

the GROUNDHOG

VOL. 2 - NO. 11 - FEBRUARY 1985 A Publication of the Mentone Area Preservation Association

The Young Dreamer, History's Verdict Awaited

No one can predict how future historians will evaluate persons and events. But there is a good possibility that in coming decades Mentone historians will compare Bruce Bon Fleur with Colonel Milford Howard, the Vagabond Dreamer who left his mark on this area in the twenties and thirties.

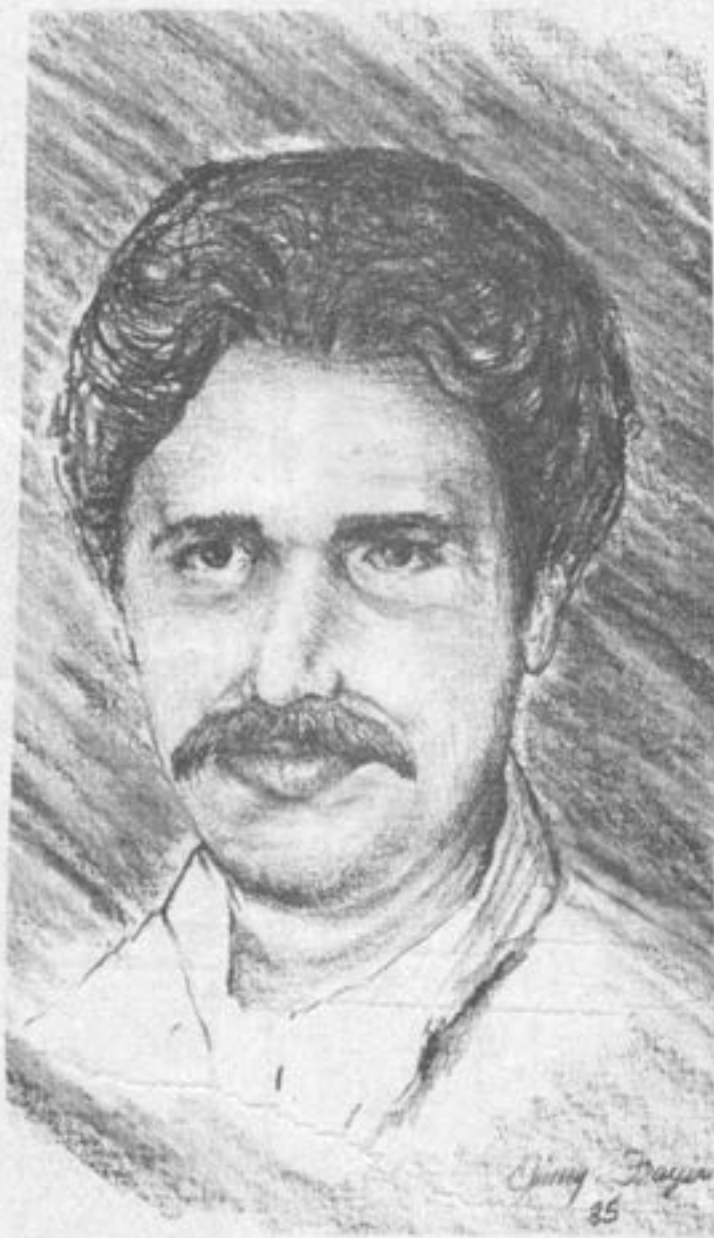
Without Bruce Bon Fleur there is little doubt that there would be no Mentone Area Preservation Association, no **Groundhog**, no Cragsmere Manna Restaurant, nor any memories of the gala celebrations of the 100th birthday of the town of Mentone and the Mentone Springs Hotel.

Just as in the case of the legendary Colonel Howard, it can be said that in many ways the reach of Bruce exceeded his grasp; he is a creative mover who left his mark on our town.

