

GROUNDHOG

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A Publication of the Mentone Area Preservation Association

Mentone's Golden Girl Maybelle Cox

One of Mentone's most active seniors is Maybelle Brown Cox who was crowned DeKalb County's Miss Golden Girl at the County Fair this past fall.

Mrs. Cox was born in Mentone on April 7, 1897. She has two living children, Leland Cox of Mentone, Vivian Kniffian of Pasadena, Calif. Her third daughter died at the age of 49. Her grandchildren number twelve, great-grandchildren number 18 and she has two great-great-grandchildren. Her family affectionately calls her "Muzzy."

"I have the nicest family, everyone of them is so good to me. They call me all the time and keep me up on what they are doing," she said.

She and her husband lived in Pasadena for many years and she still travels to California frequently to visit her daughter, Vivian who she says would like for her to move back there.

"When I filled out the Golden Girl application, they asked where I'd like to go. I can't think of any place I've not been that I want to see. I do think America is the finest place to be in," she said adding she does not want to travel outside the United States. She recently joined a group for a trip to Helen, Georgia.

Airplane travel doesn't put Mrs. Cox off. She says she's "used to it." She also drives herself to the Mentone Church of God on Sunday morning and even gives rides to her friends.

"I don't drive to Fort Payne, that's too far. But, I can get to the post office, the Superette and church just fine," she said.

When *The Groundhog* interviewed Mrs. Cox she said she would love to be in Pasadena for the Rose Parade.

"Vivian only lives three blocks from the parade line. I have seen many Rose Parades and they are beautiful," she commented.

Mrs. Cox's parents were Constantine "Cos" Brown and Anna Bell May. They bought eighty acres of land from the railroad according to Zora Strayhorn's "Mentone, Alabama: A History" near the Lahusage area in 1879. Mr. Brown was a farmer all his life and raised sheep and sold wool and fruit according to the Strayhorn account.

She went to school in Mentone in a building the "old pioneers" built that served as a schoolhouse and church for the community. She said that school later consolidated and became Moon Lake School. There was no high school in Valley Head at that time.

"Growing up in Mentone we went to church and Sunday School. We had Sunday School picnics and parties that moved from one house to another," Mrs. Cox remembers. "We made our own entertainment."

Mrs. Cox met her husband who was from Kansas when he came to Mentone in the 1920's with a Wesleyan Methodist group who was starting a school here.

She is the last member of her maiden family still living out of eleven children, nine of whom reached adulthood.



MAYBELLE COX reminisces about growing up in Mentone, her home and her family.

Her niece, Eugenia Dowiat still lives on the Brown family "homeplace."

"Some people might call the way I grew up 'back wood' but, I am not ashamed of it. I had good parents, and good raising," she said.

Horses were their only transportation and often when she was a young girl Mrs. Cox would "borrow" a visitor's horse and ride off while neighbors were paying a call to her parents.

"My father always warned me that some day I would take the wrong horse but, I loved horses and was not afraid of them," she said.

They could see the Lahusage mine town from their door, and according to Zora Strayhorn's history of Mentone the Brown family took in boarders for noon dinner. The mine at Lahusage operated from around 1902 until 1916.

"There were 100 houses there, a post office, school, church and commissary. A little train, a Dinky, went all the way to the east brow from the settlement," she remembers.

"I was almost grown when I saw my first car and the first time an airplane flew over, mother called us all out-

(Continued On Page 2)

A Look At The Dairy Industry From Rocky Hill Farm

Ask any city kid where milk comes from and they will tell you it comes from a carton. But, ask anyone around Mentone or Fort Payne and they will tell you it comes from the brown all-Jersey herd of cows at the Howell's Rocky Hill Farms.

Scooter Howell who operates the dairy on Desoto Parkway has helped develop one of the best Jersey herds in the United States. Rocky Hill presently has 110 mature cows. The business was started in 1943 by Howell's father, Wilburn Howell with three cows. Mr. Howell, Sr. still assists his son with the twice a day milking. Rocky Hill sells their raw milk to the Baker Dairy in Birmingham where it is processed into the homogenized milk sold at the farm store and in Fort Payne at the Earth Grains outlet. Spruill's dairy in Leeds makes their ice cream and cheese.

