

The Groundhog

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 8 · NOVEMBER, 1986

William Blackburn

by Mickey Strickland

William Blackburn has been in the grocery store business most of his life; and he knows it well, for he has seen the times a-changin' over the span of many years spent in serving the public. His parents, J. O. and Naomi, began Blackburn's General Store in the early 1920's and ran it until 1950. They had a lot of good help, for two boys and five girls were raised on that 375 acre farm at the foot of Sand Mountain, and they all worked in the family business.

William attended school at Lea's Chapel Church which went through the sixth grade. All classes were in the same room; the pupils sat on the benches and were warmed by a coal-burning stove in winter. They drew water from a well out back, and kept the water bucket full for all to use. "We just lived from one day to the next—working hard and keeping the family together," said William as he told of his early years. "We enjoyed hard work and never thought to question it. We went to school from 8 A.M. to 3 P.M.—then worked on the farm or in the store until all the customers were gone; usually it was seven or eight at night when we finally closed up. We were up and at work by 4 A.M., doing farm chores. Mama had breakfast waiting when daylight came and we got back to the house." Fried ham, cured in the Blackburn's smokehouse, hot biscuits and fresh eggs cooked on a wood stove made the wait worthwhile.

In those days, lunch was called "dinner," and most folks made it the big meal of the day. Coming in from the fields or the store, William's Mom and sisters prepared the good foods the farm provided, such as beans, potatoes, turnip greens, cornbread, tomatoes, okra, squash, corn, and a cake or pie for dessert. Sausage patties were a favorite meat because they could be canned and kept throughout the winter. People ate a lot of pork then because it could be preserved more easily and safely than beef.

Blackburn's General Store was unique in that it took its goods to the people of the county in a Rolling Store, or Peddler Wagon. For about ten



years the Rolling Store was pulled by horses, then J. O. Blackburn and his sons built a wooden structure on the back of a truck, and the store became motorized. Sometimes William would stay out of school to take his turn on one of the several routes the Peddler ran. They went up through Ider to Shiloh, out through High Point to Henagar, North to Sulphur Springs, up the Valley Head Highway to the area of Mentone. The wagon had shelves on the inside which held non-perishables, such as yard goods and sewing notions, groceries, mercantile goods, candies and garden seeds. The Blackburn's took a lot of items in trade, especially in the 1930's when cash was very hard to come by. The chickens, eggs, feed, and seed corn were then taken to Chattanooga once a week and sold to stores there. Butter was collected on the routes and

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The Groundhog

VOL. 4 NUMBER 8 NOVEMBER, 1986



Ray and Sandra Padgett masquerade as the Pointer Sisters.

October Colorfest A Success

The 1986 October Colorfest enticed a number of people into Mentone; what they saw was Mentone at its loveliest: a perfect fall weekend graced by sunny skies, turning leaves, and friendly people.

The festivities began on Friday night with eerie renditions of ghost stories and popular Mountain lore. Patti Rainey was on hand to enchant all present with her tales. Terry Hutcheson sang a ballad about the Mentone Ghost. (Reports were that Ms. Ghost made an appearance, but was in good humor, presumably placated by all the stories about her friends and relatives.)

Saturday morning marked the 4th running of the Groundhog Classic. This year's winners were familiar faces, both having won the Classic in past years. The women's division's overall winner was Carolyn Melton with a time of 29:11. The men's overall winner was Randall Harris, a native of Huntsville; Randall's time was 23:15. In the over 40 age division, Herby Edwards won the men's division, while Pat Cory took first place for the women. In the 20-29 age group, Jamie Doss and Mary Jo Schreiner were the winners. Steven Lucy, one of the youngest entrants, finished first in the 15-19 age group.

The crowds which gathered to witness the running of the Groundhog Classic spent the rest of the weekend enjoying the beauty of the Mountain. While many browsed at the local shops and the arts and crafts exhibits set up around the town square, others took a boat ride at DeSoto Falls or went for a ride in the hay. Throughout the weekend crowds were entertained by Tony Goggans; Tony and his frequent guests sang and provided the kind of entertainment that has earned Lookout Mountain a reputation as a haven for the musically talented.