Recently voted a life-time member of the Mentone Area Preservation Association, he is now applying his talents as an executive for the Young Men's Christian Association in Chattanooga. Bon Fleur is no longer a full-time Mentone resident, visiting only occasionally on weekends. In future years he would like to own a haven here where he could occasionally visit, possibly retire.

A native of Florida, he graduated from the University of Florida in 1973 with a degree in education and majors in political science and history. For four years he was in charge of the summer youth programs at the Daytona Beach YMCA, later becoming director of the Marco

(Continued On Back Page)



Pencil Drawing By Jimmy Frazier

Both The Town Council And MAPA Oppose Building
Of Power Plant At DeSoto Falls — Page 1

the GROUNDHOG

Waterfalls, Walls, Sidewalks March Discussion At MAPA

"Waterfalls, Walls, and Sidewalks" is the theme of the March meeting of the Mentone Area Preservation Association at the fire hall on March 5 at 7 p.m. Because of the importance of the matters to be discussed, all Mentone citizens are urged to attend, whether they are members of the organization or not.

The meeting will deal with such matters as the proposal to build a power plant at DeSoto Falls; the increasing emphasis on the need for a sidewalk from Old Hotel Square to the Post Office; and further consideration of repairing the damage to the rock walk along the side of Highway 117 from Mentone to Valley Head.

Presiding at the meeting will be Homer Crow, MAPA director. Refreshments will be served.

Council Praises Snider For Keeping Water Going

At the meeting of the Town Council on Feb. 4, town employee Leroy Snider was commended in a unanimous resolution for working far beyond the routine requirements during the recent cold weather. On the coldest morning in January with the thermometer registering 22 below, Mr. Snider walked lines and checked numerous meters, searching for leaks in water pipes.

Councilmen also unanimously passed a resolution opposing the proposed hydro-electric plant at DeSoto Falls (See article elsewhere). Also, a motion was unanimously passed that there will be a minimum charge of \$150 for installation of a new water meter, plus any additional charges because of location or terrain.

Other topics discussed included charges for town legal services and the possibility of talking with different engineering firms for future contracts with the town. Mayor Hammond and several councilmen will attend a workshop at Northeast Alabama Junior College on how to secure and apply for grants. Mayor Rob Hammond will also attend a mayors' meeting on Feb. 14.



LEROY SNIDER

Cloudmont Booms

Dramatic winter weather has brought hundreds of skiers and much media attention to Cloudmont Ski Resort. All in one day helicopters descended and three TV crews arrived. The result was colorful news stories on Huntsville's Channel 19, Channel 12 Chattanooga, and both Channels 13 and 6 Birmingham. Olive Jones reports booming business, all cabins and chalets filled weekends, plus DeSoto Park Motel and Best Western in Fort Payne. Weekend business has thrived by influx of skiers at Cragmere Manna Restaurant, Log Cabin Deli and Furgerson's Drive-In.

Lost And Found

The Groundhog Award sign is missing. It was last seen when emplaced at the Blackburns' home when it won the award of the month.

Town Council And MAPA Oppose Power Plant At DeSoto Falls



Gourdies On TV

On Thursday, Feb. 21, Alabama Public Television will feature an in-depth account of a recent visit to the Gourdies headquarters of Sharon Barron. Charlotte Moakly and the camera crew spent several hours with Sharon, preparing the feature on Thursday, Jan. 31.

Brow Briefs

Homer Crow, MAPA Director, wishes to thank all of his friends who sent him flowers, cards, and who telephoned about him during his recent hospitalization... MAPA Secretary Amelia Brooks is visiting in California where on Feb. 10 she was filmed for a future showing of *The Wheel of Fortune*... Angelo Rosario, formerly with Eastern Airlines in Miami, has been helping *The Groundhog* with his talents as a photographer... continued thanks to Donna Bukley for her photos.

Sammy Cash, recently elected to the executive committee from Place 4 to the DeKalb County Hospital Board, has been busy with the intricate negotiations for the new hospital building in Fort Payne.

