality types. Mrs. Phyllis Giles Hardeman, was fascinated by African birds. Willie identified each of them for her, then jokingly threatened to "put her out" of the van into the bush if she failed to identify the next bird they saw!

Phyllis Thompson, the daughter, provided these tidbits: the leopard kills for adventure, other animals kill for food. The wind shaped the flat topped thorn trees, the giraffe pruned them. She saw the baboon and the water buffalo. She visited the Mount Kenya Animal Orphanage where a great variety of species have been saved, including the rare bongo.

Then there were the all Masai nomads ~ cattle herders ~ who carry all of their possessions on their backs. Phyllis visited one of their huts and found it very sparse and primitive. (She sees more "things" in a Statesboro store than in all Kenya.)

Their visit was coming to a close. "The sights and scents had pushed through the light air" into their memories.

To dear, charming Willie Gitonga and all "out of Africa," it was: Kwaheri (Swahili) and goodbye.

Would she like to return to Africa: Phyllis' instant response was "Yes! Yes!"

## Greatness | Personal

Creative genius 400 years ahead of time

On May 2, 1519, Leonardo da Vinci died in Ambrose, France, where he had lived his last years under the patronage of Francis I, young King of France. He was 67.

He is best known for his rendition of the Last Supper painted on the refectory wall of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan, Italy. When Lila Blich saw the painting in 1937, it was in a sad state of deterioration which began shortly after Leonardo finished it in 1488.

In 1943, an air raid reduced the monastery to rubble. The Last Supper was protected by sandbags but moisture caused further deterioration. A heroic restoration effort was made from 1946 to 1954. Now with hi-tech and meticulous attention to detail, the Last Supper is in its seventh restoration, about 50 percent complete.

Leonardo was a multiple genius whose resume would show competence and ingenuity surpassing others in a dozen established and developing fields.

His exquisite sketches and descriptions written to be read in a mirror are found in his notebooks which have survived. There were three to five thousand pages when he died in 1519, showing him to be not only the pre-eminent artist and engineer of the High Renaissance but possessed of perhaps the greatest intellect of all time.

Yet, he is said to have asked God's forgiveness "for not using all of the resources of spirit and my art."

He painted La Gioconda, the Mona Lisa, now in the Louvre, Paris. I've seen her - probably the most famous painting in the world. Have you?

His airplanes (ornithopter with flapping wings) never flew but the Georgia Southern Museum had an exhibit of models of some of his machines made from sketches and descriptions found in his surviving notebooks.

Several of his mechanical devices are quite similar to ones in use today. He was 400 years ahead of his time.

I made the speech opening the exhibit at Georgia Southern Museum.

### Dead River Church/Dead River Cemetery

On July 4, 1976, the Longpond Baptist Church in Montgomery County unveiled the historical marker in Dead River Cemetery, two miles south of Longpond.

Dead River Church stood by the cemetery from 1802 to 1877 when it was moved to Longpond. It had been named for the river which at one time had been part of the Oconee. The Oconee's course changed after several winter overflows and left about two miles of channel which made sort of a fishing lake but was called Dead River.

Dead River Church was available for preaching by a minister from any denomination on a first come, first served basis.

Among the ministers who preached at Dead River were Wilson Conner, a Revolutionary War Captain who traveled 35,000 miles on horseback, preaching and dying in the pulpit as he had wished.

Patrick Hughes Mell, preacher, educator (UGA), former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, preached at Dead River.

Another preacher and educator was John. G. Ryals who was a former president of Mercer University.

Revolutionary soldiers buried in Dead River Cemetery are Captain Wilson Conner, Richard Cooper, William Ryals and possibly others.

#### Ed Abercrombie: He was a friend to man

"He was a friend to man, and he lived in a house by the side of the road."

They were pin pals ~ he in Forsyth, Georgia and she in England. After several years of correspondence he asked her to come to America and marry him. A friend went to New York and met her as she got off the ship. "If this doesn't work out, I'll pay your passage back to England," the friend told her.

But it did work out and they were married in the early 1930s. They had one son, Edward A. Abercrombie, who sat in his mother's lap as she read to him. She read to him from an early age, engendering a lifelong love of books and reading. Sadly, Mr. Abercrombie died when Edward was eight years old.

Ed Abercrombie died January 7. I thought I knew him rather well for about 35 years. I saw him step out to receive one of the first, if not the very first, masters degrees in old McCroan Auditorium in the early 1960s. We were in the same masters program that began in Georgia Teachers College and soon was in Georgia Southern College when the name changed.

A few years later, he was named "Alumnus of the Year," one of the first graduates to receive such an award.

From 1966 to 1980, I saw him almost every day as he worked in the Georgia Film Library which he soon headed. I learned this week that it was there that he had given John Gould a job and encouraged him to attend college which he did, giving Ed credit for making it possible. And there was Jimmy Sweat whom Ed hired earlier to work in the Film Library.

Ed attended Indiana University at Bloomington for advanced graduate work in Educational Media. When Walter and Gene Brown came down for Walt to interview for a job at Georgia Southern, Ed sat with Gene as she waited and then borrowed a Statesboro High School Yearbook from Dot Youngblood for them to take to their teenage daughter so she could learn about SHS and familiarize herself with student names. When she came, the students accepted her and it was the best year of her high school career ~ rather unusual for a student transferring just before entering the senior class!

I asked Margaret Prosser and Cleo Mallard, who taught many years alongside Mary Edith Abercrombie at Marvin Pittman School, "What about Ed Abercrombie?"

Cleo said, "Ed was Ed!"

William Shakespeare said it somewhat differently:

*"This above all: to thine own  
self be true,  
And it must follow,  
As the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false  
to any man."*

Ed was a man of firm convictions, I knew. I was glad to endorse his nomination for the Deen Day Smith Service to Humanity Award.

Tommy Singletary said "Ed was a unique Southern Christian gentleman with mechanical prowess and a flair for helping others." For example, when Charlie Robbins' John Deere tractor was in a fire, people like Walter Brown said it was a lost cause. But Ed hauled it over to his house; repaired it, refurbished it, until it shown like a display model. I understand Bob Whelchel has it now.

I thought I knew Ed but I didn't know about the obsession with John Deere tractors sorely needed help!

I did know of his fascination with the camera. He developed a 45-minute slide/tape program at his own expense which the Bulloch County Historical Society reproduced for every school and library in the county. He entitled it, "The Story of Bulloch County" and he, personally, showed it more that 50 times to groups in this area. It won the Superintendent's Award for Best Contribution to Education that year.

Also, I did not know that his neighbors had long ago dubbed him the "Mayor of Country Squire," because he would appear at a neighbor's house ready to help with jobs for which he had a special knack like repairing mailboxes. No wonder the neighborhood looks so good!

The story came to me that Tom Ansley was trying to erect a backboard in his yard without much success. Ed appeared with his truck and tools. The way I heard the story, Ed sent Tom for a posthole digger. Ed took charge of the construction job and when everything was set to plumbline perfection, Tom gave Ed the posthole digger!

Folks living in Country Squire will most certainly miss their "Mayor."

Ed sensed when people were hurting and needed support. He and Mary Edith reached out to widows and those recently bereft. Johnie McCorkle told me that he saw Ed downtown one day after Johnie's wife Ruby had died. Ed asked how Johnie was getting along. Then Ed said that he, David Ward and Walter Brown met each Monday at 9 a.m. for coffee at McDonald's. "You come and don't be late," Ed admonished Johnie.

Johnie sort of dismissed the idea but come Monday morning, he met with the fellows and has continued. The association brought him through a sad time of his life, Johnie said. "Ed Abercrombie? He was the truest, most dependable. He was my number one friend."

I thought I knew Ed Abercrombie. He served on the Board of the

Directors of the Bulloch County Historical Society for many years. We worked together in the Bulloch Retired Teachers Association.

Many years ago when the Reverend J. Robert Smith retired as pastor of First Baptist Church here, I saw Ed at work compiling a beautiful scrapbook of photographs Ed had accumulated during Dr. Smith's pastorate.

Ed would see a need and meet the need on his own, often at his own expense and just as often without recognition.

He served a term as president of the Library Board but it was as an individual helping others that he excelled.

It was Homer who said, "He was a friend to man, and he lived in a house by the side of the road."

It was Sam Walter Foss who elaborated:

*"There are hermit souls who live withdrawn  
In the place of their self-content;  
There are souls like stars, that dwell apart,  
In a fellowless firmament;  
There are pioneer souls that blaze their paths  
Where highways never run ~  
But let me live by the side of the road  
And be a friend to man."*

That was Ed Abercrombie (September 8, 1932 ~ January 7, 1996).

### **King sets record in annual Iditarod Dog Sled Race**

The 21<sup>st</sup> Iditarod Memorial Dog Sled Race began March 6, 1993. Ten days, 15 hours and 38 minutes later, Jeff King brought in his 11 dog team to Nome to win the "Last Great Race on Earth" and set a speed record, half the time of 20 days it took in the first race in 1973.

The Iditarod memorializes the volunteer mushers who relayed life saving serum from Nome to Iditarod, Alaska, to save the town from an epidemic of diphtheria in 1925.

Susan Butcher has won four times and Rick Swenson has won five times. It was Jeff King's fourth attempt in the race for gold and glory.

This year, 68 mushers began the race over the Southern Route which is

used on alternate years. It is 1,160 miles from Anchorage to Nome, equivalent to the distance from Orlando, Florida to New York City.

The 1993 winner, Jeff Kind, was quoted as saying, "There's something mystical and magical about the Iditarod."

I was interested in the native Alaskan Indian girl, Beverly Messick, who had appeared on Robert Schuler's Hour of Power several weeks ago. In her Alaskan village, the Episcopal Church bells ring for each musher who reaches that checkpoint, day or night. As a child, Beverly wanted to "hear the bells ring for me."