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Town Council Approves Feasibility Study

The City of Mentone has over the years encountered difficulties while attempting to supply Mentone residents with water. The problems with the water system were never more apparent than during this past summer—Mentone residents found that water was indeed a finite resource when faucets didn't run and toilets didn't flush. Faced with these shortcomings, the Town Council met on October 27 to review two proposals for plans to study, analyze, and suggest new alternatives to alleviate the current problems which plague our water supply system.

The two proposals were submitted by the engineering firms of Hayes, James & Associates, Inc. and Almon Associates. Both firms' proposals were similar: They both hoped to find potential raw water sources, then examine the expenses, advantages, and disadvantages involved in obtaining water from these sources. The two proposals suggested a variety of possible water sources, including the drilling of wells on top of or at the foot of the mountain, tapping spring water from the cave on the side of the mountain, obtaining water from the West Fork of Little River, or using groundwater in Railroad Valley.

The Town Council, after a lengthy discussion on the merits of both proposals, decided to give approval to the firm of Hayes, James & Associates, Inc. The Town Council felt both firms were well qualified; however, cost was a major difference in the two proposals: Almon Associates quoted a price of \$4,000 or more for the feasibility study; Hayes, James, & Associates' services are to be \$1,800.

Now that the feasibility study has been commissioned, the first step has been taken toward improving Mentone's water supply system. The feasibility study is required if Mentone is to qualify for funding through Federal and State Grants. (The study will also examine different methods of financing the water project.)

Many people still don't understand why the present system can't meet the demands for water. I'm not sure that I do, but here is an oversimplified explanation of the problem as I understand it: Mentone is dependent on Fort Payne for its water. We receive our water via an eight inch supply line. When this line is damaged or develops a leak our flow of water is endangered. But the size of the line, not just its reliability, is also a problem: Mentone can pump 3 million gallons of water a month from Fort Payne; if, however, demand exceeds supply and our reserves become exhausted, the water stops flowing—as it did this summer.

Unfortunately, to free ourselves of the problems that accompany a dependency on Fort Payne's ability to supply us with water—and the inadequacy of the eight inch water main which connects us—a great deal of money will be required. Hopefully, the efforts of the Town Council will be rewarded with the acquisition of these funds and the realization of a better water system in the not too distant future.—L.Y.K.

Congratulations!

Bob and Ruby Daniel celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on September 14.

Musical Mountain Christmas

To celebrate the coming of Christmas, the Mentone Area Merchants Association is already making plans for "Musical Mountain Christmas" during the first weekend in December (Dec. 5 - 7). The entire town will be decorated—evergreen boughs, candy canes, ribbons and wreaths, and cheery Christmas lights—creating a warm, festive atmosphere.

At 6:00 on Friday night, December 5, a tree-lighting and Christmas carolling will herald the beginning of the festivities.

Look for Santa Claus to appear on Saturday; he will be throwing goodies to the children as he rides through Mentone in the Christmas parade. The parade will begin at 10:00 A.M. at the Mentone City Park, proceed through town, and finish at the Mentone Brow Park. Included in the parade will be the Fyffe High School Marching Band (FHSMB) and the Valley Head High School Marching Band. The FHSMB, an award-winning band which has taken home 13 trophies this year, will perform again at 11:00 A.M. on the historic hotel square.

Shopkeepers have banded together and agreed to make Mentone one big "open house" during the weekend; dressed in period costumes, they will be welcoming visitors with Christmas music, door prizes, and refreshments. In addition to their regular hours, some shops will begin "open house" on Friday night during the tree lighting ceremony. Cragmere Manna Restaurant will open from 12-4 on Saturday to serve mountain cider and fried mushrooms.

The weekend will include many more activities which are now being planned. Don't miss the fun. Bring the children and help celebrate during "Musical Mountain Christmas."

Don't Throw Those Labels Away!

Moon Lake School asks that you please save all labels from these products: Campbell, Mrs. Paul, Prego, Swanson, V-8, Franco-American, Viasic, and Recipe.