Our Mentone players on the championship Valley Head football team continue to receive acclaim. On the All-Area 16-A team Jeff Harrison was included for rushing 1,500 yards, and Scott Tate was included for his outstanding work as split end.

In sending his check for membership into MAPA, Circuit Judge David Rains addressed the following to the editor: "You and *The Groundhog* staff have contributed greatly to capturing the lore and personality of the Mentone area, and I commend you for your dedication and perseverance."

Because the Cherokee Indians once inhabited this area, our readers will be interested in learning that Jim Dykes, a TVA editor, is walking the Trail of Tears, the sad and tragic route of the forced march from Red Clay, Tenn., to Tahlequah, Okla. His written account should be of much interest.

William Crow, formerly of C and H Lumber Company, now mayor of Valley Head, was featured Monday, Feb. 4, on Channel 31 news when Jamie Cooper, the Country Rover, pointed out that Valley Head was the coldest town in Alabama. Mayor Crow has been reporting temperatures to the weather department for 30 years.

On successive evenings at their February meetings, the Town Council and the Mentone Area Preservation Association unanimously adopted resolutions opposing the proposal of a Maryland firm to construct a hydroelectric plant at DeSoto Falls.

Synergetics, Inc., of Annapolis, Md., would build a powerhouse 23 feet wide by 18 feet long at the dam to house a generator that would feed electricity to the Alabama Power Company. At both the council and MAPA meetings it was stated that the project served no practical purpose to Mentone and that it would be highly detrimental to the natural beauty of the falls.

Synergetics has run three legal ads announcing intention of the project. Mayor Rob Hammond has expressed strong opposition to the project, stating to the Fort Payne *Times-Journal* that he knew of no one supporting the project.

Full text of the MAPA resolution is as follows:

We, the members of the Mentone Area Preservation Association, strongly deplore the application of Synergetics, Incorporated, for construction of a hydroelectric plant at the DeSoto Falls Dam. It is in direct opposition to our goals of "preserving and protecting the heritage, natural environment and other unique qualities of the Mentone Area."

Such a plant would be critically near Desoto State Park, the 18,000 acres of the Little River Wildlife Management Area (where rare species of animal and plant life are preserved), to the summer youth camps along Little River, to the nature trails and other natural attractions.

Not only is an ecological balance involved, the plant represents a threat to the tourist-centered economy of North DeKalb County.

We feel that the Tennessee Valley Authority is meeting our power needs adequately and that this is merely a commercial venture by private interests.

We urge intervention in these plans by our county commissioners, state authorities, and all other officials and agencies involved, including the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Adopted Feb. 5, 1985
Mentone Area Preservation Association
Homer Crow, director

No Abuse Repeaters, Says Judge Wilson

"There have been no Child Abuse Repeaters," said Judge Robert Wilson in his remarks at the Feb. 5 meeting of the Mentone Area Preservation Association. His remarks centered upon the recently inaugurated Parents Anonymous group in DeKalb County.

The National Council for Child Abuse has about one million cases reported each year, supposedly only one-third of the actual abuse perpetrated. Some 2,000 children die annually from having been abused. The Department of Pensions and Securities in DeKalb County receives 20 to 30 reports of child abuse each month.

Judge Wilson stated that so far there have been no repeaters from those who have participated in the Parents Anonymous program. He also said that there is a desperate need for foster homes in this county.

At the conclusion of Judge Wilson's remarks and a brief discussion, those present enjoyed MAPA's third birthday cake with coffee, arranged for and served by Shurlee Froehler.

Associate director Donna Bukley presided in the absence of Director Homer Crow who is ill.

New Auxiliary



Shown above are Syble Tipton and Juanita Moneymaker of Huntsville as the charter was presented for the newly-formed Unit 215 of the American Legion Auxiliary. The next meeting will be April 11, at 7 p.m., at the Fire Hall. Anyone eligible and interested in joining the auxiliary may phone Syble Tipton (4120) or Nancy Lusk (4205).