Unfortunately, she was frostbitten and had to scratch the race, according to a representative of Alaska Video Publishing Co., with whom I spoke on March 19. I also called the Iditarod Trail Committee office but they said that only 21 of the 68 mushers had reached Nome by March 19. It was not clear to them or to me if Beverly Messick might be able to resume the race, but the Iditarod lantern was still burning on Front Street in Nome.

In April, a video was made available on the 1993 Iditarod Race. I placed it in the Statesboro Regional Library. I hope you will enjoy it!

### **Louise Hodges Morton**

A great lady passed recently in Gray, Ga., where she had lived for 64 years. A native of Effingham County, she attended Locust Grove Institute a couple of years after my father matriculated there. She was graduated from Tift College at Forsyth. She obtained a master's degree from Mercer University long before I finished my AB there.

She taught at Jones County High School, Gray, for 33 years. She was Jones County Star Teacher a couple of years before I received the honor in Bibb County. She was a columnist for the Jones County News, writing much longer for that paper than I did when we lived in Gray.

What may not be generally known is that there are dozens of eminently successful men and women who got their first boost out of mediocrity by Mrs. Louise Hodges Morton who saw possibilities in them when they were high school students.

One young woman living in a western state now has her doctorate. She knows what Mrs. Morton did for her. When the sad word came that her

mentor had gone to her eternal reward, she knew she must come back for the funeral.

With only a few hours remaining before the service was to begin, the young doctor left her office without returning to her home to change clothes. She drove straight through and arrived in time to pay respects and say goodbye.

In Statesboro, we talked with Mrs. Morton's sister, Mrs. Walton Blackburn, who served through her church the shut-ins of the Extension Department and as a Gray Lady at Bulloch Memorial Hospital. Mrs. Morton's niece, Carolyn Blackburn Hogan was in my Sunday School Department here when she was a high school student.

Thirty years ago wife Evelyn taught at Jones County High School with Mrs. Morton, Mrs. Blackburn's sister, the great lady who died at 87, active and involved to her very last day. What a marvelous legacy!

### **Memories ease the pain of loss**

I lost two of my best friends last week within a few hours of each other  
~ Isabel Sorrier and Sarah Mabry.

### **Isabel Sorrier**

Isabel died late Saturday afternoon of March 4, 1995, after a long and painful illness and several surgeries. She had served as library director for nearly half a century.

Back in the 1950s, she reached out to me. She thought libraries should be available to all citizens, young and old, black and white.

Her lifetime theme was service. Compassion was her big thing, not computers. She went beyond the call of duty to encourage young people and people needing a boost. She encouraged them to read and to grow into good citizens. There are many, many Bulloch County citizens who are even now expressing gratitude for her service.

Her work extended into four other counties in the Regional Library area (Bryan, Candler, Emanuel and Evans) as well as Bulloch. She built 10 library buildings during her career in this region.

A standing joke was what we called her "Cigar Box Budget." Somehow she managed to finance library operations even to the point of investing

her own funds in a worthwhile project.

Once, in her later years, she asked me to drive her in her car to Sylvania one cold winter day. Ice on the bridges on U.S. 301 had caused an accident on almost every bridge from Statesboro to Sylvania. We made the trip without incident, helping to dedicate a new library not even in her region.

The warmth of her personality thawed many an icy situation, sometimes with great humor. At her 40th anniversary luncheon, I was asked to present her with a real cigar box which we had filled with donations for one of her countless creative library enhancing projects. "We love you, we love you, we love you!" I exulted.

Monday at the graveside service, Dr. John Bressler, her pastor, told of his first meeting with her in her office when she praised her church, the people in Bulloch County and the library. She gave him a tour during which she touched the books, touched the racks and touched the people, obviously with great love. John Paton, who was the very effective reference librarian until Friday, March 3, was one the mourners. He gave Isabel great credit for training him for his 12 years as a librarian. On Isabel's tour with Dr. Bressler, "I was one she touched," John said. When he learned of her passing, after a long pause, he said, "It is not too much to say that I loved her."

### Sarah K. Mabry

Born on Valentine's Day in 1903, my mother was a homemaker. She never worked a day outside the home. She never made a speech in her life. She was very pretty as a girl and would have been the belle of the ball if she were not so shy.

She grew up on a farm in Cobb County. Some of her ancestors had come to Cherokee Territory before 1812. One was kidnapped by Indians when she was four years old. Mother's "hobby" was reading. I probably owe her much for my own passion for the printed word.

She supported my talented, energetic father, staying in the background. When he died in 1978, she had a hard time finding a purpose for her life inasmuch as she had always thought she would go first due to her poor health.

She discovered purpose in the Scripture, "In everything give thanks: for

this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." Thessalonians 5: 18.

She read the Bible for instruction and especially for comfort in her later years. As she grew older, she had a lightweight New Testament and Psalms rather than the whole Bible which was too heavy for her to hold.

Every time I was away from home, especially at night, she always told me that she was praying for my safe return. Now who will pray for me?

A favorite of hers was from the second chapter of First Corinthians.

*"...it is written,  
eye hath not seen,  
nor ear hear,  
neither have entered  
into the heart of man,  
the things God hath  
prepared for them  
that love Him."*

I have often thought that if death were approaching and we both knew that her time was short that I would say to her, "If you see Daddy before I do, tell him I love him." But she died in her sleep early Sunday morning, March 5, 1995.

I close with an adaptation of a prayer poem by Langston Hughes.

*"Dear Lord, bless Isabel and Mother.  
Give them the brightest crowns in heaven.  
Give them the whitest robes that can be given.  
Put golden sandals on their feet and let them  
Slip and slide up to the throne of Master Jesus."*

~ Amen.

# *Irish | Celts | Scots*

## Oh Danny Boy

“Oh Dan-ny Boy, the pipes, the pipes are cal-ling...”

It was reliably reported that an Irish tenor recently sang “Danny Boy” in a televised service from the largest Methodist Church in the United States.

Spontaneous applause broke out in the huge sanctuary in Houston, Texas. The standing ovation prompted the pastor, Dr. Bill Henson, to ask the Irish tenor to sing it again - and he did! (He was not one of the Irish tenors from PBS last Sunday night.)

Only the hardest of hearts fail to respond to “Danny Boy: In Sunshine or in Shadow.” Grown men are moved to tears. It was sung at Elvis Presley’s funeral. It is said that if someone begins to sing “Danny Boy” unannounced in a crowd, that silence spreads over the crowd and they listen quietly.

Over 300 years ago, the tune came in a dream to Rory O’Cahan, a blind harpist. Lyrics were written in 1913 by Fred Weatherly, a barrister and a philosopher.

My roommate at U. S. Army 42<sup>nd</sup> Division’s Rainbow University in Zell Am See, Austria, was an Irishman from Detroit, Mich. I had thought that “Danny Boy” was a funeral dirge but Jim Broderick enlightened me. With some adaptation, it is played and sung in a multitude of settings.

The song has covered the world, showing once again that music is the international language. Arrangements have been played in bluegrass, jazz, soul and religious hymns as well as rock ‘n’ roll.

It is the unofficial national anthem of Northern Ireland sung and played with equal exuberance by all factions and throughout the Emerald Isle.

At the First United Methodist Church of Houston, Dr. Bill Henson never forgot his roots ~ South Georgia! He grew up in rural Jeff Davis County. When I was in youth work in the 1950s, Bill was vice president of the club for boys and his future wife was president of the club for girls at Jeff Davis High School, Hazelhurst, Ga.

He is an alumnus of Georgia Southern and has received the prestigious Averitt Award for outstanding contributions. And, he knows what appeals to us ordinary people. “Oh, Dan-ny Boy, Oh, Dan-ny Boy, I love you so.”

## Succat Calpurnius

Succat Calpurnius was born in Wales circa 418 A.D. At age 16 he was captured by King Naill and sold to cruel Chief Milcho in County Antrim in Ulster (Northern Ireland).

Succat herded sheep and swine. Loneliness, harsh treatment, rugged environment prepared him for God’s call to evangelize Ireland.

At age 22, he ran away, crossed the Irish Sea and returned to Wales. He became adept in Latin, well versed in Scripture and in administration and building construction.

At age 40, he returned to Ireland as Patrick. His first convert was Chief Dichu in Ulster in County Down. He went south to Tara (as in “Gone with the Wind”) in County Meath. King Leary was not converted but many in his court were.

Priests, judges, a bodyguard, a psalmist, cooks, tradesmen, artisans, and seminarians moved with Patrick through all of Ireland’s provinces (Ulster, Cannaught, Leinster and Munster). They could build a church from the ground up.

Patrick died at Saul, County Down, on March 17 in 493 A.D., according to legend.

## In 1959

Saint Patrick never entered my mind on March 18, 1959. I wrote the following on May 7, 1959.

You remember that maroon corduroy coat I used to wear? I had taken it out of the closet and was putting it on, getting ready to go to the office.

“Just a minute!” she said.

“You’re not wearing that thing to the office any more!” (All of this happened before my first trip to the office after the recent wedding in which I was involved.)

“What can I do with it?” I asked. “Your can hang it back in the closet,”

was the quick retort.

One really sacrifices to get married. We had gone around together for five or six years, that coat and I. It was a perfect fit. The corduroy thread was a little worn, I'll admit, but then I had had it dyed the same color.

It is true that the sleeves were somewhat frayed on the inside and the lining was disarranged and the last button had dropped off, but it was a perfect fit.

Nowadays, I am seen in public without my old friend, my maroon corduroy coat, but it was a perfect fit.

In Bowdon, one admitted she had been "concentrating" on this marriage for some time. In Cumming, they admitted they had worked on such an alliance but we didn't know it. Clint Kimbrough called from Cedartown to say he never thought I would bite the dust. From Dalton came word about saving expense. One little girl said right off, "I've been praying for this."