These labels can be redeemed by the school for equipment: audio-visual and athletic equipment, computer hardware and software, reference books, or teaching aids for science, math and reading.

Bring your labels by Moon Lake or call the school (634-4113) for a pickup. For more information call Kathie Disney (634-4510).



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Located High Atop Lookout Mtn. Offers a
Unique Dining Experience
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Friday & Saturday
Real Italian Spaghetti Dinner
\$5.25
Includes Dinner Salad &
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The Country Store & The Little Log Cabin

have moved in together for the winter

Crafts - Collectibles - Quilts

Open
Saturday & Sunday 11-5

On The Square in Mentone

Marsha Hair

Wanda Simmons

Please Mail Early!

Postmaster Benny Goss asks that everyone please get their Christmas cards and packages in the mail as early as possible. Mailing early will ensure that your mail is received on time.



Bed 'N'
Breakfast

THANKSGIVING DINNERS

November 27
12:00 and 5:00
2 sittings

Reservations Only
205-634-4836

Don't Miss the Bookmobile

The DeKalb County Bookmobile visits Mentone every other Wednesday from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. If you get the urge to curl up with a book in front of the fireplace but don't have a book to curl up with, the bookmobile is the place to go. The library on wheels will be in Mentone on November 19 and December 3 and 17 in front of the Town Hall. A bookmobile, like a young mind, is a terrible thing to waste.

Keep Learning

Psychologists and educators who have done work on adult learning have found that learning something new in adulthood can revitalize the mind, the personality, and even the body.

Learning is addictive, but it's an addiction that benefits both mind and body. Among the mental abilities that learning keeps in shape are memory, problem-solving, the organizing of one's thoughts and the generating of new ideas. "Studies show that these skills get rusty when people don't use them," says Dennis Thompson, an educational psychologist at Georgia State University in Atlanta. "and education gets rid of the rust."

Unfortunately, many are afraid to try. We fear we've lost the ability to learn anything new and will make fools of ourselves. Research proves otherwise. People of all ages discover that they still can learn, and they begin to think better of themselves. That is one of the prime emotional benefits of adult learning. Other benefits are greater self-reliance, a sense of being in charge of one's life, and increased meaning to life. Such feelings rekindle the zesty self-confident outlook of early adulthood, when the world seems ours for the taking.

Finally, there's evidence that lifelong learning has physical benefits. As we age, our reaction time slows down, but studies show that older people who are highly motivated and actively practice a skill—such as learning something they are interested in—are able to partly reverse the slowing of their reaction time. More broadly, researchers at Duke University have found that the more active aging people are mentally, the better their physical condition remains.

So, if you need more zest in your life, attend a FREE adult education class offered in your area by the Northeast Alabama Area Adult Education Program. The classes are offered by the Northeast Alabama Area Adult Education Program, and that are designed to improve your skills in math, English, and reading, and to prepare you for the GED test. After successfully completing the GED Test, you are awarded a high school equivalency certificate. That certificate can qualify you for college entrance, civil service, technical training, job advancement, and armed services.

Anyone 18 years of age or older is welcome to attend these classes. High school graduates may attend for review. Special assistance is also available for the non-reader.

You may enroll at any time by attending the class most convenient to you. For further information, you may call your local board of education or the Adult Education Coordinator in Fort Payne at 845-0465.

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The Groundhog

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Mentone Playschool Arrives



There is something new in Mentone, and it happens every Tuesday at the Mentone United Methodist Church from 9:30 until 11:30 A.M. Sunni Mays and Susan Collins have founded a Playschool/Mother's Morning Out, and it has been a huge success. It is for kids ages 2 to 4 and is sort of a co-op in which each Mom takes her turn assisting with the week's activities and refreshments. Unless it is her turn to serve, each Mom gets a couple of hours every Tuesday to herself. "The purpose," said Sunni, "is to provide experiences in the areas of emotional, social, intellectual and physical development of the children who participate. Also, to give each Mom some time off each week."