Groundhog Finance Report

JANUARY ISSUE

Income	
Balance on hand	\$831.50
Ad Sales	225.00
	\$1,056.50

Debits	
U. S. Post Office (includes permit)	\$100.86
Donna Bukley, sales, delivery	63.75
Angelo Rosario, photos	39.75
The Summerville News Co.	178.75
	\$383.11

Balance on hand	\$673.39
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Leftovers

By Jean McGehee

Charles was once the youngest, or one of the youngest, newspaper editors in the country. But my journalistic career has been largely confined to schools, both as student and teacher. So you can imagine my excitement to learn that at least two people read my column about typing the **Groundhog** address labels.

Bill Cyr, of Mar-Mil Steel and Supply Company in Fort Payne, wrote and volunteered that his company would be willing to print the labels on a computer each month, even if it meant depriving me of my associations. So those of you out of Mentone who receive the paper each month, please notice the address labels and give thanks to Mr. Cyr along with us.

In last month's column I had wondered about the name Creswell Groves, as it had come to me. A letter arrived from Mrs. Howard Rempe of Hallandale, Fla., telling me that in 1983 while she was living in Mentone, she was asked by Mrs. I. T. O'Bryan of Lindale, just south of Rome, to have the name of her sister, Mrs. Creswell Groves, placed on the mailing list. Mrs. Groves died on Jan. 21 in Rome.

Mrs. Groves was Henry Battey Groves, who had spent many years here in Mentone. She worked in the office at Camp DeSoto and rented a house to the Rempes who say that Mrs. Groves was "a very kind, sweet, witty and interesting lady."

THE GROUNDHOG began publication in April, 1983, evolving from the MAPA newsletter. The first year we had forty-seven advertisers; last year 85 persons or businesses advertised with us.

We spent a heart-warming 10 days in Jacksonville, Fla., where Charles is minister emeritus at our church there. On the way home, that bone-chilling weekend of Jan. 20-21, our toes almost froze. Then the following weekend, we went to Birmingham for Charles to participate in a memorial service for our beloved Alfred Hobart (our first minister) and on the way home on Sunday the rain suddenly turned into ice around Collinsville. We arrived home to hear on the Huntsville TV stations that the highway up the mountain was closed.

Signs of the times: Children fishing through auger holes on Gordon Strickland's pond... Helicopters depositing and picking up skiers at Cloudmont.

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.

Charles White McGehee, Editor
Jean McGehee, Associate Editor
Donna Bukley, Advertising, 634-4678
Homer Crow, Director
Donna Bukley Associate Director
Amelia Brooks, Secretary
Shurlee Froehner, Treasurer

Groundhog For Posterity

When future historians are combing the prime sources of information about Mentone, they can be assured that all copies of **THE GROUNDHOG** will be stored in the files of the DeKalb County Library and in the vaults of the Probate Court Office. These arrangements were made at the request of Probate Judge Paul Thomas (a member of MAPA), and Librarian Rachel Manning. Each month copies of the current **GROUNDHOG** are sent to these important sources. Director Homer Crow is investigating possibilities for having all issues being placed on microfilm.

VIEWPOINT

By Charles White McGehee

At the slightest provocation we like to go out to a restaurant for a lusty breakfast. We truly agree with the Alice Woolf heritage that an excellent way to start the day is to get dressed, get out of the house, and have breakfast with good people in a restaurant. When we have breakfast in Valley Head, it's usually Tiger's Inn. Sometimes in Summerville when we take the **Groundhog** to the printers we eat at The Round Table. There's a wait of over an hour between reading proof and picking up the fresh-run copies.

