

the

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 9, DECEMBER 1986

GROUNDHOG

A Publication of the Mentone Area Preservation Association

Zora Shay Strayhorn

by Jean McGehee.

A Proud Historian

Creativity and Spontaneity: It's never too late.

"My life hasn't been a total waste," laughs Zora Shay Strayhorn, author of *Mentone, Alabama: A History*. "I went to Dorothy Lamour's wedding reception, and I've danced with Lawrence Welk." She has the photographs and souvenirs to prove it.

And, like the movie stars in her native California, Zora changed her name. Born Frances Imogene Shay, she changed her name after the early deaths of her parents and her only brother. She was named Imogene after her paternal grandmother, a Christian Science practitioner. The new name was designed for her by friends to help assuage her grief over the deaths in her family.

The writer just turned 77; she graduated from Northeast Alabama State Junior College in Rainsville in 1978 with a degree in science--the oldest woman graduate. Previously she was graduated from Longmire's Business College in San Bernardino, California, where she had gone during the Depression. Zora's father was a druggist and real estate agent and broker. She had studied for a year and a half at San Bernardino Valley College, but circumstances forced her to change to the business college.

Zora had a quotation ready for *The Groundhog*: "The secret of being tiresome is in telling everything," by Voltaire. Then she

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the GROUNDHOG

VOL. 4 - NO.

MUSICAL MOUNTAIN The Indian: American CHRISTMAS Heritage of Shame by Mickey Strickland



During the parade Santa rides the Mentone Maggie

The Mentone Area Merchants Association, members of MAPA, the Town Council, and many others worked together to decorate Mentone and get an early start on the celebration of Christmas.

This year's Musical Mountain Christmas, which has become an annual holiday event, took place during the first weekend of December. On Friday night a tree-lighting marked the beginning of the festivities. Decorating the large cedar tree beside the Log Cabin Deli turned out to be no easy task: It took the combined efforts of a number of Mentone citizens, plus Sand Mountain Electric Co-op's Billy Clanton, Robert Stone, John Chipwood, Crockett Smith, Stan Skaggs, L. W. Moses, Mickey Willigatan, and CONTEL's Jack Johnston. (Both S.M.E.C. and CONTEL supplied trucks equipped with cherry pickers.)



The Log Cabin Deli Delights

On Saturday morning Santa made his appearance as part of the Mentone Christmas parade. Others in the parade included the Mentone Police and Fire Departments, Tony Goggans, WFPA Radio, Mayor Rob Hammond AND State Senator Lowell Barron, the Fyffe and Valley Head High School Marching Bands, the DeSoto Rescue Squad, WQRX Radio, the Mentone Maggie with Santa at the wheel, WSAF Radio, and the Log Cabin Deli staff.

The rest of the weekend was filled with music and entertainment, refreshments, visits from Santa, and a variety of other activities: Mark Herndon was on hand to sign autographs at the Mentone Springs Hotel; Mentone shopkeepers served refreshments and gave away door prizes; at the White Elephant Galleries there was banjo playing while Santa gave candy to all the children; the kids seemed to enjoy the weekend as much if not more than the adults.

This area is a special place. Nowhere else on earth does a river originate on the top of a mountain and flow there for miles through high canyon walls and over low plateaus to create such wildly beautiful scenes as rapids foaming and murmuring where waters meet ancient stones, and where dark pools keep the secrets of the birth of a mountain and the death of a nation hidden in their depths, barely whispering them on the surface of the black water for many to hear, but for few to understand or care.

When Andrew Jackson decided that the Indian people were less than human and were to be herded into pens like cattle and driven to a desolate, barren place far from this rich homeland, that they were to be starved and beaten in the chilling dead of winter, how appropriate that the death march should be called the Trail of Tears.

There were many reasons to weep on that prophetic journey, that infamous example of the European attitude of intolerance and hatred for those who possessed those things "they" wanted to own. At least half of the Cherokees lost their lives on that enforced trek. Tears poured like the rivers of home down the gaunt cheeks of once-proud faces as children died from exhaustion, exposure, and hunger. Then the elders began to fall by the wayside and were either killed by Jackson's soldiers or left to suffer until Death claimed his own. Mothers with child had their babies while the rest trudged onward, then picked up the bloody rags swaddling the doomed infant—and within hours of giving birth, were forced to keep up with the others.