The charge of five dollars a month per child is to cover the cost of some of the craft supplies, heating, light bulbs, paper towels and such. The schedule for each session begins with circle time in which all the little ones sit together on the floor and listen to a story or two. Then arts and crafts begin, affording a time for free expression and creativity to shine forth. The playschool uses as many natural materials as possible, including leaves, nuts, rocks, pine cones and other things found out of doors. Next, the children gather together for singing and organized games until snack time. Snacks must be natural and wholesome; Mothers bring fruit juice, fruit, cheese, nuts, and raisins when it is their turn to bring refreshments.

Last but not least is free play, and outdoor play if the weather permits. Everyone cleans up and signs out already looking forward to next week! —M.S.

The Lookout

"Atop Lookout Mountain"
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Mentone Area Preservation Association CHRISTMAS DINNER at CRAGSMERE MANNA

Thurs. Dec. 4th
Christmas Buffet Dinner
Cragmere Manna
6:00 P.M. Reservations Required
\$7.50 (Includes Tax and Tip)

Mail check to:
Harrell Jenkins, Treasurer
Box
Mentone, AL 35978

Indians by Greg Purvis

In the spring and summer, when the woods are full and the trees are heavy with the weight of leaves, one can easily be blind. Blind to to sight of what is in those woods, what is behind those trees: the stuff of dreams, which has existed long before white men came to this beautiful mountain.

Now winter approaches: the leaves begin to fall, the forest grows thinner, our world of what we perceive to be real is fading. Now you might be sweeping the dry, dead leaves off your front porch some afternoon, the sky pink above you, a stale wind blowing. Now you might be gazing at the Autumn stars some crisp, cold night, or riding home alone through the skeletal forest. And you might then see what you were blind to before: what was always here, under the gilding of modern America.

Indians.
I see a chieftain, his bronze face proud
And marked with defiance
Holding up a spear towards the heaven
And crying a curse to old Shakak
In my room where, on my new carpet, he treads:
I see an old wrinkled medicine man
Praying to the new waxing moon
Burning incense and small totems
In my backyard where I swing
In Indian-summer breezes
I see an Indian warrior
In a head-dress
White-speckled paint on his red face
A tommy-hawk in his hands
By the brook where I sit and dream
I see an old squaw in bright-colored robes
Feathers in her hair
Standing grinding cornmeal outside my window
at night
When I am supposed to be sleeping
And I also see a young oil-tanned maiden
With beads in her hair
Trying to laugh at me, in the backseat of my car
But her mouth opens and only blood
Ancient blood pours out
Over her tan dress and down to her rawhide moccasins
Oh Yes, I see Indians everywhere
My God! Am I one too?

Helena Is Cooking Again! The Strawberry Patch Is Now

Helena's

Homemade Pizza
Salad Bar
Soup Bar

Homemade Desserts
Short-Orders

Buffet Special

Thursday Night 5-8:30

Pizza, Soup Bar, Salad Bar

Hours 11-9 Closed on Tuesdays

634-4600

Mentone, Alabama

Musical Mountain Christmas



The Hitching Post

Unique Christmas Gifts

Open House

December 5-6-7

Friday Night 5-8

Saturday 10-5

Sunday 12-5

Refreshments

Door Prizes

**Crow's
Nest
Antiques**

**Mentone
Realty**

**The
Gourdie
Shop**

**Nightingale
Artworks**



Gourdie Runs On Platform of Friendship, Good Will to Revolutionize State Government: And Loses

An internationally known Mentone resident threw his hat in the ring for the state's highest office. Gourdie chose to run for Governor of Alabama.

Gourdie mounted his race on the platform of silent, non-judgemental friendship, a philosophy that has brought him international fame. "We are calling on our most beloved ambassador of friendship to rescue us from this noisy summer of bickering and political mud-slinging," said Sharon Barron, Gourdie campaign manager. "A change of season is in the air—let's change the political climate for the better!"

Gourdie has become a media favorite across the United States as the original silent, non-judgemental friend. He has appeared on national news programs and gained an international following in the last ten years after a humble beginning in a Sand Mountain gourd patch.

"Most people think gourds are all alike," said Mrs. Barron. "However, there are those with deeper vision."

Gourdie is unique in all the world of politics, according to the campaign manager.