A dairy is a seven-day a week operation. The cows at Rocky Hill seem to know when it is milking time and make their way to the barn through a tunnel under Desoto Parkway that connects the pastures and barns.

Raw milk is sold by the Howell's to the processor at approximately \$.13 per pound. The same product last year was priced at \$.18 per pound.

"Fuel prices are what really make the difference in milk prices," Howell commented.

He said that Rocky Hill is not producing as much milk as last year because demand is down.

"We are actually milking fewer cows, about 90," he said.

One factor that has contributed to the slow down is a cutback by the powdered milk plants.

"Last year they had a bigger foreign export market for the powdered milk. There was a lot of milk being put into cheese and now the cheese supply has been replenished so there's a lot of milk out there 'looking for a home,'" he said.

Howell commented that news reports of people going hungry in Russia and other parts of the world could be helped with milk from this country.

He said there is a way to process liquid milk using ultra-high temperatures and aseptic packaging which requires no refrigeration. The milk then has a longer shelf life. There seems to be interest in the UHT milk on the European market.

"There are only three UHT processing plants in the U. S. Most of the UHT milk is processed in Japan," Howell said.

He feels that the dairy industry in the U. S. does not really understand the world market.

"If we were on a world market system, I believe the American farmers would get less for our milk than anyone else," said Howell.

Government regulations in the dairy industry seem complicated and cumbersome but according to Howell,

"we can produce the amount that we want."

"Everybody grumbles about government regulations, and I do, too. I wish sometimes we didn't have them but, I know what would happen — prices would go down (for the dairy farmers)," Howell commented.

Fire Department News

The North Lookout Mountain Fire Protection — Mentone Volunteer Fire Department — last month responded to two home fires. One at the residence of William Ramsey on Lake Lahusage near Cloudland. With a ten-minute response time after the alarm, the firemen found the home totally aflame. Even with the assistance of the Cloudland Fire Department, blazes were unextinguishable.

Another fire alarm was answered at the residence of Harland Strickland. The fire was confined to the living room.

Due to our wet month of December, no woods fires were reported.

The Fire Department says thank you to those who donated to the Department and asks everyone's continued support.

The Fire Department's Board of Directors includes: Hershell Pruitt, Sammy Cash, Buddy Williams, Nelson Stallings, Leonard Shigley, Chief — Dale Kerby, Secretary — Maxine Baty, and Treasurer — Eleanor Tate.

1991 Arrives

By Emily C. Smith

Can it really be 1991 already? I'm still writing 1968 on checks!

Time really does move by more and more swiftly, especially when you live a busy life. Busy-ness is a plague of our culture even though we are insulated from a lot of the big city woes here in Mentone. I often remind myself as I look out the window of my kitchen at the beauty of the mountain or drive down our quiet roads that this is a wonderful place to escape some of that busy-ness. I hope you do, too!

The paper is small this month — a reflection of the winter slow-down in our community. Also, Eloise Brown who keeps up with all the news from Valley Head for us is recuperating from surgery. We will miss her column this month! She has asked that if you have any news for her for the February *Groundhog* you call her at 635-6454.

Jack Jones was featured in a great article with nice color pictures in the December 26 *Birmingham News*. The article was about Shady Grove Lodge Dude and Guest Ranch. This is the only dude ranch around and we're proud to have it in Mentone. Congratulations, Jack!

Gladys Cash's daughter, Clara Bozeman, was named one of the Federal Employee's of the Year in 1990 and we want to congratulate her. She is a lead tax examiner and won the honor in the outstanding technician/assistant category.

Lynn and Don Castleberry celebrated the birth of a baby boy on December 22. Fred Timothy Castleberry weighed 8 pounds, 6 ounces and everyone is thriving!



SANTA AND MRS. CLAUS hear the Christmas wishes of Mentone Children at the MAPA Christmas Party last month.



It's a family business for the Howell's at Rocky Hill Farms. Scooter takes a break with his youngest son Dallas after an afternoon of hard work.

Town Council Meets

The Mentone Town Council met for their regular monthly meeting on January 7 at the Town Hall. A number of issues were discussed and action was taken on several topics.