Many settlers along the way would give food and blankets to the Indians, feeling intense remorse for a situation they knew to be founded in their own desire to possess that which belonged to another. One woman became obsessed with the endless stream of battered humanity and devoted herself endlessly to using any means she could to give supplies to these wretched beings. She slept little, became increasingly distraught, and finally broke completely under the strain of guilt she felt for her people who would feel none of their own. She never recovered.

Neither did the Indian Nation. The barren pieces of land they were forced to take in return for their lovely homeland were eaten away by the voracious hunger of the white man until only scraps remain. Until 1968, it was a violation of law to be an Indian. The Indian had to deny his heritage, practice his religion in secret and profess to be something he was not in order to keep his land and home. No child, if it was known he was an Indian, could go to school. If the government found out a child was Indian, he was taken away from his parents and placed in Indian boarding schools. This was for his own good, he was told, to help him be "assimilated" into the white man's world and stripped of his own. The Indian learned to lie, and to say he was "Black Irish" or "Black Dutch" and to take a European name. Even then he lived in constant fear of discovery.

State governments entered into agreements with the young United States in order to "rid" their areas of Indians—by whatever means it took, however inhuman or despicable. In Georgia, no Indian could dig the gold on his own land. A white man could however, and often stole it without a quail. If an Indian was wronged, he could not appear in court, although his white antagonist could. All judgements were in favor of the white man and automatically gave him all the Indian family owned. If the Indian did not make it through the often-harsh winter, no one seemed ready to protest. We have one of the most fair and equitable court systems in the world, but this proud institution must bear the guilt and shame of intolerance and unfairness when it was used, and is still being used, for the benefit of a few at the expense of the rights of the individual. Justice must be blind, and to see her looking into the black hearts of special-interest groups promoting mass-hysteria in the name of the common good or in the name of God, is to see Justice destroyed. Whether it be the Japanese locked into concentration camps in the West during World War II, or the Indian people still being abused, or women treated as if they were less than men, or blacks denied basic human rights because of the color of their skin, or pornographer's "rights" defended while the lives of children are destroyed in the process, or poor people treated as if to be hungry and homeless is somehow a judgement of God or their own fault, it is the product of the American dream become a nightmare because Justice has often been prostituted and degraded in the name of the common good.

Even though the Indian people were treated so badly, the men signed up in astounding numbers during wartime in order to defend that which the white man had stolen. The land was like a child to the Indian: no matter who

(continued on page 7)

Town Council Meeting

At the December Town Council meeting Mayor Rob Hammond announced that the drought is officially over; the storage tanks are full and water at this time of the year is plentiful.

The Mayor presented the Council members with copies of the audit for the year ending September 30, 1986. It will be reviewed over the next month and discussed at January's meeting.

The Council outlined plans to bushhog the tall brush and grass along several of the Town's side streets. Unfortunately, street repair work has been slowed by the rainy weather we've experienced of late.

It shouldn't be long before cable T.V. is available in Mentone. The latest reports are that Boyce Dooley is making progress on installing the cable system; providing no difficulties arise, it should only be a matter of weeks before he completes installation.

The Town Council urged that all people operating a business in Mentone make sure they obtain a business license. The licenses for 1987 may be purchased at the Town Hall beginning January 1.

After a brief discussion the Council decided to rent out the room that at one time housed the old Post Office. The extra money the rent would provide will help offset the loss of revenue sharing funds.

CHRISTMAS CANTATA



On Saturday evening December 20 at 7:00 P.M. the Mentone Wesleyan Choir will present the Christmas Musical entitled "Christmas...That's Why!"

JANUARY MAPA MEETING

January 6, 1986
Tuesday

Speaker: Pat Everett

Topic: A discussion of the travel industry.

The Parlor
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Church

7:00 p.m.