"He never criticizes anyone...in fact, he never speaks. Gourdie doesn't have a mouth!"

Campaign insiders, before packing their bags for the return trip to the gourd patch, disclosed that plans were already underway for a run at the White House in 1988.

And why not? If peanut farmers and actors...

Mentone Area Merchants Association Formed

On Monday night, November 3, a group of merchants from the Mentone area met at the Log Cabin Deli and agreed to form the Mentone Area Merchants Association (MAMA). Carmie Pettry, owner of the Deli, was unanimously voted acting president.

The group discussed a variety of problems and possible objectives for the organization, including new promotional materials for Mentone, the need for public restrooms, and the lack of enforcement of traffic laws within the Mentone city limits. Priority attention was given to the upcoming Musical Mountain Christmas on December 6-7; MAMA planned a number of special events for the weekend. The members agreed to meet again the following Monday to elect officers and formalize plans.

DeSoto Caverns Light Up For The Holidays

The holiday spirit will light up the caves at DeSoto Caverns in northeast Alabama every weekend from Nov. 28 - Dec. 28. During those weekends, visitors can see the "Christmas Festival of Lights," a spectacular display of lights and water played against the magnificent backdrop of the Great Onyx Cathedral. The Cathedral is a natural, geological cavern the width of a football field and the height of a 12-story building. While visitors watch the story of Christ's birth illustrated through the magnificent rock formations, music fills the mighty cavern. In an exciting finale, multiple, gushing jet streams of water from ten foundations ascend in a water dance high in the air. The entire tour takes about one hour. DeSoto Caverns Park is open 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Saturdays and 12:30 p.m. - 5 p.m. Sundays. It will also be open the day after Thanksgiving and the day after Christmas. For more information, contact DeSoto Caverns Park, Rt. 1, Hwy. 76, Childersburg, AL 35044; telephone (205) 378-7252.

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Mountain Watch

by Jean McGehee

Our older son, McGregor, has had his own band in the Boston area for several years. Things have been going so well for him lately that he's had only one day of vacation all summer. Wanting to do something entirely different, he drove up to the tip of Cape Cod at Provincetown, Massachusetts, and went out on a boat to see the whales. "Everything you've ever felt about a cat or dog—just multiply that by a lot. The whales were intelligent, playful, and seemed to enjoy the attention," he reported.

Now that I'm pushing sixty, I got out a scrap of paper I've carried in my wallet for four years. Other senior citizens and those facing that time might appreciate this list. I don't know where it came from, but here are nine suggestions for a better old age:

1. Stand up straight.
2. Wear long sleeves.
3. Use no heavy cover-up cosmetics.
4. Rage; don't whine.
5. Spend at least two months in cold weather.
6. Keep busy.
7. Take care of geriatric zones like ear hair.
8. Tell anecdotes.
9. Develop a big ego.

I also read where Malcolm Cowley said that once you're past seventy and you wake up without a pain, you're dead. Cowley also suggested that upon arising (he's past eighty) don't try to walk straight ahead, but stand and go from side to side first, to make sure you're well balanced.

It's been fun to pick tomatoes in November. Probably

we could still be enjoying cucumbers and squash, too, if they hadn't been pulled up. Much of the garden just sat through the drought, but once the rains came, the garden blossomed and thrived. Cantaloupes planted just before May 1st repeatedly bloomed and died until finally we had a few that matured in October. At the end of October when I went to pull up the butter bean vines, I picked three baskets of beans. Mary Brown, Raymond's wife, shared with me her method of drying beans for next year's seeds. These were the big beautiful purple and white butter beans, the real thing. Also I harvested two baskets of green peppers, carrots, and the New Zealand spinach which made a come-back. All of the tomatoes were planted around May 1st, four different varieties, and they're all still producing the first week in November.