Phil Hurt, represented by attorney Winfred Watson, approached the Council to vacate the Laurel Park subdivision located north of Camp DeSoto and east of the Little River. The subdivision which exists on a 1926 plat has never actually been divided into lots and no streets exist there. As all property owners were in agreement on the proposal to vacate, the town approved the vacation resolution as read.

Kim Dale Kirby, Mentone Volunteer Fire Department Chief, told the Council that liability insurance for the two fire trucks for Mentone was due the first of February and would cost the Fire Department \$1,400. This would provide \$100,000 liability per person per accident. He reported that the fire department would "even be looking for gas money" if they paid the entire \$1,400 themselves.

The Council voted on a motion by Bill Russell to give the Volunteer Fire Department \$500 toward the cost of insurance with a promise that if the town had more money available after February first, they would give more.

Hobson Kirby reflected the Council's sentiments when he said, "I'd like us to help if we can and if we can't I'm sure everyone will understand."

Mayor Max Cash explained that they were negotiating with the Fort Payne Water Department over the payment of \$70,000 for water services.

"If we have to pay that, we'll be left with just enough money to operate," he said. He added that there was also a bond issue note due in April.

Mayor Cash has been talking with the Fort Payne Water Department over the issue of how much water they can provide to Mentone.

"We asked for 4 million gallons a month and 4.5 million for the summer months when the camps are going," he said. Fort Payne had informed him that they could only furnish 3.5 million gallons per month. The mayor hoped that the \$70,000 could be used to pursue an alternate water source if they could not work things out with Fort Payne.

Angelo Rosario who attended the meeting reported that the cable television installers had told him they hoped to be finished in February or early March.

The older police car will require some work to satisfy the insurance company including a muffler, windshield and possibly new shocks. In other police business discussed it was reported that there has been some cattle rustling in the Hammondville area and that Mentone had received a large medical bill for a Mentone inmate at the DeKalb County jail.

The Rev. Don Brock, pastor of Mentone's Church of God of Prophecy attended the town council meeting to "show my support for the town and the Council."

It was suggested that some road improvements were needed in front of Moon Lake School and better "School Zone" signs to be posted.

Report From Moon Lake School

Moon Lake School is selling ads for their annual, The Laurel. The annual is printed each year and is enjoyed by both Moon Lake students, their parents and former students. The ads are \$12.50 for one line, \$25.00 for a 1/4 page block, \$50 for 1/2 page block, and \$100 for a full page.

If you are interested in buying an ad, contact the school at 634-4113 or any of the teachers.

Also, Moon Lake is still collecting red cash register receipts from Food World as part of the "Apples for the students" program. These may be turned in at the school office.

MAPA Members Hear Firemen Needs

Fire Chief Dale Kirby related the needs of the fire department to Mentone Area Preservation Association members at the January meeting. MAPA donated \$500 to the volunteer firemen to help pay for liability insurance on the fire trucks for the coming year.

Kerby explained that much of the equipment the firemen use is costly — radios are \$340, boots are \$40 a pair, nozzles for fire hoses are \$250. He said that a lot of equipment is donated to the fire department.

"Heat for the building costs us about \$300 per year. This is just to keep the trucks from freezing," he said. "Gas for the trucks and they are large, heavy trucks can be as much as \$100 per month."

The fire department operates on donations and depends on donations.

"Some of these costs may seem high," Kerby commented. "But, compared to the cost of a house or business that is lost in a fire, they are not much."

MAPA treasurer Harrell Jenkins said, "Everyone in Mentone depends on the fire department in case there is an emergency. Supporting the fire department is something every family and organization here ought to do. It benefits everyone."

Chief Kerby said that they are looking into ways to improve the fire department's equipment and training that would lower fire insurance costs for the area covered by the department.

Sammy Cash, a member of the Fire Department Board said, "Kim (Kerby) is doing a great job."

In other business, it was reported that over 100 children attended the MAPA Christmas Party for the children of Mentone. Bill Patterson played the role of Santa Claus and Linda Kilgore of Mrs. Claus.

Ray Froehler was named chairman for the 1991 Rhododendron Festival.