The Tiger's Inn and The Round Table have something in common. We call it "the club table." We don't know what they call it. It's a large table off to the side of each place where people who seem to know each other gather for breakfast or a cup of coffee. The remarkable thing about the club tables is that its occupants are constantly changing.

One fellow will say, "Well, I'd better be getting along. I have a roof to put on." Another might comment, "I can't make any money sitting here jawing with you guys." So they leave. In a few minutes someone else will take their places. Usually they are on the way to work. Sometimes it seems to be a retired fellow just enjoying the companionship.

At first we thought it was a kind of family table or where the owners and waitresses sat for a break. But it soon became apparent that this was an institution that just sprang up. I became envious. These people thoroughly enjoyed each other, their sausage, eggs, pancakes and coffee — or just coffee. Some of them didn't talk much, just enjoyed chatter about the weather, the Braves, or somebody's house getting broken into.

How good it would be, I thought, to have breakfast at that club table. Then, one morning, when we entered Tiger's Inn, all of the other tables were taken. Lo, and behold, the club table was empty. Timidly I asked the waitress, "Can we eat there?"

"Certainly," she said. It all came about with unbelievable ease and grace. We ordered, began eating, and in a very few minutes a fellow came and sat at the other end of the table. He ordered a cup of coffee and entered into conversation. We had never seen him before.

Dalton Turner came over, stood and talked with us for a little while. In time, others came and went. Some we knew, others were strangers.

It was unbelievable. We had made it. We were eating at the club table. Part of the rotation. Accepted. No dues. No committee assignments. No membership card. Part of an institution of sheer delight.

A survey should be made of these club tables. There must be a tradition that brought them about. Perhaps it was a club table that was involved in a Huntsville TV feature some time ago. Somewhere on Sand Mountain the owner of a restaurant announced that he was losing money and would have to sell out. A bunch of men who had eaten there for years, gathering regularly for breakfast, sharing their views and companionship — probably at the club table — decided to buy the restaurant.

About 20 men pooled their resources and preserved a living tradition. They know what life is all about. They know what preservation is, and what a good breakfast is.



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objectives of MAPA, desiring to join with
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area, I enclose \$5 for voting membership
for one through June 1985.

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ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

Mentone, Alabama Chapter IV, The Explorers

Wherever one turns in Mentone, long shadows of the past cast their reflections of events and of people who traveled through here as explorers and adventurers. Towns, villages, rivers, parkways, atomic sights, and cities all carry the names of people or events in Alabama history. Credit may be given to the English, Irish, and Scots for the language. The French contributed, among other things, the flowering shrub azalea that is native to Mentone. The English were among the first to build churches and schools and to establish law and "blue laws." The popular dances at the Crafts Festival held each summer in Mentone reflect the Irish jig and the Highland fling which started in the mountains of North Carolina. The Indians and the African slaves brought here first by the French have also influenced the culture.

Mrs. Paul White, granddaughter of John Mason, renowned as Mentone's founder, is a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution which erected a historical marker at Fort Morgan on Mobile Bay. The marker reads:

In memory of Prince Madoc, a Welsh explorer, who landed on the shores of Mobile Bay in 1170 and left behind, with the Indians, the Welsh language.

Many authorities vigorously agree that Madoc landed in Alabama and came on up into Tennessee and Georgia and that there are three forts which are of pre-Columbian origin. The forts were built in defense of a people, apparently in deadly fear of their lives.

The forts are at DeSoto Falls in Mentone; Old Stone Fort, 70 miles west of Chattanooga in Tennessee; and Fort Mountain in Georgia, 70 miles southeast of Chattanooga. The forts show engineering expertise. They reflect the type of structures in Wales and not Indian construction.

At DeSoto Falls on the west bank of Little River below the falls is a cliff that has been aided by sharp cutting tools (although crude) to form four caves. Delicate footwork is needed to descend the precarious narrow path downward.