After I had agreed to help with the fourth annual Groundhog Classic Run, I worried about asking other people to help. It was needless fretting. Fourteen local merchants readily agreed to sponsor the run with their \$50 checks. Ruby Stalvey of Ruby's Variety gave paper cups for the water we offered the runners at the half-way mark. Terry Day of the Stateline Country Store donated Gatorade at the finish line, and William Blackburn of the Mentone Superette gave us paper bags for the T-shirts and the medals. George Bedwell of Berry College met me in Summerville and lent us his electric timer. Groundhog editor Lew Keith assisted Rainey Therrill, who was in charge of the race itself. Polly Cameron and her mother registered late entrants. L. M. Flannigan helped to block traffic at the mid point, and the Sheriff's Department helped Police Chief Colquitt Jones, who was suffering from a bad back that day. What could have been a lot of headaches turned into a pleasurable experience, thanks to some cooperative folks.

Our Town

by Greg Purvis

The Mentone Volunteer Fire Department, headed by Marshall Pruitt, reports no fires between early October and early November.

The Mentone chapter of the American Legion completed cleaning and doing minor repairs on the Legion Hall in late October. The building was painted redwood and trimmed in white. The grounds and adjacent vacant lot were cleaned by Legion members.

The Legion held a covered-dinner for all members and veterans on November 11, Veterans Day, at 6:30 P.M. The American Legion asks that Mentone residents remember our veterans and those killed in active duty.

The DeSoto Rescue Squad, at their meeting held at 6:30 P.M. on November 3, discussed plans to take a rappelling class. Interested members were Pleas Cox, Squad Captain, Paul Purvis, and Gregory Purvis, Reporter.

A Christmas banquet is planned for early December at the Lookout Restaurant for all Squad members and their families. This banquet will be used to elect new officers for 1987. A nominating committee was established to nominate these new officers. The elected members were: David Mays, Linda Brown, and Leonard Shigely. A new member was admitted into the Squad. Mr. Bill Adams, owner of Adams Outdoor camp near DeSoto State Park.

Announcing: MENTONE, ALABAMA: A HISTORY

by Zora Shay Strayhorn

In time for holidays! The perfect gift for all who love Mentone. This is a complete history, first serialized in *The Groundhog* from October 1984 to March 1986. Thoroughly researched. Large readable type. Eight pages of photographs.

THE CHAPTERS:

An Overview
A Description of the Mountain
Mentone's First Inhabitants, the Indians
The Explorers
The Civil War
Post Civil War Times
The Turn of the Century
Heyday to the Depression
The Camps
The Churches
Personalities and Legends
Decade of the Centennial



Published by the Mentone Area Preservation Association

\$6 by mail from Box 50, Mentone, AL 35984

\$5 at local distributors



James Johnson of the Wesleyan Fellowship Sunday School class hands a check for \$100 to Charles Bell, principal of Moon Lake Elementary School. The check will go to the new gymnasium.



WINTER HOURS

Friday - Saturday 5-9
Sunday Buffet 12-3

Open House

Saturday 12-4
December 6

Reservations for Christmas

Banquets Available

634-4677

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CRAGSMERE MANNA RESTAURANT

THE DEPOT



"Christmas Open House"

November 29-30

Sat. 10-6

Sun. 1-6

door prizes and refreshments

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SUMMERVILLE, GEORGIA 30747

Owner: Susan Huff

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 \$10 for voting membership for one through June 1987.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

BEST WISHES FOR AN OLD FASHIONED CHRISTMAS



White Elephant Galleries

ARTS, CRAFTS, ANTIQUES, GIFTS

Open house

Sunday

December 7, 1986

Door Prizes

Refreshments

Chances On Antique Wicker Chair

Banjo Players

Santa Claus

Rose & Glenda's

antique wicker
primitives
choice stoneware

Sunny Mays

handmade baskets
handmade pottery

Dot's Corner

14K gold @ 1/2 price
assorted costume jewelry
great stocking stuffers!

Carol Strickland

hand-painted cards
antiques
handmade dulcimers

The Purcells

handmade pillows
quilts
woodwork
odds & ends

continued from page 1

One of the highlights of the weekend was the Night of the Tenth Moon Ball, given by Ray and Sandra Padgett at their Mentone Springs Hotel. Ray and Sandra deserve special mention for the most original costume: they, along with a friend, came as the Pointer sisters; their true identity would never have been guessed if their voices had not given them away.