Our Town

With Linda Brown

Happy 1991!!! Every report that I have read or heard concerning this new year states that it is to be a hard one. The threat of war is hanging over our heads, the nation is (or may soon be) in a recession, unemployment is up and all the plaques of society are still with us. We still have the homelessness, drugs, murder, disease, and storms to contend with. How do we handle all of this? The answer lies within each of us. We need to be at peace with ourselves. We need to realize that we are in control, we can survive anything. Of course, we will need help — help from each other, help from within and help from a higher power. We make our own happiness and must learn to live one day at a time. You can do anything for one day! This is why it is so good to be living in Mentone. If you feel that you can't make it through the day, call someone. I personally do not know anyone in Mentone who would not take the time to talk with you if you asked them for help. Recently I was in a meeting and heard a Mentone lady say this about the Middle East situation, "I don't see how I can stand it, my grandson is over there and has left a young family behind." Everyone present immediately offered her their love and support. Since then several of those present have remarked that we must remember her and help her through this difficult time. This is Mentone concern and spirit.

Now that the winter season is here, there may be some inclement weather in store for us. If there is a storm and you need food, water, medicine, transportation or other necessities please let the DeSoto Rescue Squad know and they will help. Call Jesse Crabtree, 634-4171 or call me, Linda Brown, 634-4755 and I will contact someone for you.

Ruth Bathurst is now home after recent surgery, she is recovering nicely.

Milton Howard is continuing to improve after his recent accident.

Our sympathy is extended to Mr. Roy Bartlett and Mr. and Mrs. Rick Chapman in the death of their wife and mother, Mrs. Mary Bartlett.

Please call me at 634-4755 and give me the dates and times of any meeting you are involved with and I will try to compose an entire roster of Mentone meetings.

One of my grandsons recently told me that I should write this article in "rap." This is for Josh (you have to provide the sounds yourself).

Here it is — a brand new year,
Study hard, get it in gear,
Be a nice person, don't be a clown,
Smile a lot, do not frown,
365 new days, what will you do,
That dear Josh is up to you.

From The Pastor's Study

THE GRANDEUR OF IT ALL

By Pastor Don G. Brock

Mentone Church of God of Prophecy

The year was 1956; it was my first acquaintance with Mentone as my family and I moved here. Even then, at an early age, the natural beauty and majesty of the area impressed me. In the many years that I was away, prior to returning in 1987, thoughts and memories of God's wonderful creation as exemplified here, were often on my mind. Every possible occasion brought me back. Pictures kept memories alive but could not do justice to the grandeur of it all. Visits to the area were a reminder that only the Creator could have provided such a place where one could be made to feel what must be a similar sensation as the Psalmist David felt and wrote about when he penned, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul." What a beautiful description and blessed state to experience. These words not only describe natural surroundings, but also inner feelings. These feelings are not only spawned by beautiful and peaceful surroundings, but by a relationship with the Creator of them.

Close communion with God and His creation is nourishment for the believer. Prayer, meditation, and Christian fellowship are the atmosphere in which the child of God finds peace and tranquility in this not-so-peaceful world. God gives us quiet and contentment in our own minds and sets our soul at ease in Him.

You and I were created in the image and likeness of God. He knew what would be beautiful surroundings for us and we are blessed with His best. Just as iron is attracted to a magnet, the soul, in its state of hunger, is drawn to God and His handy-work.

Billy Graham said that, "... the soul actually demands more attention than the body. It demands fellowship and communion with God. It demands worship, quietness and meditation." Unless the soul is fed and exercised daily, it becomes weak. It becomes discontented, confused and restless. Many people turn to alcohol or drugs to try to drown the crying and longings of the soul. Others attempt to quiet the longing in a variety of ways, but nothing but God ever completely satisfies, because the soul was made for God and without God it is restless and in secret torment.

God can bring us to the oasis of still waters; where the grass is fresh and green. He will impart to us some peaceful hour, some shady nook, some prepared table where the soul may be refreshed and renewed. True rest is found in God alone; oh, how this is needed in our madly rushing, jet age, space reaching, noise-prone world. We have to learn to rest in the Lord and His creation, as well as to rest in Him.