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POETIC LICENSE

By Greg Purvis

Poetry is an ancient art of words and phonetic syllables which are brought together to form a nearly audible picture in the reader's mind. Poetry can be expressed in short verse or songs, and is written about every subject one can imagine. Most traditional or classical poems tend to rhyme in a manner such as:

I went down to the market place
To see what I might find

And there a girl in nice lace
Leaving her tears behind

'Place' and 'Lace' and 'Find' and 'Behind' rhyme.

However, much modern, or imagistic poetry, does not rhyme. The rhyme is not the most important element of the poem, it is the feeling it produces in the reader.

Take a non-rhyming poem which tries to describe the feeling of a lost pet. It's called "A Cat's Funeral Dirge."

When my little cat died

He was, at least, happy

No great machine, the Satan of cat-kind

Ran him over in the street like a rag

No tremendous, slaving canine choked him

In a gaping rabid maw

And no cat disease struck him dead

Of cancer or consumption

It was only that it was his time

To pass on

To cat heaven

He died, and when I saw him

My eyes filled with tears

Laying rigid in the grass

Amongst the cat-nip and clover

The wind tainted with dust

Blew through his mangy fur

But I knew, if he could have,

He would have been smiling

Because he died in the fields

Where always he was happiest

But some people do not know the poetic law, which I will sum up in: "The right to write unbiased by rules of grammar or composition, in any style, with any words, and in any theme." Some people think all poetry must rhyme. So here is one for them, about the coming of night:

Oh, night is coming like a wave

A sweet and gentle kiss

Night is coming, hear it cry

Like a swan-song in the mist

Night is brooding over me

While in my cradle I sleep

From the very air it drips

From the window it will seep

The darkness comes across the land

Swallowing the sun

Night is brooding over me

And the darkness has only begun.



Zora Shay Strahorn signs a copy of her MENTONE ALABAMA: A HISTORY. A large crowd turned out to purchase the history and have it autographed by the author during a reception held at the Mentone Inn.

The Groundhog

Published monthly by the Mentone Area Preservation Association. First conceived on Groundhog Day, 1982, and organized April 6, 1982, for the purpose of preserving and protecting the heritage, natural environment, and other unique qualities of life in the Mentone Area. Chartered as a non-profit organization by the State of Alabama.

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Our Town

by Greg Purvis

COLLEGE BOUND! Fort Payne students Greg Purvis, David Lusk, and Bennett Morrison have been accepted into the University of Alabama for the fall of 1987. The three students are seniors at Fort Payne High School.

The DeSoto Rescue Squad held its annual Christmas dinner to elect officers for fall 1987 on Tuesday, December 2. The dinner was held at Helena's for all Squad members and their spouses. Afterwards, the election committee nominated officers for 1987. Those officers are: Captain-Joe Stephens, 1st Lt.-Pleas Cox, 2nd Lt.-Jessie Crabtree, Secretary-Treasurer-Linda Brown, Sergeant-David Mays, and Chaplain-Raymond Brown. The Program Committee consists of Mary Brown, Mae Shipley, and Betty Stephens.

Pleas Cox and new member Bill Adams attended a county meeting with Linda Brown near Birmingham last month.

The Rescue Squad is open for new members. The meetings are held every second Tuesday in each month at 6:30 P.M.

DeSoto State Park, under the supervision of Director Talmadge Butler, is beginning to upgrade the park for the spring-time tourist rush. Butler says that the Fall-Winter season was unusually good this year. There were several good weeks in early Autumn when the trees were colorful. Butler also commented that the water level in the river is at normal rise after the November rains.

To MENTONE AREA PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION, BOX 50 in support of the objectives of MAPA, desiring to join with others in preserving and protecting the heritage, natural environment and other unique qualities of life in the Mentone area, I enclose \$5 for voting membership for one through June 1987.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Groundhog:

I visit the Mentone area frequently with friends. We enjoy our visits to your town and we love reading *The Groundhog*. I have just one question: How's the fishing. We're planning a fishing trip for the spring, and we were wondering if we should include Mentone as a possible choice.

Kenny Whitehill
Atlanta, Georgia

I'm told the fishing in Little River is fair to excellent, depending on your skill as a fisherman, the time of year, etc. However, you should be aware that Alabama's fishing license laws have just changed. The following information was given to me by the DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES:

A new Alabama law makes some changes in the old fishing license requirement as it applies to people from out of state.