One of the four caves is rather large with an arched top. Man carved a passageway to a second room. At the edge of the third room, one looks from a ledge to a direct drop of 150 feet below into the frothy waters of Little River. The fourth cave is entered by crawling. The first cave room has a heavy dusting of ancient black smoke.

Ascending over the same narrow path to the top, one may view the site of an ancient fort whose rocks have been carried away by modern cliff dwellers to construct their summer homes. The contour of the solid ground indicates a peninsula has been formed by the bend in the river. There appears clear evidence of the remains of an ancient fort by the crumbling rocks and old stones that still remain. It would be a safe, secure hiding place; only one guard would be needed since only one person could enter at a time.

Several historians agree that the forts were built before the time of Columbus. A seed fell into one of the 20 foot high walls and when its tree was cut down Aug. 7, 1819, the 337 annual rings counted dated the stump to be 1482, but the fort had been built before that date.

The Mandan Indians of North America of light colored skin are said to be descended from the Welsh expedition. There is one bit of evidence that is a rebuttal to the Welsh story. Thomas Stephens, a Welsh scholar, submitted an essay in a contest in 1858 that stated the voyage of Madoc was conjured up because of jealousy of Columbus.

Zella Armstrong, in *Who Discovered America*, states

that ancient Roman coins have been found in several places where the Welsh forts were constructed. There was commerce between Rome and Wales, and the Welshmen with Madoc could have carried coins of great age. During the Roman occupation of Wales, Roman coins were minted.

The first Spanish explorer to see Alabama was Alonso Alvarez de Pineda when he sailed into Mobile Bay in 1519 and drew a map of the coast as he sailed along it. The first Spanish explorer to penetrate the interior of Alabama was Hernando de Soto.

DeSoto shouts at one in Mentone, Alabama: DeSoto Falls, DeSoto Parkway, DeSoto Park, caverns, hotels, movie houses. The science of archaeology is now finding evidence of remains of Spanish artifacts linking names and places of the route Hernando de Soto took through Alabama, Georgia, the Carolinas, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana.

DeSoto, from Castile, Spain, had been part of the looting of Peru with Pizarro. He had returned to Spain a wealthy hero at 35. He asked permission from the king of Spain to outfit an army for an expedition to the New World in search of gold. The blessings of King Charles V of Spain were bestowed upon him as well as title of Governor of Cuba, but no money.

Before leaving Spain, he outfitted seven large ships and three small ones in the spring of 1537 at the Spanish port of San Lucas. The ships were laden with cargos of oranges, dates, figs, salted meat, rope, kegs of nails, ingots of iron, and timber. His crew included blacksmiths, carpenters, scribes, sword-makers, shoe-makers, priests and slaves. Also on board were horses, pigs for meat and shoe leather, steel swords, and guns. He recruited hundreds of men, both rich and poor. DeSoto chose young men for his adventure, but one man, Juan Mateos, had gray hair.

During the year he spent in Cuba, DeSoto sent his best navigators to search out the best harbor in Florida. At this time, the entire southeastern portion of the U. S. was called Florida.

DeSoto had decided before he left Spain that instead of being cruel as he had in Peru, he would proffer friendship, but earlier adventurers had mistreated the Indians, and they swore vengeance.

He arrived in Tampa Bay, Fla., in 1539. He penetrated inland and met thousands of Indians in battle. The Indians were afraid of DeSoto's horses; they thought horseman and horse were one animal. The Indians' arrows were no match against the Spaniards' spears. The Spaniards were cruel to the Indians and took them as slaves and killed thousands of them, but sometimes the Indians outwitted them by being more clever.

Fired by the lust for gold, DeSoto marched northward toward the Savannah River and on up into the Carolinas and back into Georgia. He wandered for five years. Many groups of Indians got rid of the Spaniards by telling them of gold farther along their way.

No one yet knows the exact route DeSoto took. He did come near DeKalb County because some of his men wrote about the Indian chief named Coosa for whom the Coosa River and County are named. Archaeologists and scholars believe DeSoto's army crossed Sand Mountain as it left the Tennessee River and followed the Coosa down to the

Alabama River.