No one and nothing can rob us of tranquility if our hearts and minds are stayed on Him. He is our peace. The happiest people are rarely the richest, or the most

Mentone's Golden Girl

(Continued From Front Cover)

side to see it," she commented.

Two Haley's comets have visited our skies in Mrs. Cox's lifetime. She recalls her mother waking the children up and taking them to the upstairs east window to look at the comet in 1910.

"It was very plain and bright with such a long tail," she said.

The "oddest thing" about Mentone Mrs. Cox thinks is the interesting mix of people who moved here from the "north and around" to make Mentone their homes.

"I remember Dr. Purdon. He was an Irishman who wanted to teach people how to farm. The Huron's had the first post office and of course the Mason's," she said. "Mentone was, and still is, such beautiful country," she said. "You could see through the woods like it was a park."

She said that livestock kept the underbrush trampled down. Her father kept sheep and Mrs. Cox recalls him driving a herd of 100 sheep at shearing time through what are now streets of Mentone.

beautiful, or even the most talented. Happy people do not depend on the excitement and fun supplied by externals. They enjoy the fundamental, often very simple, things of life. They do not yearn for yesterday or tomorrow. They savor the moment, glad to be alive, enjoying their work, their families, the good things around them, and the grandeur of it all. They are adaptable; they can bend with the wind, adjust to the changes in their times, enjoy the contests of life, and feel themselves in harmony with creation. Their eyes are open, they are aware; compassionate. They have a capacity to love.

You can experience true happiness in the Creator. God is our peace. He is our still waters. He is the storm shelter of this life. Take time today to experience Him; His creation in you as well as your surroundings. It is grand!

MENTONE'S

GROUNDHOG

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Country Journal

By Bernise Crow

And away we go on another excursion. This time we fly to Argentina — a beautiful country in South America. (Pardon me Jimmy McCarty — we will get to our country in the summer!)

This time it was a mission trip with a church group from Atlanta, Ga. Lisa's mother, Ronda Crow, invited us to go with her church group — Faith Assembly of God. Their pastor, Rev. Tommy White, arranged the passage and handled all accommodations. There were 16 of us — 14 of their church members. Each person paid his own fare, but Tommy was able to secure good rates for us. We got a bad start from Atlanta via TWA. The plane had to be serviced in Jacksonville, Fla., and was 3 hours late. Of course we missed our connecting flight with Aerlineous Argentinus at Kennedy Airport in New York. We finally got passage on a Pan-Am flight, after a long wait and much confusion. We had not eaten dinner, and at 2 a.m., they served us a good hot meal on the plane. We were routed through Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, which was an eight hour flight. We had about a two hour wait there, but the airport is nice, and upstairs we could get a panoramic view of the beautiful city.

It was another six hour flight to Buenos Aires aboard the Argentine plane, where a guide, who could speak English, met us. We rode a bus to a small municipal airport for a two hour flight to our destination at Bariloche. The ride was smooth as silk, and we were served what would be the equivalent of an Argentine afternoon tea — good crisp pastries, dainty sandwiches, and cookies. In the quaint, rustic little town of Bariloche, a bus met us to take us to the Colonial Hotel. This is a ski resort, but the season ended the week before, and they were entering into spring — just the opposite from our climate. The town is situated on a lake, and the name escapes me. Looking across the lake, one has a view of the snow-capped Andes Mountains. It was like March there, with very cold wind, but warm sunshine. Lovely flowers were blooming everywhere — tulips, lilacs, jasmine, daffodils, and iris.

It was 9:15 p.m. Bariloche time when we arrived, and it was still daylight. They say that the sun is still shining at midnight in the summer months. We checked into our rooms, freshened up a bit, as much as possible with no luggage except our carry-on bags. Our luggage got misplaced because of our delayed flight from New York, and we did not get it until early Wednesday morning and this was Saturday night. We ate at an oriental restaurant, and the food was good.

The purpose of this trip was to help build a church. We thought the building was in the finishing stage, but found that they were just doing the foundation. Homer has been in the construction business most of his life, and was looking forward to working lightly; but he found that work there is done mostly by hand. The men got up and went to work the next morning at 8 a.m. They were tired, but

made a day of it. They were digging large deep holes with a shovel, and handing the dirt out in buckets. They had used a machine to dig some of the dirt out, but found that the requirements were for the foundation to be ten feet deep, and the dirt was caving in so badly they were not getting anywhere. So they reverted to hand labor, much like it was done a century ago. Everyone was very congenial, humorous, and loving and worked side by side for five days.