First of all, nonresidents who are 16 years old or older must have a valid annual or trip fishing license whether they fish in public waters or privately-owned ponds in Alabama. It used to be that nonresidents were exempt from purchasing a license if they fished in privately-owned ponds. This new law applies to fresh, salt or brackish waters.

Secondly, the new law establishes a reciprocal cost basis for fishermen of Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee. When fishermen who live in these states come to fish in Alabama, they will pay approximately the same price for an Alabama license that an Alabama fisherman would have to pay for a fishing license in Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, or Tennessee.

My Favorite Things

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Christmas

What does Christmas mean to me:

It's more than gifts and a tree;

The love of God was shown afar,

As His Son came from Heaven to where we are.

The angels came to the shepherds,

in a field,

Telling of the birth of a faithful

shield;

A star shone brightly in the

Bethlehem sky,

Telling of the birth of one who

would sacrificially die;

There was no room in the inn,

Therefore, He was born in the

stable where animals had been;

God's own Son was now on earth,

He was honored with gold,

frankincense, and myrrh;

His Son was now in the manger,

And as soon as the king heard,

there was anger.

He brought to earth, "Good

Tidings of Great Joy,"

Accessible to every man, woman,

girl and boy,

The greatest gift of all has been

given,

To everyone who accepts Him,

There's a home in Heaven;

We celebrate Christmas because

of Jesus' birth,

For He brought "Good Tidings of Great

Joy" to earth;

"Seasons Greetings Throughout the

Year, from Winter to Fall, and a

Merry Christmas to You All!"

Written By: Rev. James C. Young

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Any Time

by Lew Keith

What follows was extracted from an enjoyable morning of conversation with Zora Shay Strayhorn.--LYK

On the writing of *Mentone Alabama: A History*:

At one time-it was around May of 1984-I began to toss around the idea of writing the history of Mentone.

I was overcoming my fear of writing, feeling more at ease with it. I had been working with Jean McGehee for several months. I wrote a number of manuscripts which Jean would read; she'd then have me rewrite them, honing them, rewriting them ten or twenty times. One day I decided to visit Northeast Alabama Junior College; I'd graduated from there in 1978, so I know most of the teachers. I visited with Dr. Horton, Dr. Pendley, Dr. Woods, and Mr. Hester; I told them I had been thinking about writing a book. Dr. Horton told me to "Just start at the beginning and write." I visited with them for over two hours. I told them about Maydoc, who they were only slightly familiar with. During the two hours that we talked they gave me a lot of support and really inspired me to write the book. They told me: "Zora, you can do it, so go ahead and do it." I give them credit in the book.

I remember Mr. Hester-who is the business manager-asking me what religion I was. I told him that I was some place between an astrologer and a Mormon; he howled with laughter. But seriously, I have just one creed: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and Love and forgiveness. I wrote the history of Mentone because I love Mentone.

On what the future holds:

I have a deep love of Africa. I send donations and school supplies to a small Methodist school in Halare-it used to be called Salisbury. I have a deep desire to see Africa, to see the children who until now I've only seen in photographs, before the 21st century arrives. A lot of my friends say its too dangerous. If I'm going to die, I'd as soon die in Africa.

On life:

I believe that life is lived in moments. You can take a whole lifetime, and there are really only a few moments that really sing out against the background. The quality is much more important than the quantity.

On Mentone:

Before I came to Mentone I had this concept of elegance; I was a snob. When Dixie (Zora's deceased husband) got out of the Navy we moved here. At that time we had a place just off River Road. We had a gorgeous car then, but we always had to park it up the road when the stream was high, then trudge through the mud to the house. I had planned on settling somewhere in southern California; but Dixie had other plans-and now I'm glad he did. Eventually I fell in love with the Mountain; I love this environment and I do what I can to preserve its natural beauty.