With such powerful forces at work, a poor fellow hadn't a chance.

At staff meeting in Atlanta, our wedding announcement was framed in black, headed with, "They said it couldn't be done" from a Lucky Strike advertisement in the 1950s.

### **On March 18, the day after St. Patrick's Day**

It was a little shaky on March 18, 1959. I had traveled over the U. S., Canada and Western Europe and had never done it. That day I locked myself out of my room at the old Aldred Hotel.

To slick down my hair before the big event, I sloshed the stuff over the top of my head and started combing. It didn't smell right and it didn't comb right, either. It was shaving lotion and that doesn't do well as hair tonic!

Before the wedding in the bride's parents' home, I gave one last quick look around ~ there was a brother at each door ~ real big brothers, too! This was it. The Reverend Dan Williams was reading the ritual and I was meekly agreeing to everything he said.

### **Tennessee is admittedly three states**

Tennessee is admittedly three states: mountainous East Tennessee including Knoxville and Maryville (pronounced Murvil), Central

Tennessee including Nashville and West Tennessee bordered by the Mississippi River and including Memphis.

In East Tennessee there is the delightful place called Townsend with prominent mention of the Cherokee Tuckaleechee. Advertised as "The Peaceful Side of the Smokies," Townsend has so far avoided the clutter of Gatlinburg. Other than motels, there is only one franchised restaurant. All other businesses apparently are local, including fine restaurants.

Along the length of Townsend, there is a paved bike and walking path about 50 yards from the highway and parallel to it. The flowers and shrubs along the pathway are profuse. People hop out of their cars to take pictures as if the plants were about to disappear! Harvest displays include a house of pumpkins and a wagon drawn by corn shuck horses.

Townsend is where the popular TV series, "Christy," was filmed on location. Kellie Martin played the lead in Catherine Marshall's story of her mother's experiences in a remote mountain community in Tennessee.

You remember that Catherine Marshall was the wife of Dr. Peter Marshall, the Scot who pastored the Presbyterian Church of Decatur and was Chaplain of the U. S. Senate during WWII. He died young and Catherine became even more widely known through her books. As I recall, she was from the Covington, Georgia area and met Peter Marshall when she was perhaps a student at Agnes Scott College in Decatur.

Many years after Peter Marshall died, Catherine married Len Lesourd, an editor of Guideposts Magazine, one of the Norman Vincent Peale publications. Arthur Gordon of Savannah was a frequent contributor to Guideposts.

Townsend is in Blount County as is "Murvil," home of Maryville (Presbyterian) College established in 1819. Townsend is home of "Christy," the outdoor drama. This year the lead was played by a young married girl named Stacy Heinacke who is also a Christian music recording artist whose first album is endorsed by Lee Greenwood.

The outdoor drama was one of the best I have seen ~ well cast, great music and the best sound system yet. It began to drizzle rain when we attended "Christy" but the crowd stayed and the many performers were

real troupers.

Between scenes they used different instruments, different musical keys and different tempo for "Down in the Valley." If the musical score becomes available for sale, my name is on the list to purchase a copy.

After the show, I spoke with Christy (Stacey Heinacke). She gave me her blessing!

In Franklin, N. C., we have found a great restaurant called Hickory Ranch. We have returned several times. On one occasion when they were not serving corn bread, the chef heard my plaintive cry and baked two corn sticks, one for me and one for the proprietor!

On several visits, our waitress has been Jennifer Powers, a rising senior at the Florida State University in Tallahassee. She played short-stop on the U. S. Women's Olympic Softball Team in 1992. Jennifer said that the team traveled throughout Central America that year.

She is the only Olympian I have ever met.

# *Natural Phenomena* *Miraculous | Religious*

## **Divine Protection**

Perhaps the most dramatic and personal incident to happen in Cades Cove was the experience Elder John W. Oliver (the second John Oliver) had as a U. S. mail carrier. He would drive his old car as far as he could go, then mount a horse to deliver mail into White Oak Flats.

This time, a bootlegger hid behind a bush, intending to kill John Oliver because he thought (erroneously) that John had reported his moonshine still to the revenuers.

When John came into view riding his horse, the bootlegger saw another horse and rider with him and did not shoot.

Later, when the bootlegger recounted the story to John Oliver, John said, "I was alone!"

This reminds one of the episode in the Bible where the enemy of Elisha, the prophet of God, "...sent thither horses and chariots and a great host and compassed the city about."

When the servant of the man of God saw the enemy, he said to Elisha, "Alas, my master! How shall we do?"

Elisha responded, "Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them" (the enemy).

"Elisha prayed ~ 'open his eyes that he may see.' And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." These were warrior angels.

The second horse and rider seen only by the bootlegger is thought to have been a guardian angel.

The bootlegger's eyes were opened! His life underwent a drastic change. He was transformed. Not only did he give up his bootlegging and his sinful ways, he became a paragon of virtue, highly respected and greatly beloved throughout the Cove.



### Faith Holds Firm at the River

*"Shall We Gather at the River?"*

~ Robert Lowry (1826 ~ 1899)

I was watching the young man with the bird house sitting on the altar cushion. The very young were down front for their special session. "Where do birds live?" he asked the tiny children. "Where do fish live?" "In the ribbah," one child yelled.

Yes, indeed. The town is built near the Ogeechee.

"Where does Jesus live?" They chorused, "In heaven." "Where else?" "In our hearts." And this from tiny children.

"Let's have our prayer," the leader said. I peeked at the children. Some heads were bowed; some hands were clasped in the universal attitude of prayer and one had open palms over her eyes. Thanks were given for the children and blessings were laid on them by their leader.

Don't you think this is better than raucous music and rap and guns and drunken parents?

### Shall We Gather at the River?

In the pastor's absence that day, the laymen were leading the service at Millen Methodist Church. The organist had died but a console emitted the finest in religious taped music. Two laymen rendered a powerful duet, singing with the tape. Then a tape of Ray Bolts' "Thank You" came on, backed up with a fine band. It was an imaginative setting on the Other Side for one who had lived and taught and given in the best Christian manner. I glanced around the congregation. They and the choir were deeply affected by the words and the music. In fact, the music was the message that day in Millen Methodist Church. "Shall We Gather at the River?" It was the opening hymn in Oliver at Little Ogeechee Baptist Church fifth Sunday worship.

Indeed, we had gathered at the river.

The Ogeechee flows near the 204 year-old church which has spawned five other churches since its founding. The late Harvey Blicht told me that he remembered, as a child, sitting, at a table in the old church building,

where the infamous General William T. Sherman had sat with his officers, planning the march on Savannah in 1864. Sherman is reputed to have stayed in what is known as the Lufburrow House, one block west of the church in Oliver. It is now called the Willow Bend Plantation, a well appointed retirement home owned by Dr. and Mrs. McCabe. (She is the lady who took the medical supplies into the back country of Bosnia and now works with "Mary's Hands.") At Little Ogeechee, the pastor is the Rev. Vernon Edenfield, a deeply committed minister. He is a bi-vocational pastor. He had a good job in Savannah but when his employers insisted that he work on Sunday despite his pastoral duties, he gave up the job. Then he lost his house and he lost his car ~ all for the Cause of Christ. His faith held firm.

One of Mr. J.R. Wasdin's daughters led the children's worship at Little Ogeechee that day. As at Millen, the children unabashedly responded that Jesus was in their hearts. The Hymn "Shall We Gather at the River?" Robert Lowry (1826 ~ 1899) thought so. More than a hundred years ago, he wrote both the words and the music to the old hymn of that title. It alludes to the Scripture found in the Book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible.

The hymn was first published in 1865. It was published in "Happy Voices ~ a collection of hymns by Robert Lowry." But it was on a sweltering day in July 1864 that Lowry, hot and physically exhausted, fell into sort of a trance and seemed to have a vision of the Last Days. The images were so vivid of the River of Life emanating from the Throne of God that the words began to flow and the hymn almost wrote itself. It was, indeed, a "happy voice" which ended the hymn, answering the rhetorical question with, "Yes, we'll gather at the river."

Early in my teaching career after class one day, a student asked, "Are you a Christian?" I was somewhat taken aback but I managed to respond in the affirmative. Then I added, "I'm ashamed that you had to ask." I have since rationalized that I was teaching in a state school where we had to be very careful about expressing religious convictions.

In the next few weeks, some sincere, albeit imperfect, Christians from First Baptist Church here on this side of the river will attempt to say a word or share a printed message with friends and strangers. They will not

be selling a religion. They will speak to the universal, penultimate spiritual need. It may be as awkward for them as it may be for you. But I hope you will hear them in their humble efforts to carry out the Great Commission (as recorded in St. Matthew 28: 19-20).

**March: "in like a lion, out like a lamb"**

March: "in like a lion, out like a lamb" or vice versa? Already there are tornado watches and tornado alerts.

In Provence in the south of France, they have a wind, the Mistral, which blows unexpectedly any time of the year. It is ferocious, generated by collision of cold air from the Northern Alps and the warm air from the southern side of the Alps Mountains.

The Mistral is strongest in the Rhone River Valley from Avignon to Arles but it knifes its way across the Mediterranean Sea (life threatening to persons in small craft) headed for the Sahara Desert in North Africa.

The gusts of chilling air last three, six or nine days. The Mistral is very noisy ~ whining and whistling "like a chorus of flutes played by the insane."

You remember that Avignon is where all that remains of an old Roman bridge juts out 75 or more feet over the river. Along with "Frere Jacques" we used to sing "sur le pont d'Avignon" on the bridge of Avignon "l'on y danse" there we dance.