On one of these treks through Alabama, DeSoto met the seven foot tall giant Tascaluza (Tuscaloosa) who took him to his village to meet his father. Outwardly friendly, the Indians exchanged gifts at Mauvila (Mobile). The village had a high wall; the soldiers camped outside except for a few who went within with DeSoto. All of the soldiers quarreled and a battle started, lasting nine hours.

An arrow struck DeSoto as he mounted his horse and stuck to the thigh bone. He pulled out the shaft and told no one, but stood tall in his stirrups. The Indians retreated inside the wooden buildings of the walled village, and the Spaniards set fire to Mauvila.

Estimates vary as to how many Indians died, but Mauvila was destroyed. DeSoto lost 20 men and many were wounded. Nearly all of his horses, guns, gunpowder, food and medicine was destroyed.

His men wanted to return to Cuba, but DeSoto's proud spirit would not allow him to return home without gold. In May 1541 at Memphis, Tenn., DeSoto and his men were the first Europeans to view the mighty Mississippi.

DeSoto returned to the banks of the Mississippi. He planned to build boats with the help of friendly Indians and to sail south. He fell ill with malaria fever. He had exhausted himself. In the summer of 1542, he died; he was 42 years old.

He was first buried by the great river, then was moved to a spot 60 feet deep in the Mississippi, and his coffin was slipped into the watery grave. His remaining soldiers eventually walked and sailed until they came to Mexico City, Mexico.

According to John R. Swanton, chairman of President Roosevelt's U. S. DeSoto Expedition Commission, DeSoto "appears to have traversed Jackson, Marshall and Etowah counties, but not to have entered DeKalb though he may have passed near the southwestern corner of it."

DeSoto's army did make note of the great natural beauty of the area, but it is doubtful that he went near the falls that bear his name.

— Zora Shay Strayhorn

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The Young Dreamer, History's Verdict Awaited

(Continued From Front Cover)

Island YMCA

Interested in canoeing, he read in a national outdoors magazine of the challenge of Little River Canyon. This adventure in 1974 ended in disaster. The canoe broke in two, and Bruce and a friend endured a two-and-a-half-hour hike out of the canyon.

He was not discouraged. "I couldn't believe anything that beautiful could be relatively unknown," he said, after further exploring this region.

Returning for several more visits, he grew in his affection for the Mentone portion of Lookout Mountain. Driving along DeSoto Parkway, he saw Cragmere, the colorful building which was originally a cabin built by a former slave, Ned Jackson, and once owned by the Davenport, Gifford, and Farrel families.

In 1969 Cragmere had been purchased by Jack and Olive Jones, and for a time was rented by the young people of the Vine Street Christian Community who opened the Yellow Deli Restaurant.

Jack Jones took Bruce on an extended tour of the Mentone area, which convinced the young Floridian of its many natural wonders and advantages. Wanting a change from his committee meetings, meetings with parents, and administrative duties, Ron Fleur developed two strong desires.

One, to live at Mentone. Two, to establish a quality restaurant, which he felt the area needed. He formed a limited partnership and brought in a team to bring it about: Mike Holden, who had been a chef at Disney World in Orlando; Karen James of Tampa who was to have been manager; and Leah Gordon of Daytona Beach, director of grounds and gardens.

"They were young, shagging energy, deals, and common purpose. We were also impatient," says Bruce. "We rushed to open by Thanksgiving when we should have waited until spring of 1982."

Cragmere Restaurant and Gardens opened as a quality restaurant, receiving excellent reviews in the regional press. But operational difficulties arose, eventually forcing it to close. In May 1983 it was reopened and purchased by Randy Shi, known as the Country Gourmet. It is continuing to receive good reviews, expand clientele, and cater to parties and groups.