The Argentine people were very impressed that this group of business and professional people would work so hard. The church site is in a nice section of town, and will be beautiful when finished. I hope we can go back to see it some day. There were 13 of these holes to be dug ten feet deep, and six feet in circumference. They did not get all of them done, but most of them were finished, complete with hand mixed and poured concrete in the base of these cavernous holes. The architect was a cute young girl, a native of Buenos Aires. Her husband, who was from Canada, worked with her. I questioned her ability until I learned that Bariloche is in an area of the Andes Mountains that is subject to volcanic eruptions. The soil is most friable, to use the language of the horticulturists. It is so soft, due to volcanic ashes, that the foundation would shift if not dug very deeply. So this church should be on the "solid rock," and should stand firmly.

Our host and hostess were Mark and Janette Trippet, who are missionaries there. Mark's work is primarily to oversee the building of churches. He has been in a Spanish speaking country for most of his life, and could interpret well for us. His wife, Janette, is an attractive young mother of two beautiful children who attend private schools.

We ladies would go to the Trippet's lovely home on the lake and make stacks of big sandwiches for the men's lunches. Janette would go to the supermarket each morning and buy supplies for these very nutritious sandwiches. We would pack fresh fruit, cookies, and bottled drinks to go with them. Then after lunch, Janette would drive us around to see the area, and do some shopping. The minister's daughter Melody, and another lady named Marlene, worked with the men all day. I did not feel up to digging holes.

This would be a wonderful place to spend a vacation, just viewing the countryside, fishing in the lake, or shopping. They say the fishing is good in the lake that stays icy cold year round, because of being fed from melting snow from the mountain peaks. The place reminded me of the ski towns in Colorado. The buildings are predominantly made of logs, put together in a unique design.

Food is good and plentiful in Argentina, especially for those who like good steaks. The last night we spent in Bariloche, our host said he was giving us a special treat — some of the best steak in the world. And I believe he was right. We were served a two pound steak that was mouth-watering. Of course we could not possibly eat all of it, but some of the men did consume it without any problem. And . . . we had a large bowl of ice cream, with loads of large fresh raspberries. We did eat that! The beef in Argentina is not stall fed or given hormones like some of ours. They feed from the lush grass on the ranches.

One item Janette said they missed more than anything was peanut butter. Evidently they don't grow peanuts there.

Leather goods are a good buy and so are cashmere and angora sweaters. So we did some Christmas shopping — the girls received sweaters, and the boys got leather jackets. The local people were friendly and helpful. They are beautiful, with dark skin and sky-blue eyes, of European descent, mixed with Spanish. We could see the German influence in the preparation of food. The dialect is difficult to learn, Mark Trippet said.

Chile borders Argentina, and the Chileans come here to work, much like the Mexicans migrate to the United States. We drove to the area where the Chileans live, and they live in shabbily built huts, made of anything they can pick up. Oh, how I wanted to help them. The children are pretty, and look much like our Indians of the southwest. They look healthy, but need better housing conditions. Maybe Jimmy Carter's Habitat for Humanity could help them with housing. When I saw the dire need for shelter, I thought we should be building houses instead of churches. But, perhaps that is for someone else to do.

We took one day for sightseeing in the Bariloche area, and what wonderful scenery we were shown. We rode a chair-lift to the top of a mountain peak, and what a splendid view of mountains, lakes, and castle-like structures. Then on our last two days, we stayed at a hotel in Buenos Aires, and spent a day touring this metropolis of nine million people. There are some magnificent buildings and sculpture, but it was a shame to see so much graffiti even on government buildings. We drove down the main boulevard, which is the widest in the world. We needed more time here to see the art museums.

It was a wonderful place to shop — just wish we had more money and time. Shoes were especially well made and every style imaginable were available. Handbags were a good price — anything leather. This has been a bit scattered, but we only had a few days to see a lot of country.

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