South to Arles roars the Mistral. This is an old Roman town. The amphitheatre is still in use after nearly 2,000 years. In 1945, the soldiers in our outfit played another army unit in football in the amphitheatre. The seats were hard, I remember.

The Mistral is a "mud eater," drying up mud puddles. Some call it "the whip," lashing man and nature into submission. The Mistral is resented. It makes people's eyes water and smart. It puts people on edge and makes them irritable.

After it passes, of course, everything has a rinsed look ~ sky, streets, buildings. But some trees are permanently bent toward the south, having endured countless pummelings of the Mistrals.

I was in Provence near Arles during the summer of 1945. I lived in a tent. I think I missed the Mistral. I don't recall any high winds, only the

heat. Fall and winter are perhaps worse seasons for the Mistral down the Rhone Valley.

Later, I was in Salzburg and also Zell Am See, Austria where I learned of a wind which affected the natives to the extent that no important business was conducted and teachers gave no tests while the wind blew.

So, would you rather live in sunny Provence with its unpredictable Mistral, in the Austrian Alps, or in Statesboro and risk a tornado?

**Newton Cast Shadow of Greatness**

Ten Minutes!

How can a man preach a sermon in 10 minutes?

It was now past 12 noon. The congregation at Druid Hills Baptist Church, always expectant, had been sitting on the edges of their pews since our pastor, Dr. Louie D. Newton, had bounded onto the platform at 11 o'clock and another vibrant worship service was underway. As president of the Southern Baptist Convention he had promoted the collection of 200,000 kits of clothing and necessities to help relieve some of the widespread suffering in Russia from World War II. He had just returned from a visit to Moscow. Fifteen minutes passed, but Dr. Newton exclaimed:

Five minutes!

How can a man preach a sermon in five minutes?

Dr. Newton had been asked by the tourist guide what he would like to see in Moscow. Dr. Newton astounded the Russian by requesting an interview with Premier Josef Stalin. Nevertheless, the next day he was ushered into the office of the Man of Steel whose policies and purges had contributed to the deaths of tens of millions of people! Dr. Newton gave Stalin a pipe and a Bible. Upon his return to Atlanta, he received a letter from Stalin, thanking him for "the pipe and the book." It was now 12:30. But Louie D. Newton, who never wasted a waking moment, had more to say

Two minutes!

How can a man preach a sermon in two minutes!

For that matter, how could this man captivate congregations at Druid Hills for nearly 40 years? He rocked on his feet, smacked his lips, violated almost every rule of public speaking, but he related to people better than anyone I had known. I was in the shadow of greatness.

As a Georgia Tech student in the late 1940s, I was a member of Druid Hills Baptist Church.

When I telephoned Mrs. Doris Howell on April 27 for help with this book review, she remembered me and reminded me that it was Dr. Newton's birthday. He was born on April 27, 1892, in Screven County and died June 3, 1986 in Georgia Baptist Hospital. Mrs. Howell agreed that I had the great privilege of being in Druid Hills when Dr. Newton and the church were operating at their splendid peak.

She had been Dr. Newton's secretary and provided gratifying updates on many fine people who undergirded the greatness of Druid Hills Church. The history of Druid Hills Baptist Church of Atlanta was recently published under the title of "They Continued Steadfastly." written by Harry and Jeanne Osborne Shaw (former Jeanne Osborne Gibbs, longtime book editor of "Georgia Magazine"). Copies have been presented to the Statesboro Regional Library, the L.C. Anderson Library in Metter, and the Screven County Library in Sylvania. Dr. Newton's home was in Screven County on a farm near Halcyondale.

Druid Hills was "born right." Constituted July 5, 1914, by 173 charter members, mostly from the disbanded Highland Park Baptist (1908-1914), where Dr. J.M. Brittain had been pastor. His son, Dr. M.L. Brittain was president of Georgia Tech from 1922 to 1944.

Things have always been done differently at Druid Hills, but always by prayer, on faith, and with verve.

The church called Dr. Fernando Coello McConnell, pastor of the 3,000 member First Baptist Church of Waco, Texas, to return to Georgia and the fledgling 173 member congregation. He was a native of Towns County, taught by Uncle Elijah Kimsey and Uncle John Corn at Hiawassee, and married to Emma England all family names I have known.

Truett-McConnell College at Cleveland, Ga. is named for him and for his cousin. Dr. George W. Truett, the "Prince of Southern Baptist Preachers."

When Dr. McGonnell died, the church called Dr. Newton to be their pas-

tor, but he declined twice. He was editor of the thriving "Christian Index" (1920-1929). He had been professor of history at Mercer University, but had no seminary training. "At last he accepted the third, heartfelt call of the Church." He was ordained at Union Baptist Church in Screven County.

Dr. Newton was pastor of Druid Hills from 1929 to 1968. Upon his retirement. Dr. Harold Zwald was named pastor. He had been a member of our youth group at Druid Hills and had served several pastorates including First Baptist Church, Cumming, where I had visited him and his wife Laurie. Later, Dr. Robert DeFoor came as associate pastor. In 1975, Harold Zwald and Bob DeFoor swapped positions after approval of the church conference voting 800 to one in favor!

Although Dr. Newton was the best known of persons of Druid Hills, other great personalities included Parks Warnock, who became known as "Mr. Barnabas" after the New Testament helper to the Apostle Paul. He was church administrator, 1935-1976. A letter I received in 1977 from Mr. Warnock indicated a vital, highly effective man in his 80s. Later Dr. Paul Mims became pastor.

Warren and Roy Sewell, wealthy clothing manufacturers, gave millions of dollars to Baptist causes under Dr. Newton's leadership. There was T.J. Ransbotham, leader extraordinaire, and Hinson McAuliffe, solicitor general of Fulton County, who prosecuted Larry Flynt, publisher of Hustler Magazine.

Dr. E.A. "Gus" Verdery was in our youth group, later heading psychiatric unit at Georgia Baptist Hospital, finally serving in Switzerland where he contracted a rare disease from which he died.

### Bulloch County Connection

Colonel and Mrs. LeRoy Cowart and children were members of Druid Hills when their son died in service in the Pacific during World War II. There were two daughters, Clothile and Martha. Martha was scheduled to attend the 50th Anniversary Reunion of the Statesboro High School Class of 1938 but could not due to death of her step-mother.

Prominently mentioned throughout the book are the Denmarks, John Eustace Denmark and his wife, Leila Daughtry Denmark of Bulloch County. Mr. Denmark, now in his 90th year, has been a member of Druid

Hills for 55 years. Dr. Leila is probably Georgia's best known pediatrician and perhaps the oldest practicing, always to help children have a better life. The Denmarks live in Alpharetta now but still attend Druid Hills regularly. They are members of the Bulloch County Historical Society and were recently inducted into Life Membership in the President's Club of Mercer University.

"Dr. Newton was a great humanitarian," Mr. Denmark told me. "Druid Hills never turned away anyone who was down and out."

Mr. Denmark also expressed great appreciation for the attention paid him by Georgia State Supreme Court Chief Justice Richard B. Russell Sr., when he was a young man.

Judge Russell was the father of Dr. Fielding Russell of Statesboro.

The Bunces of Bulloch County are cousins of Dr. Louie D. Newton ~ Jimmy, Paul, Lucy Long, and Isaac Newton Bunce.

Dr. Newton's sister Minnie and her husband, the Rev. J.A. Reiser, served effectively at the Metter First Baptist Church in the 1930s.

In 1940 I was posted as a Boy Scout to traffic duty at Northcutt Stadium in Marietta where Dr. George W. Truett told the crowd that his one desire had been "to find and follow God's will, which is always best, and always safe, and always right." This was my first contact with Dr. Newton, who was in charge of the program and who was on a first name basis with my Scoutmaster Sherry Hamilton.

In 1939 I had attended a session of the Sixth Baptist World Alliance at the old Ponce de Leon Park in Atlanta where Dr. Newton had persuaded the railroad engineers not to blow the train whistles when in the vicinity of the park. Sixty thousand attended.

Dr. Newton had amazing physical and spiritual stamina. Whereas it has taken me nine weeks to complete this article. Dr. Newton wrote nine articles each week, never missed his weekly radio broadcast in 53 years, wrote weekly for the Index, 1930-1986, was president of Georgia Baptist Convention and Southern Baptist Convention and vice-president of the Baptist World Alliance.

He was foremost the pastor. Ministering to great and small wherever and whenever he was needed. Consequently Druid Hills was the leading church of its time.

Druid Hills was a country church set in a fashionable section of a great

city. It was not unusual for Dr. Newton to recognize in the congregation a pastor or layman from some small rural church. "There's John Doe from Podunk!" "Stand up. Brother Doe." A capsule of the man's life story tumbled out or a thumbnail sketch of the history of the man's church was laid on us.

One time Dr. Newton could not think of the name of a street near the state Capitol. "What's the name of that street, Judge Duckworth?"

And Georgia Supreme Court Chief Justice W.H. Duckworth responded. The narrative proceeded.

Another time, at the beginning of his sermon, Dr. Newton had read several verses from the big pulpit Bible. In his rambling style, he had talked about many things but sought to draw to a close his sermon. He turned the pages of the great Bible first this way and then that way ~ he had lost the place!

"What page was that on?" He appealed to the congregation. No one knew, of course, so he drove on to a successful conclusion without the desperately sought Scripture reference!

In the late 1940s young people from Druid Hills Church helped with the youth program of the Pryor Street Mission (later Formwalt Mission) located in the decaying interstitial area of the section of Atlanta later razed by Urban Renewal for the stadium. I remember the affection of the deprived children for Gwen Higginbotham. One day Gwen directed that we go visiting in the deteriorating neighborhood where our children lived. Recently, I reminded her how awed I was that "old" women, the workworn, malnourished mothers, addressed her with such respect, saying "mam" to 18-year-old Gwen (now Mrs. Randolph Daley).