I remember a conflict we once had with strip miners: they came to us and tried to buy our land. At that time I didn't even have a car. Dixie would say "Why don't we sell part of the land." We didn't pay very much for the land, and the miners were talking about

giving us \$5,000 for a few acres. But I wouldn't. I told Dixie: "No. I love you. I don't always like you, but I always love you. But I will not see the land spoiled." The only things that I really have around here are the trees, the birds, and the fresh air. Money's fine; I'm not against money. But I will never trade the quality of the land for mere dollars. Dixie told me I could be driving a new Cadillac; but I didn't want to own a Cadillac-it wouldn't be wise to drive a Cadillac on these old bumpy roads.

On success:

To me success is abundant good health; not just physically, but metaphysically, emotionally, spiritually, the whole picture. I think you should like yourself enormously. To express yourself, to have the time to do it in, is also very important. People think they need a lot of money to be successful; money is just a tool. If you want to paint, money buys you paint; money gets you to the point where you don't continually worry about paying bills. Success has many different meanings, but money can not measure success.

On truth:

A universal truth is applicable to any body, to any place or time. You read it in the literature of many countries. There's much that is parallel in the world. Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and on and on-they all share a universal truth. If you can apply it to your life, and it works for you, then you know it's true; truth is self-evident. But first you have to like yourself and accept yourself; a lot of people have guilt complexes. They say "I'm not worthy." Liking yourself, finding truths, it's all a mental process. People have to take the innate intelligence that they have and tie into what I call divine intelligence. But call it what you will, everybody can tune into this, but all people have to do it for themselves. This is the way to furnish your health, happiness, and well-being.

proceeded to tell about her past. After junior college and business school, she held a variety of positions, ranging from helping to make maps in the court house to work with construction engineers and architects during the war years.

There were politicians and sheriffs in her father's family and a strong German tenacity in her mother's. She also worked for the welfare department, the post office, and as a clerk in a hotel in Yellowstone National Park.

Today Zora lives in her "nest," a cottage on the outskirts of Mentone. But the fall of 1947 found her on the *Matsonia*, headed to Hawaii to work. Her stateroom mate was LaVica Gustafson, who was joining her husband Rudy, a Navy chief stationed at the submarine base in Hawaii. Zora found a job as secretary to a CPA who represented the government of New Zealand.

About nine months later, Rudy and LaVica Gustafson introduced Zora to Dixie Craig Strayhorn, a Navy chief who was a commissary steward. They were married in the base chapel two months after they met. A couple of years later Dixie sailed on the *Bluebird* to New London, Connecticut. Zora came to the states on a naval transport, through the Panama Canal to Norfolk, Virginia, where she was met by Dixie's family.

In New London where Dixie was once again stationed at a submarine base, Zora worked as secretary to the city clerk, judge of the probate court, and for the General Dynamics Corporation, who was building the *Nautilus* in Groton, Connecticut.

After four years in Connecticut, the Strayhorns visited the Gustafsons in Mentone. They fell in love with the area. They moved to an old farm house off the river road not far from the Berry Patch. It was called Windy Acres. Like the Gustafsons, they also adopted a son. Gregory Lee Strayhorn was four days old when he came into the family in February, 1955.

In the autumn of 1955 two members of the Board of Education of Cherokee County visited Zora and asked whether she could teach in a one room school at Five Points, not far from Cloudland, Georgia. Clara Cash worked with her. "It was a disaster," Zora recalls. "I had no more business..." The children were in grades one through nine. She picked up some of them on her way to school, carried wood for the stove, and broke ice on the pails of water.

Dixie went to school in Fort Payne to secure his high school diploma. In December 1956 they sold the farm and went to San Bernardino, California, where Zora had previously lived. Here Dixie worked as a cook for the Sheriff's Department and for the Forestry Service. Zora returned to work at Norton Air Force Base where she had worked before her Hawaii sojourn. Young Greg played in the base nursery. In 1960 the young family returned to Mentone and bought the present home, Pine Tree Ranch.

The Mentone history is her first published writing although she has been interested in writing for many years. Another interest is religion, and she is a member of St. Joseph's-on-the-Mountain Episcopal Church. "I've also maintained an interest in the esoteric sciences," Zora reports.



The December MAPA meeting was a time to celebrate the coming of Christmas; Randy Still served up a delicious buffet while Tony Goggans' music gave everyone the Christmas spirit.