While Bruce still operated Cragmere, he opened an office in the Hitching Post, with Mrs. Martin as executive secretary. It was part of an ambitious expansion called MountainView Communications. Its principal product was MountainView Magazine and Visitor's Guide. It focused on people, places, and happenings of Northeast Alabama and Northwest Georgia. It was an above-average publication, with articles on Mentone, Jeff Cook Sound Studios, Jamie Cooper, the County Rover, and Charles Counts, the golfer.

After three editions during 1982-3, MountainView was succeeded by two editions of The Trader's Tab, which Bruce produced as an informed consumer's guide to the tri-state area flea markets, trade events, outdoor shopping, antiques, auctions, and discount buying. Two issues were published in March and May 1984.

One friend of Ron Fleur said, "Both these publications were conceived and produced with class and competence. Each of them could have been a great success. It just seemed that Bruce's dreams were leading him in other directions."

Sandra Paddell and her husband Ray of Atlanta purchased the Mentone Springs Hotel. Sandra and Bruce became friends and developed the idea of an organized group of citizens in-

terested in preserving Mentone's unique natural and historical qualities. On Groundhog Day, Feb. 2, 1982, a meeting at Cragmere resulted in formation of the Mentone Area Preservation Association.

Members of MAPA wanted to encourage further attention to the landmarks and the natural beauty of this region. Bruce Bon Fleur was at the center of the activity of the longtime citizens and newcomers who wanted to retain and protect those things which they loved about Mentone.

Eager to probe into the creative mind of Bruce Bon Fleur, his views about Mentone and his own future, Groundhog editors conducted an interview in the pleasant surroundings of lunch at the Read House in Chattanooga.

GROUNDHOG: What other projects did you have in mind for MountainView Communications?

BBF: There were several. One was "Wild Card." It was to have been a subscription service with a computer input for information about camping, hiking, white water canoeing, and other leisure time activities. It would have been nationwide.

GROUNDHOG: What were your biggest fears about Mentone?

BBF: That a Gathinburg-type developer with \$2,000,000 could come in and start buying. This really can be done unless there is an alert group such as MAPA or a vigilant town council. If there isn't some planning now, this could still happen.

GROUNDHOG: How did the idea for MAPA materialize?

BBF: I had been in town a year, talked with a lot of people, natives, business, and summer people. There was agreement of such needs as a community center for the youth and elderly, a traffic light, and a sidewalk to make downtown safer and more accessible. We decided to call a meeting.

GROUNDHOG: How would you like to see Mentone in five or 10 years?

BBF: Preservation is the key word. All the historic buildings restored, the natural beauty kept intact, an enhanced quality of life for all people — better streets and lighting, a clean town keeping what it likes, making it a better place to live.

GROUNDHOG: Boiling it down to specific considerations, what are the basic issues?

BBF: There must be a plan for growth. Mentone is already growing. There is no way to stop it. It should grow in a proper, somewhat controlled way. It must be faced that this is a tourist center. People are coming in increasing numbers. There needs to be attention paid to the economics of the town. More employment must be provided, especially on a year-round, not just summer, basis.

GROUNDHOG: You have gone back to your previous organization, the YMCA. What does this say about your future?

BBF: I hope to stay with the YMCA. I am in process of developing a new program in North Chattanooga. The YMCA helps people from two months to one hundred years of age. It offers opportunity for personal growth. It is more than "gym and swim." The Y offers me opportunity to channel my ideas into an established, respected structure. My goal is to specialize in communications and marketing.

GROUNDHOG: Any last minute thoughts about Mentone?

BBF: We need to give careful consideration to that old statement, "If you can hold out for three years (winter), you've got it made."

GROUNDHOG: What do you think about that oft-quoted statement of John Mason, chief founder of Mentone: "Do not come with the expectation of making a fortune, but if your fortune is already made, it is the most wonderful place in the world?"

BBF: He was a wise man.

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