I won the Better Speakers Tournament while at Druid Hills. Dr. Newton said my speech helped him. Imagine that! The title of my speech? "The Achievement of Greatness." I was living in the shadow, of greatness!

On June 3, 1986, at the age of 94, Dr. Newton suffered chest pains. He was taken to Georgia Baptist Hospital. He was conscious as those in the room sang "Amazing Grace." Dr. Paul Mims whispered a prayer. Dr. Newton smiled and died.

And all the trumpets sounded on the other side.

## Memoirs From The Holocaust

On Sunday, Sept. 29, the final performance of an opera with a powerful message superbly executed was presented in GSU Foy Fine Arts Recital Hall.

It was the "Memoirs From The Holocaust," a one-act opera in English by Dr. Michael Braz who has given so generously of his musical talents to virtually every sector of our community.

No doubt the story was repeated many times during the German Third Reich of the 1930s. Adolph Hitler fostered hatred of the Jews.

Young German men were enlisted in the Movement which put them into uniforms bearing the swastika Nazi emblem. The young men were made to feel important in the New Order in which they had enlisted and were given hobnail boots to stomp around in. I shall never forget the dread sound of hobnail boots on the cobblestone streets of Germany.

The opera follows the tightening of screws on the Jews in a small German town in the 1930s during the Third Reich ~ ridicule and reduced rations, murder of those who spoke out, orders to board a train for "relocation" to concentration camps or the gas chambers. When I was assigned to General Douglas McArthur's old 42nd Rainbow Division after WWII, I had opportunity to go to an army-sponsored university. My roommate was a good Catholic boy named Jim Broderick from Detroit, Michigan. He told me about their capture of a concentration camp with gas chambers. He said that he saw emaciated human bodies stacked like cordwood.

As the story unfolded in Michael's opera last Sunday, I remembered what Harry Cohen of Statesboro had told me about the rape and murder by the German Nazis of his seven year old cousin in Lithuania and his 12 year old twin cousins in Minsk.

The opera story line follows the efforts of an 11 year-old boy's mother to shield her son somewhat and train him not to hate although she had learned to hate since the Nazis had killed her husband.

I remembered the story Sandra Rosenberg told me about her mother's escape from Nazi dominated Poland during the early years of WWII. Sandra's mother and several of her aunts were able to escape but the rest

of her family died in the Holocaust. One aunt died as result of eating a piece of wood, she was so starved for food.

In the opera, the young boy's mother was killed when she refused to line up to board the train for the concentration camp. The village wise man had tried to steady the young boy. There were overtones of Viktor Frankl whose family was sent to the gas chamber but he was saved at the last minute. His Logotherapy is a part of professional counselor training. Oversimplified, it says that even standing in line to the gas chamber life can have meaning. The wise man in the opera looked to the skies, as the boy read the 23rd Psalm and never wavers in his faith in God although nobody understood the hatred engendered by Adolph Hitler and his minions.

"Don't forget what you've heard here," I said to the college student seated beside me. And to others I said, "It mustn't happen again."

In Statesboro, Mrs. Rosenberg greeted each new day in a free land with these words: "God Bless America!" she said.

God bless America, indeed!

## The night the stars fell

On the night of November 12 - 13, 1833, Bulloch Countians were treated to a celestial spectacular which was an awesome display of natural phenomena. It was the night "the stars fell."

It was a dazzling meteor shower, an annual event which reaches its most brilliant performance every 33 years. In 1833, its brilliance frightened people in Elbert County (Elberton, Ga.) so much that many thought the end of the world had come. Women and children were lowered into wells to keep from burning. Preachers cried, "Repent ye!" and religious fervor swept across the Piedmont sections of Georgia, South Carolina and Alabama. (See History of Elbert County.)

Most of the particles burn up when they hit the earth's atmosphere at 40 miles per second but people in earlier time had a greater sense of awe and wonder and even reverence for the forces of nature then is felt in 1996.

"Stars fell on Alabama" on November 12 - 13, 1833, inspiring a song of that title. In "Alabama: One Big Front Porch," Kathryn Windham says that Alabama folktales and family lore are dated "before the stars fell" and "after the stars fell" in 1833.

Consider the story of Nelson Dickerson, stagecoach driver. On that night in 1833, Nelson Dickerson sped along the old Savannah-Sunbury-Cobbtown-Dublin Road with his passengers in what may have been the fastest trip on record! The panorama of "falling stars" was not rivaled by anything in their previous experience.

Present day in-flight movies have nothing on the spectacular Nelson Dickerson's riders viewed that night free of charge! Many residents in this area are his descendants including families of Rita Turner Wall and Annette Slater Branch.

On that night in 1833, Edwin Booth, brother of John Wilkes Booth who shot Abraham Lincoln, was born. Also born that night was William O. Hopper, great grandfather of Alma Hopper and others in Bulloch County.

The shows of 1899 and 1933 fizzled but they came back in 1966. The 33 year-cycle schedules the next big meteor storm for 1999.

Other stellar displays were awe inspiring as in 1835 when Haley's Comet appeared. In nearby Wadley, the Spires Cannon family was awakened by daughter Mary Ann Cannon as she came inside their house to awaken sister, Betsy Cannon, after having gazed outside on Haley's Comet.

"Come and see the star with a tail," Mary Ann told Betsy. Whereupon, Betsy, snug in her feather bed, replied, "I wouldn't get out of my warm bed if all the stars had tails!"

Haley's Comet was a terrifying experience for people around the world in 1910 but fizzled in 1985.

### **Prayer Service is Overwhelming**

One hundred years ago, during the summer of 1886, the Rev. J. N. Sullivan had been conducting revival services at several small Methodist churches in Bartow County, north of Cartersville, where there had been 23 conversions. However, on the night of August 31, 1886, after a fervent evangelistic sermon, the response of the audience at Pine Log, Preacher Sullivan's home church, had not been overwhelming.

As the revival service was drawing to a close he prayed for divine help. "Lord, if it takes it to move the hearts of these people, shake the ground

on which this building stands," As reported in "The History of Pine Log Church," almost before the words were out of his mouth, "the building shook perceptibly."

"The emotional reaction among the people was immediate and intense as they rushed down the aisles to pray at the altar. It was the following day before they knew that it was the great earthquake which demolished much of Charleston and the coastal area of South Carolina."

The Rev. J.N. Sullivan was the father of 10 children including two sets of twins and my dearly loved great aunt, Adelaide Sullivan Mabry. She was not at the revival service that night at Pine Log. She was at home where her daughter Annie was born. When asked why the newborn baby cried so much, the attending physician said that she was scared – as were thousands of others that night.

The report of a 12 year study by 25 scientists published recently by U.S. Geological Survey and funded by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission indicated that the cause of the 1886 Charleston Earthquake remains a mystery.

Thirty-five years ago, a marble marker commemorating the Sullivan Prayer was erected at Pine Log with several persons present who had heard the prayer that fateful night in 1886. At age 90 my great Aunt Addie was the oldest surviving Sullivan at the dedication on August 26, 1951. My Uncle Forrest Mabry held an umbrella over Aunt Addie to shield her from the hot August sun. The next day her hip broke. After that she was bedridden, living with courage, kindness and perseverance until her death at 96.

In the late 1950s I wrote a series of articles on the Earthquake Prayer for the Cartersville newspaper. In response Guy Hughes reported that on one occasion the people had come together at church to pray for rain. Preacher Sullivan, a man of great faith and mighty in prayer, had been called.

When he arrived (on horseback) he took off his saddle and blanket and brought them into the meeting house. Somebody asked why he was doing that and he replied that he had come to pray for rain and he didn't want his saddle to get wet.

The people stayed at the church until dark. What must have been a cloudburst had come while they prayed.

The father of Silas Hendricks left the church on a mule to return to this

home in the vicinity of Gum Springs. The rain had been so heavy that Little Pine Log Creek had "gotten up" and had dislodged a bridge timber from the floor of the bridge. Neither Mr. Hendricks nor the mule saw the hole in the bridge. The mule stepped in the hole and both Mr. Hendricks and the mule nearly drowned that night. "The prayer that caused a cloud-burst" is another chapter in the saga of J.N. Sullivan, an old-time Methodist preacher in the long ago.

This and other incidents are part of the Christian heritage of those who were raised in Bartow County and those who are related to the large Sullivan family. Joe Frank Harris was a Cartersville schoolboy when I wrote the articles on prayer, earthquake, and rain. Did he read my articles? Did his Methodist forebears tell him the Sullivan stories? If so, why did he wait so long to issue a call to prayer for rain so badly needed by those of us who now live in the "other Georgia" south of the fall line?

Although still a small congregation, Pine Log has maintained the campground and annual camp meeting since 1857. The Rev. Ted Griner, former pastor of Statesboro First Methodist Church has been Pine Log camp meeting on four occasions.

Pine Log United Methodist Church will be holding a special service on this date, August 31, 1986, with the theme, "Reinterpreting the Earthquake Prayer." Several of us will be speaking on the continuing impact of this old time Methodist preacher on the lives of our family and the Pine Log community.

Are there cosmic laws at work about which we know very little? Is there a master plan for the universe in which humble and devout persons have a part? Did prayer cause the Charleston earthquake? Can prayer bring rain?

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5: 16 (KJV)

### Thanksgiving 1994

Thanksgiving 1994. I read a note on an old church bulletin, "Why are all these people here?" And the answer from another, "This is a communitywide Thanksgiving service."

Thanksgiving 1995. It was indeed a communitywide service with black and white Christians from many denominations assembled for worship and thanksgiving.

The award winning Statesboro High School Chorale rendered two exquisite numbers. The sermon was straightforward. Then the 70 voice GSU African American Chorus overflowed the choir loft and filled the sanctuary with their strong young voices.