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"Dixie always said I was unorganized," she smiles, "but I'm just not organized like most people. I'm organized in my head." Comfortable by her fireplace, surrounded by the batiks, collages, watercolors, and oil paintings created by her own hands, Zora is content to focus on her writing.

She maintains a close friendship with a cousin, niece and nephew and others in California. She has sent supplies to a Methodist sponsored church school in Zimbabwe and corresponded with a teacher there. A visit to Africa has long tempted her, as well as a trek to California. Greg is now a staff sergeant in the air force, Stationed in Dover, Delaware. Dixie died two years ago.

Even though the research on the Mentone history was long and arduous, Zora still has ambitions for further writing. Don't be surprised when another publication is forthcoming from this original, creative Mentone resident.

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Mountain Watch

by Charles White McGehee

When Christmas descends on Mentone, a kind of magic envelops the town, part of a celebration that is a blessing to the Western world. Its theme is joy and hope and the eternal promise of peace on earth. In addition to its religious meanings, it is the time of the winter solstice, when the sun has reached its lowest point on the slopes of Sand Mountain.

All across the earth this phenomenon is occurring. Just when days are the longest, and sometimes hope is at a low ebb, the sun begins its northward trek again, signifying a new year and new expectations. In addition to Jesus, it is a time when other religions of the east have celebrated the births of Buddha, Confucius, and Krishna.

To most of us, from earliest childhood, Christmas is the time of the birth of the Christ child. Sometimes we overlook the fact that as a child in Nazareth Jesus observed Hanukkah, the Jewish festival of the lights. There is a traditional story about Hanukkah.

Long before the time of Jesus, Syrian armies under King Antiochus invaded Israel. The temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. An old priest named Mattathias refused to bow down before the foreign gods. "Whoever is for our God, let him follow me!" he shouted as he went up into the mountains, followed by his five sons. Many other Jews went up into the hills.

Under leadership of Mattathias' oldest son, Judas Maccabee, they hammered away at the well equipped Syrian army—which was soon driven from the land. Their first task was to repair the temple. After eight days this was done. In a service of worship the sacred flame was lit, which was to burn always; more oil could not be brought in for eight days.

According to legend, however, the flame burned eight days. In their happiness at new freedom the Jews began the celebration of Hanukkah, which lasts for eight days. Each night an additional candle is lit in the menorah. Each night the children are given an extra present. Anne Frank in her diary writes of the sustenance of the Hanukkah service during her two years of living in an attic in Holland hiding from the Nazis.

So if you happen to encounter a Jewish friend during the holidays, give this greeting: "Happy Hanukkah!"

An earlier festival of the lights comes with the advent of fall. The Hindus celebrate Divali, which means "cluster of the lights." Continuing for a week, it is the Hindu New Year. On the first night of the New Fall Moon there are oil lamps and colored lights.

Along the roofs and windows of every house these lights dazzle and fireworks light up the night. Hindus send gaily colored greeting cards. There is much family visiting. In many Indian communities the celebration is accompanied with dancing in the temples and processions through the streets.

There are sweetmeats for the children and bonfires in the villages. Divali symbolizes the goddess of wealth and fortune, riding across the land astride a giant owl just at dusk scattering her gifts to all of the deserving—very similar to Santa Claus in America. Divali also is a victory of light over darkness.

So as we celebrate Christmas in Mentone, let us realize that it has many facets, a mystique which touches the human heart and which means many different things to many different people—but underneath it all, even with the over-commercialism, it is possible for some to hear the singing of the angels, to others a plea for peace on earth, and to millions across the earth, something that defies mundane understanding.

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Fort Payne. Very much a part of the complicated details of bringing this project about is Mentone's Sammy Cash, long-time forest ranger, productive fire chief, and at present Democratic Party beat representative from this area.

As member of the Hospital Board Sammy was involved in many of the complicated matters of phasing out the old hospital and purchasing the land for the new BMC. Still active in politics, Sammy is staying in touch with things at the Court House by serving as bailiff.

Jean and I have a great deal of confidence in the quality of medical care in this county. I hope a long time elapses before I am required to test the facilities of the new hospital. But my own personal staff of medical caretakers gives me no concern about not living in a huge metropolis.