First, it was "The Lord's Prayer" and then, paced by percussion instruments the energetic singers began to sway and clap in unison as they made their appeal, "Create within me a clean heart, O God." You can't fault them for that!

Offering was taken for the transient poor and more than \$800 was received. The congregation was dismissed. About about three fourths of them stayed to hear the 70 high energy singers belt out more standard hymns in their own style. Some of the congregation joined them.

We have much to be thankful for, not the least of which are the young people who sang their hearts out for the glory of God last Sunday night. Amen and Amen.

### Alabama Legacy

David Ward has done it again! Fresh from the success of "Alabama: History of a Deep South State" published last year, GSU professor emeritus Dr. David Ward, an Alabama native, has just brought out a splendid picture book entitled, "An Alabama Legacy."

With a few place names changed the book could have been "A Georgia Legacy." In fact, Alabama was part of Georgia for a long time. In the beginning, the Colony of Georgia extended from the Savannah River to the Altamaha River with a band about 100 miles wide extending to the Pacific Ocean ~ a grandiose claim.

Later, Georgia claimed all the land south of Tennessee to the Mississippi River except Florida. After a bitter states' rights struggle, the land from our present western boundary to the Mississippi was ceded to the Federal

Government and became Mississippi Territory. Then Alabama applied for statehood which was granted in 1819.

My grandmother was an Alabama native. In Statesboro, Dr. Lee Cain is an Alabama native. I wonder what he will say about "An Alabama Legacy."

You remember the song "Stars Fell on Alabama" by Mitchell Parish and Frank Perkins:

*"My heart beat like a hammer,  
My arms wound around you tight,  
And stars fell on Alabama last night."*

"An Alabama Legacy: Images of a State" was published by Friends of the Alabama Archives. The Alabama Power Company bought a thousand copies!

### Toccata

Several months ago I wrote that Tommy and Jerry Singletary had provided me with the music of Simon Preston on the mighty pipe organ in Westminster Abbey, London. I admitted that Widor's "Toccata" had brought me to the Threshold of Heaven ~ that words failed me in expressing!

I tried again a third time.

(I regret that Wife Evelyn does not share any of my feelings for this ethereal excursion.)

The more I play the "Toccato," the more I can glimpse what my Dad wanted to do as a career ~ be a concert organist.

In my mind's eye, I can see the mighty pipe organ keyboards (several) and the foot pedals as they are brought into the mood music of the Toccata being played by Simon Preston in Westminster Abbey.

I can also see in my mind's eye the stops and the swells of the old-fashioned pump organ.

My Dad once wrote to me after hearing the old gentleman organist perform on a Sunday afternoon with the Mormon Tabernacle organ used with recording the choir.

I once heard the (a) Mormon Tabernacle Choir one Sunday afternoon in the Colosseum in Columbia, SC ~ "a peak experience."

### More on Widor's Toccata

When I play my recording of Simon Preston's rendition of Widor's Toccata on the great organ in Westminster Abbey in London, I have an indescribable feeling of satisfaction and gratitude to God for a glimpse of Heaven's music.

I have felt that I was, indeed, standing on the threshold of Heaven. Maybe I would "make it in" as expressed by the yearning of some of my Black Christian friends.

Then, the music begins to fade. I have to turn up the volume and I relate this to times I have not felt close to the Lord. The music continues. I think it means that I have at times been nearly out of earshot of the Almighty. But the music is there and I cry out for succor and the music comes back full volume ~ more like the opening of the "swells" of an old pump organ.



# RAFT

## Restoring Altamaha Folklife Traditions

"All rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; Unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again." This Bible verse from Ecclesiastes is fraught with meaning for the 20,000 people who were caught up in Project RAFT and the festivals held on the Altamaha River at Lumber City, Baxley, Jesup and Darien, in April 1982.

R.A.F.T. is an acronym for Restoring Altamaha Folklife Traditions, a project of Georgia Southern. Focus of the project was the design and construction of a 35 X 80 foot raft to be used in the reenactment of a primitive method of floating "Timber to the Sea."

From 1721 to 1946 timber was floated down the Altamaha River to Darien on the coast. My wife's cousin claims to have ridden the last raft to Darien, in 1946. In the 18th and 19th centuries, along the river during the month of August, giant cypress trees were ringed, that is ~ an ax was used to cut through the bark around each tree so it would die. This was done in the full moon in August ~ just to be sure! The trees were allowed to stand until December or January when farm work was at a minimum. Then they were cut and rafts were made up. The logs were branded in case the raft broke up before it reached the big sawmill at Darien. Rafts over 100 feet long were not uncommon in those days when virgin timber was still being cut. Such rafts were "hinged" to help negotiate sharp turns.

On each end of a raft there was a great sweep to be used as combination rudder and oar. Each raft had a "goat house" for shelter from the elements and a fire board covered with sand on which a fire could be built on cold winter nights.

The movement of a raft is strictly with the current about five miles an hour on the Altamaha River. A raft originating at Lumber City would take a week to reach the Georgia coast at Darien, a 145 mile trip. My late Father-in-law, John Darley, told me that he rode the rafts down the Altamaha prior to World War I, when it took a week to get to Darien and two weeks to walk back to Soperton in Treutlen County. His son, and my brother-in-law, Hugh Darley, and Lew Selvidge, my colleague a professor at Georgia Southern, designed and helped build the raft for this project.

Many old raftsmen in their 80's attended the RAFT festival at Lumber City. Several women proudly reported they had ridden rafts with their husbands in the long ago.

Brainerd Cheney, an old raft pilot and author of "River Rogue" and other novels set in the Altamaha basin, came back for all four festivals to autograph a special edition of his book.

The old Altamaha Station Post Office was found in a hog pen. It was built on skids to be dragged to logging camps along the Altamaha from 1876 to 1945.

The Post Office was rescued from the pigs and the Postal Service placed it in service at all four RAFT Festivals last April.

It has been returned to Tattnall County where it rests near the old Alexander Hotel which has been renovated in Reidsville.

Among the artisans and craftsmen at the festivals were Sea Island singers Doug and Frankie Quimby, whose tribal roots are in Nigeria. They taught slave and share-cropper songs at the festivals. Hicks Walker, age 77, made the longest journey of his life from Sapelo Island to Lumber City to demonstrate net making and to explain the process in the Coastal Gullah accents.

A remnant of Sacred Harp singers, left over from the 19th Century, led a "singing school," teaching shaped notes. Some of my former college students and others learn Charles Wesley's "Idumea," one of the saddest songs ever set to music.

It begins:

"And am I born to die? To lay this body down! And must my trembling spirit fly into a world unknown? A land of deepest shades, unpierced by human thought; the dreary regions of the dead." Fortunately, it ends on a somewhat happier note!

Also at the Lumber City Festival were displays of Indian artifacts including several thousand arrowheads collected from the river basins around Lumber City. An ancient east-west Indian trail crossed at the confluence of the Ocmulgee and Oconee Rivers which form the Altamaha.

There, Mary Musgrove maintained The Forks, one of her many residences during Colonial times. She was the Indian princess who was General James Edward Oglethorpe's advisor, interpreter and friend. General Oglethorpe, as you know, founded the colony of Georgia in 1733.

Mary Musgrove eventually became the largest landholder in Georgia and the richest colonist.

Tama, an Indian village, was located in the forks of the Ocmulgee and Oconee Rivers. Coastal Indians traveled up the big river to this community, so the named, "Al-tama" or "way to the Tama Country" became the Altamaha River.

My wife, Evelyn Darley Mabry, was born near Tama not far from the Forks in what is now Wheeler County.

Life was hard for many past generations bound to the river. The mighty Altamaha has influenced countless thousands bound to the river region by birth, kinship, friendship, fierce loyalties and toil, as well as by the unspoiled beauty and majesty of much of the Altamaha even today.

Not far from Lumber City in Dead River Cemetery rest three Revolutionary War soldiers, Capt. Wilson Conner; Richard Cooper, and William Ryals. Conner rode 35,000 miles on horseback, preaching the Gospel and dying in the pulpit, as he had wished. Descendants of these patriots mingled with more than 2,000 Project RAFT enthusiasts who came to the festival at Lumber City.

Not only are the people of the Altamaha bound by culture, the blood relatives were there by the hundreds. Each festival was like a giant family reunion even with cousins meeting each other for the first time, as happens at family reunions.

The huge crowd was a model of decorum, reflective, speaking softly, obviously affected by the entire effort.

At 4:35 p.m., on Saturday, April 3, 1982, this 35 X 80 foot raft was loosed from its moorings at Lumber City and strong men began the arduous task of maneuvering it into the channel of the Ocmulgee River. The pilot was 90-year old Bill Deen, who was to make the entire 145 mile trip to Darien, along with 72-year old raft pilot, Henry Eason. The project director was Dr. Del Presley, a GSC professor whose great-grandfather was a rafter around the turn of the century. I counted more than 1,000 people who lined the banks of the Ocmulgee River for the launching. There were 9 men and one boy aboard the raft as it headed for the juncture with the Oconee River which forms the mighty Altamaha. The Oconee comes down from Athens, Georgia, and the Ocmulgee originates south of Atlanta.

The Altamaha is a crooked river, so much so that raftsmen tied up on sandbars at night could hear the "hollering" of other raftsmen 40 miles

downstream by river but only a couple of miles "as the crow flies." Rafter "hollering" in the long ago relieved tension as well as established their location with other rafters on the busy Altamaha.

I missed the second festival on Easter Weekend, April 10 when 3,000 people were at Baxley landing on the Altamaha.

On April 17, I was back in South Georgia with 5,000 kinfolks, college professors, students, and other people of the Altamaha who congregated at Jaycees Landing above Doctortown near Jesup.

*Untie the rope  
And let us float  
This is the life for an outdoor man!*

*We're floating down past Doctortown,  
We're floating down past Doctortown,  
We're floating to Darien!*

~ Curtis Tillman

There it was. The Raft. Survivor of a close encounter with a cypress stump in the mighty Altamaha River. Repaired in midstream of the Altamaha using 19th Century techniques and 20th Century resourcefulness, the 35 X 80 foot raft was afloat and riding high.

The naysayers were silent now. The raft could and did float and it had survived a major catastrophe.

Craftsmen and folksingers were performing again ~ black craftsmen from Sapelo, pottery turning, displays of Indian pot shards and arrowheads from Old Pensacola Trading Path nearby, cedar shingles split and shaped with a drawing knife on a 19th Century styled drawing bench. Indian crafts exhibited by a bronze beauty, an antique Ford which ran like a sewing machine, quilting, rafter cooking, chaircaning, basket weaving, and more.

Nostalgia was the order of the day at Jesup. What person can listen to the Burch Girls singing "The Red River Valley" with a country twang and not feel nostalgia gnawing in the pit of the stomach?

My dentist, my lawyer, my veterinarian all had raft stories to tell. The president of GSC was there. Lt. Gov. Zell Miller was there.

The People of the Altamaha were eager to go on the raft and examine it as it lay moored at the landing. Marilyn Lick, the wife of the president of GSC found an elderly lady on the raft quietly weeping. The lady's father

had ridden the rafts in the long ago and had told her stories of his life on the Altamaha.

Now she was on a raft and the emotion of it all was overwhelming for her as it was for many of us.

Rain sent thousands scurrying to their cars only to reassemble at the water's edge as a Gospel quartet sang, "O they tell me of a place where no storm cloud roams, O they tell me of a home far away, O they tell me of an unclouded day."

Although there was an amalgam of people present from all walks of life, there were a lot of festival goers who had the same ancestors somewhere in their background!

We encountered dozens of my wife's cousins, some of whom had ridden rafts. In the long ago her father and forefathers on both sides of her family had been raft hands.

And her brother, Hugh Darley, together with Lew Selvidge, had co-designed this raft.

It was Darley's ancestors who built the Mayflower, and its sister ship, the Seaflower, in their shipyards at Ipswich, England, commissioned in 1608. It was Ship Captain Thomas Darley who was impressed to fight as a Redcoat in the Battle of Cowpens, S. C., January 17, 1781. Knocked from his horse, he faced the business end of a sword in the hands of American Patriot Samuel Cowles. Darley flashed the Masonic distress signal and Cowles spared his life.

After the Revolutionary War, the two men served as Methodist preachers. Thomas Darley organized the Methodist Church at Washington in Wilkes County, Georgia, while Robert Watson Mabry, my great-great-grandfather, was the school master at the Select School for Girls in Washington in the early 1820s. Darley later organized Mulberry Methodist Church, in Macon, the mother church of Georgia Methodism, and was instrumental in getting the Grand Masonic Lodge of Georgia chartered by the Legislature.

Six generations later, another Darley had taken to the water but this vessel would not return as had the Mayflower.

As the rafthands worked to free the raft from its moorings, a Gospel singer strummed a tune about the river. Then Del Presley, Project RAFT Director, strummed the life string of us all when he announced "Amazing Grace," representative of the strongest bond which unites the People of the Altamaha.

We all sang:

*"When we've been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise,  
Than when we first begun.  
Amazing Grace, How sweet the sound."*

With misty eyes I watched the raft poled into the broad Altamaha and I saw the crew struggle to find the channel. Then they found the current and the raft moved out of sight around the bend, "floating down past Doctortown Floating down to Darien."

There were 10,000 People of the Altamaha at the festival in Darien on April 24, reminiscent of the days when Darien was a World Class port; the Bank of Darien was the strongest south of Philadelphia; and timber was King of the Altamaha basin.

On April 24, the raft was moored to the Darien Bridge, opposite the tabby ruins of the cotton warehouses used around the turn of this century when cotton was king. Bales of cotton were floated down the Oconee River into the Altamaha bound for Darien in "Oconee Boxes". These crude wooden boats were dismantled and the timber sold after the cotton was unloaded. For the RAFT Festival at Darien, it was the haunting skirl of the highland bagpipes which reminded us that Fort King George and the Scottish Highlanders had held that area against the threat of Spanish invasion in the early 1700s.

Note: The Altamaha Post Office was open and doing business again as it had in the long ago.

Shrimping is now the principal industry for Darien. The final RAFT Festival was held in conjunction with the annual Blessing of the Fleet.

I stood in the rain on Sunday, April 25, as each of the shrimp boats approached the bridge for the blessing. I stood beside the Roman Catholic and Episcopal priests as they alternately offered brief prayers and then intoned the blessing, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Rafthands were all aboard the Shrimper "Seashelly," winner of the previous year's decoration contest.

One boat carried a large sign with this Scripture: "They that go down to

the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord." (Psalm 107:23-24a)

Then a wreath was thrown into the water in honor of countless river men and shrimpers who have "gone down to the sea in ships!"

I conclude with this quotation used by Dr. Louie D. Newton in his classes at Mercer University in 1913:

*"He who will not look to the past,  
to see the way we have come,  
Cannot with clarity interpret the present,  
nor with courage chart the future."*

### Rafthands of the Last Raft, April 1982

Virgil Carter  
David Cheney  
John Crawford  
Hugh Darley  
Bill Deen  
Jeff Dukes  
Henry Eason  
John Eaton  
Sid Johnson  
Alan Kaye  
Miriam Litchfield  
Richard Madray  
Carlton Morrison  
Gordon O'Neal  
Lawson Peterson  
Charles Place  
Edwin Presley  
Del Presley  
Worth Presley  
Charles Reeves  
Lewis Selvidge

Charles Stewart  
Don Stewart  
Stanley Whonic  
Rebecca Yeomans

### RIDING DOWN TO DARIEN

by Henry Curtis Tillman

Pull the saw and swing the axe,  
Old Ten-mile roars like thunder.  
Let pine trees tall and cypress fall  
And bruise the ty-ties under.

Cart them off with a balance cart  
To the landing in a hurry,  
Then skiff them up and float them down  
By sixes to the ferry.

Whittle pegs of white-oak wood  
And pin the logs together.  
It takes a raft that's fastened good  
To ride a flooded river.

Untie the rope  
And let us float,  
This is the life for an outdoor man!

We're riding down past Doctortown,  
We're riding down past Doctortown,  
We're riding down to Darien!

The wind is sharp as a razor's edge,  
The skies are black as leather  
And only a man who is a man  
Can stand this river weather.

What cares a bearded face for cold  
 Or callous hands for blowing?  
 There'll be a fire to thaw us out  
 Down yonder where we're going!

Meanwhile we'll drink our coffee black  
 With Rag Point's waters churning.  
 Our women-folks will wait and wait  
 And welcome our returning!

Untie the rope  
 And let us float,  
 This is the life for an outdoor man!

We're floating down past Doctortown,  
 We're floating down past Doctortown,  
 We're floating down to Darien!

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## War Stories

Max Parnell

Word comes that Max Parnell, one of the legendary WWII Flying Tigers is dead at 79. Max was a senior when I was a freshman at Marietta High School.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued secret Special Orders for volunteer USAF pilots and Air Force personnel to be detached to the Nationalist Chinese Air Force headed by General Claire Chennault to keep the Burma Road open so that supplies could reach the Nationalist Chinese fighting the Jap invaders. This was before Pearl Harbor when we were not yet at war with Japan.

Mamie Hall went out to China at age 24 in 1924. Mamie was from Statesboro. In due time, she met General Chennault and played Bridge with him. He was almost deaf, she told me.

Mamie became personnel director of the Flying Tigers. She was the first woman to fly over the Hump, the Himalayan Mountains, the highest in the world. Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, her friend, gave her a valuable silk scarf, still in Mamie's family.

Mamie married James Porritt, an English wool merchant in China. Wartime conditions worsened and James sent her back home for seven years, after which she joined him in England and lived there several years after he died, taking care of her mother-in-law.

Max Parnell was shot down in 1944, after the Flying Tigers had been taken in the U. S. Air Commando Group. The Japs beat him in captivity but he would not talk. The cruelty of the Japs to the POW is almost unbelievable, Max' brother-in-law Avis Moore said.

Moore wanted a verse from High Flight to be included. "Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth. Put out my hand and touched the Face of God."

Max did not talk for years about the terrible awful treatment he received at the hands of the Japs. After 50 years, he finally set down in words his experience which he entitled "The Hell of Ofuna."

As a lowly freshman at Marietta High, I remember Max was elected Most Handsome Boy!

The Third Air Commando Group was stationed at Statesboro Air Base

before going to the Pacific. Mel Boatman, Martha Evelyn's husband, served in the Third Air Commando Group which was in the same larger army as the Flying Tigers after they were taken back into the U. S. Air Force.

B. H. Scott, of Bulloch County, was the grandfather of General Robert Lee Scott, Flying Tiger author of "God is My Co-pilot." Dr. Fred Manget of Marietta was a Methodist missionary doctor who served great and small in China including the Flying Tigers. He suggested the name "God is My Co-pilot," later made into a movie.

Did the late John B. Darley, Fred's cousin, know anything about the Flying Tigers? You bet he did! He was ferrying planes out of Cairo, Egypt to Kunming, China, when Jap fighter planes came in hot pursuit. Out of nowhere came up Flying Tigers who took out the Jap planes, saving John B's life. Tiger armorer Chuck Baisden of Savannah said that there were about 100 Flying Tigers still living in 1996.