Central and continuing factor in any family's health is the general practitioner, sometimes called doctor of internal medicine. Ours is Dr. George Weatherly. With regular checkups he monitors our conditions, emanating geniality, instilling confidence, and giving full attention to the patient at hand. He causes one to feel that there is a joint consultation going on—not an autocratic pronouncement about to be made. As a superior diagnostician, I have confidence that in a crucial situation he could get me immediately to a metropolitan specialist.

Our surgeon, Dr. Alex Walker, is widely known and accepted for his skills. Here is an example. Two years ago on a trip through Virginia I was stricken with an abdominal infection and was a patient for several days in a hospital in Abington. It was a condition that required a gallbladder removal. Back at Mentone I called a urologist I had known in Chattanooga. He said, "I'll do it, but you have right there in Fort Payne one of the best." He was proven correct.

Because of the time spent on my feet, they require special care. I've developed much confidence in Dr. Michael Lyons, an orthopedic surgeon who could well be practicing in a big city hospital. Incidentally, he lives on the Parkway just below Mentone. He is doing some highly complicated surgery, such as artificial joints, and has a wide practice in handling accident victims. It's a comforting thing to know he is at the other end of a telephone in event of a bad fall.

Care of my eyes is in the competent hands of Dr. Michael Parker. At the regular checkups he is alert to any new maladies, careful with new lenses when needed, sensitive to my needs. Once when new reading glasses were being fitted, he made a house call to see me at my desk, to take into consideration lighting and distance.

This glowing praise of my staff does not imply that there are not others in these fields equally confident. I know their calibre and think they must be representative of others. You probably have your own words of praise. There is constant glowing testimonial for Valley Head's Dr. James Quimby, right there at the bottom of the mountain, one of the last of the real country family doctors. He is so noteworthy that he earned cover status on *The Groundhog*.

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took it away the heart still yearned for it and loved it just the same. Many Indians have been cited for bravery in the Wars the white man declared.

The atrocities committed against the Indian people would take volumes to recount, and the same sickening attitude that allowed them to happen still prevails in the small minds of some individuals today. But the Indian people have endured indignity and humiliation at the hands of mean-spirited and greedy people ever since the first red hand of friendship was offered to the white visitor who came in for sanctuary from the sea, and stayed to slaughter his host. The Indians are well-acquainted with suffering, but they are still a proud people who have the strength of spirit that can only be forged in the flames of tribulation. They will endure, and their knowledge and love of the earth is badly needed in our destructive society. They have much to teach, and God help us, we have much to learn.

(Many thanks to Chief Joe Steward of the Echota Cherokee Tribe for assistance in the development of this article.)

An Indian Prayer

O' GREAT SPIRIT

*Whose voice I hear in the winds,
And whose breath gives life to all the world,
hear me! I am small and weak, I need your
strength and wisdom.*

LET ME WALK IN BEAUTY, and make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset.

MAKE MY HANDS respect the things you have made and my ears sharp to hear your voice.
MAKE ME WISE so that I may understand the things you have taught my people.

LET ME LEARN the lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock.
I SEEK STRENGTH, not to be greater than my brother, but to fight my greatest enemy—myself.

MAKE ME ALWAYS READY to come to you with clean hands and straight eyes.

SO WHEN LIFE FADES, as the fading sunset, my spirit may come to you without shame.

Mountain Greenery by Desmond Disney

Tips on buying plants

Knowing what to look for and what to avoid when purchasing plant material is important to the success of your landscape. Here are some tips to follow when buying trees and shrubs.

It is best to buy from a local nursery, whenever possible, (department stores usually do not have the right conditions for keeping plants) and it gives you the opportunity to choose the individual plants that are wanted (as opposed to buying from a mail order nursery). And, since transportation from a local nursery is quicker and easier, the plants have a better chance to arrive in good condition. It is also a poor practice to look for bargain plants. They may be dug specimens with poor root systems, or not true to name.

Deciduous trees and shrubs are sold bare-rooted, container-grown or balled and burlaped. Evergreens are sold either container-grown or balled and burlaped.