### Clinton, Georgia Restoration

In middle Georgia, the Old Clinton Historical Society began to encourage restoration of Clinton in 1974. When we lived in nearby Gray, Clinton was overgrown with vegetation and almost a ghost town in the 1960s. Old Clinton Historical Society President D. V. Childs was my banker.

Anne Bowen Hamilton is a prime mover in the restoration. Her daughter Earlene Resseau edits their newsletter. Colonel Gordon Green is memorialized by the Society. He was the brother-in-law of Dr. Fielding Russell, of Statesboro, and a member of the Sunday School class I taught in Gray.

Clinton was the county seat of Jones County from 1808 to 1905. Students of Clinton Female Seminary (1821) became the nucleus of Georgia Female College (Wesleyan). There was no Macon in 1820 when the McCarthy-Pope House was built in Clinton (now restored). It was said that Macon would never amount to anything because it was too close to Clinton!

Clinton Methodist Church was founded in 1821. Wife Evelyn's ancestor, the Rev. Thomas Darley was pastor there in 1827. Another pastor was Dr. Lovic Pierce whose fourth generation descendant was editor of a popular Methodist periodical when we lived in Gray.

### Griswoldville Reenactment

The Battle of Griswoldville was fought in Clinton recently with over 1,000 people lining the street, closed for the day. Confederates charged the Union position seven times with cannon fire and muskets blazing. When the Confederate flag bearer was hit, another grabbed the flag and held it high.

The finale of the reenactment was a massed formation of both Union and Confederate reenactors. It was a photo opportunity but I saw it as a symbol of unity amid diversity which is America.

Historic Preservation Week is May 12-19. Old Clinton Historical Society had jumped the gun a week early (no pun intended).

### Another school year dawns

Are you ready for math? In high school algebra, I had a teacher named Golightly who also coached. It was rumored that he had an old football injury. My unsympathetic teenage buddies called him Crip Golightly (behind his back).

He was a good algebra teacher with folksy speech. When we made gross errors, he would say, "Aw, get out!" But we learned quickly not to leave the classroom! If we talked too much, he boomed, "Cut the jaw!"

I had a good geometry and trigonometry teacher. Ray Tipton was and is a prince of a man. He was a good detail man who expected effort every day at home and in class. He was a Phi Beta Kappan and carried a batch of academic keys. He later served as principal before being called into service in WWII as an army major.

The more vocal students would ask, "What good is geometry (or trig)?" He always drew a figure on the blackboard showing how the width of a river could be calculated without crossing it or how to calculate the height of a tree without climbing it (similar triangles).

When I was on furlough in Paris during WWII, I was walking down the middle of either the Rue de la Paix or the Champs Elysees when I met a boy from my hometown walking toward me! There were very few automobiles as the French had not yet had gasoline sources freed for civilian use and the old charcoal burning cars didn't go very fast.

Today, you would be run over long before you reached the centerline.

The hometown boy, Milton McLemore, said that Mr. Tipton was in Eisenhower's headquarters (SHAEP). "Let's go see him." We didn't see Ike but we did see Mister, ah, Major Tipton. We did not know whether we should salute, shake hands or hug his neck.

I had been a student at Georgia Tech earlier and had the dubious privilege of taking college algebra twice. I think the first instructor was named Nicholson and the second was an elderly professor retained because of war time shortage.

He wore a patch over one eye. We contrived to sit on that side of the room. The booger bear was a method of solving algebra problems known as "Homer's Method." Most of my Ga. Tech math professors never explained why we were using Homer's Method or any other method.

Analytic geometry was a good course. We plotted the curves represented by algebraic equations.

### Rainbow University

I had entered Tech at age 16 and had completed two years of college before I went into the army. After the war in Europe was over and The Bomb was dropped on Japan, saving my life and countless others, I was in the Army of Occupation for a year in Austria where the 42nd Rainbow Division inaugurated a college level program at Zell Am See called Rainbow University.

I took German, psychology and calculus. I applied what I learned in psychology to improve my study techniques. If I was stumped on a calculus problem, I did all on it I could just before I went to bed for the night. On many mornings, I awoke with the answer, ready to write! Operating was something called incubation.

Also I learned that one remembers better those things in a sequence which are studied first and last than those near the middle of the sequence. The principle of repetition or frequency of practice was well known for learning German vocabulary. Force, the other principle involved assigning contrast or drama to an item to be learned.

The most important principle for long term retention was to give the subject matter meaning. Meaningful material may never be forgotten.

Back at Tech after WWII, I had the great good fortune to schedule Dr.

D. M. Smith for calculus. He was a master teacher, reputed to have done some of Einstein's math for him. Albert Einstein was a theoretical physicist, not a great mathematician.

D. M. Smith had a short leg, a massive head we swore was full of brains and he wore a coat with chalk dust all over it. With all due respect to others, he was the best math teacher I ever had.

He could reduce the solution to any calculus problem to three steps, i.e.. Battle No. 1, Battle No. 2 and Battle No. 3 ~ each outlined in foot high numerals on the blackboard.

If we had whined that we couldn't get a problem, he set up the solution (it seemed so simple when he did it) and then he would laugh us to scorn. He was funny ~ so funny that I remember episodes 50 years later!

When he retired, we gave him a new car to replace the ancient horseless carriage he drove. I remember I gave \$5, equivalent to about \$200 in today's economy. The new car was presented at half time of a Tech football game in Grant Field.

And then there was Smilin' Jack. I don't remember his legal name. When he returned our test papers, he smiled. Most Tech professors never smiled. It was differential equations he taught. I made 100 on the first test. He smiled, I smiled. Then I made 80. He smiled, I smiled.

Then I made 60. He smiled, I winced. Fortunately the quarter was over before I reached grade of 40. I had probably reached my limit in math. Video circuits required application of differential equations.

I passed that course, also, but I had already determined, after taking a battery of tests, that I would change my career orientation, I did take a math course 10 years later at Mercer University under Professor Riley Plymale who had taught my father 40 years earlier at Locust Grove Institute.

### The Other Side of the Desk

I taught algebra and geometry several years in Macon. I was a rigorous teacher ~ the kind considered mean and demanding at the time but appreciated later! I learned that education is one of the few things some people pay for but don't want to get their money's worth!

At Georgia Southern Summer School, I took a course in Set Theory from Professor Walter Lynch which was exactly what I needed to teach geom-

etry in transition from the traditional to a contemporary approach, "Modern Math."

A statistics course at Mercer and another in my doctoral program at FSU were the source of some frustration for one schooled in precision engineering math.

Much of the calculation in statistics involves the element of chance or error. We are not omniscient so we call it chance. Our data are almost always samples, therefore an error exists (which can be calculated).

With school opening, I want to say that mathematics has both power and beauty. I was well over 30 years old before I saw the beauty. Too late. Virtually all first original contributions to the field of mathematics have been made by those 18 to 35 years old. If you're 40 and haven't done it, maybe you better just use what somebody else has created!

### Candlelight Dedication

Thirty years ago my father and I had tried to walk in the old Clinton Methodist Cemetery to read headstone inscriptions but dense underbrush prevented us. The Historical Society has cleared the cemetery and it is now accessible.

At dusk last Saturday, there had been a flurry of activity as men dressed in grey moved among the graves in the old cemetery, anxiously searching for certain tombstones ~ 23 of them.

Down the road from Clinton came the sound of marching feet and the ruffle of drums. As they came closer, I could see two women among them, dressed in black and wearing veils.

It was a platoon of Confederate reenactors. They halted at the edge of the cemetery, facing the old church. The only lights were lanterns and the occasional glare of spotlights of Channel 13, Macon.

A Confederate reenactor officer spoke of the 1,500 days of the War Between the States, averaging 300 deaths per day, the most casualties of any conflict in our history. It was not the outcome we were celebrating

but Confederate dedication and the valor of 23 men who lay silent among their kinsmen and neighbors in Jones County.

The moment we had come for had arrived. As the sargeant prepared to call the roll, I could see candles flickering here and there on tombstones in the darkness. Beside each one a Confederate reenactor stood with his rifle in a classic pose. Beside two were the widows in black.

"Willam A. Griswold." "Present in spirit, sir."

"John Childs." "Present in spirit, sir."

"Daniel N. Smith." "Present in spirit, sir."

"Roland Thomas Ross." "Present in spirit, sir."

I'm glad it was dark. I had difficulty maintaining my composure. I had known descendants of virtually all of the 23 departed Confederates during our five year sojourn in nearby Gray, Ga.

The roll call continued until all 23 had answered, "Present in spirit, sir." It was an emotional experience.

Prior to the service a reenactor said that this was his fourth year to answer the roll call for "James A. Jones." I saw a tear in his eye. The reenactor's name: James Jones! "Present in spirit, sir."

Twenty-one Confederates returned to Clinton after "The War." Two were killed in action, mourned by the widows in black.

There was a three volley salute, then from out of the darkness a bugle sounded the benediction, "taps."



A word from Editor Tony Phillips

Dr. Kemp Mabry is author of *Stories to Warm the Heart, Part 2*, based on his Statesboro Herald articles and his speeches. He has been a newspaper writer for 65 years. He has had five careers since he was graduated from Marietta High School in 1942.

- First career: Georgia Tech Electrical Engineer, W4GLE/KE4GL, and WWII high speed radio operator veteran. 10 years.
- Second career: YMCA Director. 10 years.
- Third career: High School Math and French teacher, Counselor, and Bibb County Director of Guidance and Counseling, Macon.
- Fourth career: Georgia Southern University Counselor Education Professor. 22 years.
- Fifth career: Retirement. President, then Executive Vice President, Bulloch County Historical Society, 1982 – present. Columnist for Statesboro Herald (gratis).

Tony Phillips, longtime friend and enthusiastic supporter, is Editor of *Stories to Warm the Heart, Part Two*. Phillips McDuff Public Relations Firm is the publisher.