The least expensive form is bare-rooted; the roots are bare of soil. Reputable nurseries and mail-order nurseries pack the roots in dampened material-like fibrous sphagnum moss and wrap them in plastic moss in order to conserve water. Do not buy plants on which the roots have been allowed to lie exposed to the air and sun, no matter how low the price. Chances of the plants surviving are slim.

Buying plants with their roots inside the ball of soil in which they have been growing all along, wrapped in burlap (balled and burlaped), or inside a container (container grown) greatly increases their chances of survival. In fact, many shrubs, after they reach a height of 3 feet or more, will not survive digging and transplanting in bare rooted form and must be sold balled and burlaped or container grown. Azaleas, which have a shallow root system, are one example.

There are, however, a few things to watch for when buying balled and burlaped or container grown plants. The burlap around the roots of a balled and burlaped plant should be tight as a drum head; if it is loose the roots will tear away from the soil; and don't buy plants if the soil inside the burlap is loose and the roots wobble around inside the soil. This usually indicates that the plant was dug up, placed on a piece of burlap, and then dirt thrown around the roots. This is called a "manufactured" ball, and it isn't much better than moving the plant bare rooted.

When buying container grown plants, make sure they were properly raised. The good ones have been grown in the containers in which you purchase them. The poor ones were grown in the field and then dug up and put into containers for easier handling. The trouble with such plants is that they lost perhaps half their roots to the spade when they were dug up. If the roots stick out above the soil and over the rim of the container, the shrub was probably field grown. If you cannot tell, ask the nursery man to lift the shrub and its soil part way out of the container. If you see many roots, resembling a tangle of spaghetti, tightly packed on the outside of the ball of soil, the plant was probably started in the container and it is satisfactory. If the roots are sparse or invisible around the soil ball, or if the soil ball itself is loose and crumbly, the shrub probably has not been in the container long and should be rejected.

However, a plant that has been in its container too long is not a good choice either. Chances are the roots may have become constricted, doubling back to wind around one another until it becomes root-bound. In ex-

treme cases it will choke itself to death. Look at the top growth of a container grown plant. If it seems sparse and unhealthy, the plant may be root bound; in any event pass it by.

Resist the temptation to buy big, old shrubs hoping they will enhance the look of your yard immediately. Besides being more expensive than younger plants, unless they have been specially treated in the years before their sale, and then been very carefully dug up and moved, they are bound to suffer so much shock in the process of transplanting they may never again regain their original grace. Buy young plants about half the size they will reach at maturity. For example, if a plant will reach the height of 6 to 10 feet, buy one no more than 3 to 5 feet.

Look for signs that distinguish strong, healthy plants from weaker ones. The best shrubs have a number of canes (stems that branch out from the central stem close to the ground). Look for dense, full plants with many stems coming off the main branches and with leaves that are blemish free. The more buds on flowering trees and shrubs the better. Don't buy plants with shriveled bark, stems with many dead branches or brown leaves. This may indicate that the plant is diseased, injured, or poorly cared for. Plants that are under-nourished, growing in the wrong soil, or suffering from root damage usually display yellow-green leaves and should be avoided.

A number of symptoms can tell you whether a plant is being attacked by pest. Look at the leaves for discolored spots that indicate fungus disease, or holes that show the presence of insects. Examine the joints where leaves are attached to the stems for stuff that resembles soft white cotton; the "cotton" is a colony of mealy bugs. Also check for spider mites by holding a piece of white paper beneath the leaves and shaking the plant; if tiny dots start dancing on the paper, the plant should be passed over. The presence of cankers—malformations that resemble dark knots on the stems—cut off the flow of sap, eventually spreading and killing the plant unless the afflicted stems are cut away.

And finally never buy a plant on which branches are tied up without first taking off the twine to make sure the branches are reasonably full and symmetrical. If the nursery man trusses up the branches to make transportation easier for you, check to see which is the fullest or prettiest side and tie a piece of string to it; this will help later when placing the plant. And when transporting plants in an open truck, cover them with a tarp to protect the foliage from the wind. Wind burn will cause the leaves to turn black and fall off prematurely.

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