The event that many enjoyed most was the costume contest. Jessica Goggans won the event, citing her mother's potent imagination and artistic ability as decisive factors in the contest's outcome.

The Colorfest came to a close on Sunday evening; everyone had an enjoyable weekend of good food, fine entertainment, and, most important of all, warm hospitality.



Tony Goggans and the Henagar Butcher

HELENA'S Opens

HELENA'S is now open. Previously the Strawberry Patch, the restaurant is located in the same building as Furgerson's Grocery and has been reopened by Helena Furgerson as HELENA'S. The new menu includes homemade pizza, a soup and salad bar, and homemade desserts. Helena, a native of Greece, plans to add a variety of Greek dishes to the menu in the very near future.



Trick or Treat?



Jessica Goggans, costume contest winner

Enjoy A Traditional Thanksgiving Meal With All The Trimmings At

DeSoto State Park
Serving Thanksgiving Day
From 11:30 A.M.
Till 3:00 P.M.

Roasted Turkey & Dressing W/Giblet Gravy
Baked Ham W/Raisin Sauce
Chicken Casserole
Meat Loaf
Fried Chicken
Green Beans Almondine
Corn On The Cob
Mashed Potatoes
Candied Yams
Stewed Carrots
Salad Bar
Homemade Pumpkin Pie
Apple Cobbler
Carrot Cake

All You Can Eat!

\$6.95



Winners of the 4th Annual Groundhog Classic

Garden Club Hosts Tea

The Mentone Rhododendron Garden Club recently hosted a tea at Howard's Chapel; the tea was just one of a series of activities and events taking place to celebrate DeKalb County's 150th birthday.

Attending the tea were Mrs. Clyde Hoyt, President of the Garden Club, and the Garden Club members; they graciously welcomed visitors and served tea as the history of Colonel Howard and Howard's Chapel was recounted.

Also present at the tea was Paul Thomas, Sesquicentennial Chairman. The guest speaker was Dr. Bert Hitchcock, who heads the English department at Auburn University; he presented a fascinating description of Colonel Howard: author, filmmaker, congressman, and presidential candidate. Dr. Hitchcock also described the building of Howard's Chapel, located on a small hill just across from DeSoto State Park.

THE GROUNDHOG would like to thank the ladies of the Garden Club for their efforts and encourage those who've yet to visit Howard's Chapel to do so—it will be a memorable experience.



stored in tall metal cans, then sold to a company from Crossville once a week.

The Blackburn family worked until after dark each day, as did a lot of people in rural areas of the South. But they were luckier than most in that their house was lit in an unusual way. Mr. Blackburn had a large underground tank near his house into which he poured 50 lb. cans of carbide, added water, and piped the gas which resulted into lamps in his home.

On Sundays after the chores were done, the kids were allowed to ramble and play in the woods on the side of Sand Mountain. They would ride flat wooden planks down the mountainside and swim in Town Creek. Most toys were home-made and a boy could have as much as his imagination would allow, provided it could be made from things found naturally in the woods and fields.

Neighbors would come from miles around in their wagons, trucks, and on foot to hear the *Grand Old Opry* on Saturday night at the Blackburn's. There was always a big pot of coffee, logs on the fire, and just plain visiting as friends got together around the Sylvania radio. William's favorite program was a music and variety show from Del Rio, Texas.

William bought the store in Mentone in 1962; he raised two sons and a daughter who carried on the Blackburn tradition of a family owned and operated business. In 1971, William married Willo Mae Williamson and added not only a helpmate but a lady with a sense of humor and witty personality that gives the Mentone Superette a special charm.

Willo and William are more than store keepers; they are members in good standing of the Mentone community. Their store is a meeting place for old friends and new—a place to leave or pick up a message, to post bulletins of impending activities, and to just visit and enjoy the coldest cola on the mountain. William still delivers groceries free of charge, and many of his



Willo and William Blackburn

customers who have traded with him from the beginning depend upon this personal service.

"I love living and working here in Mentone," William told me of his years in the grocery business. "I like meeting new folks, and seeing all my old friends, too. I don't want industry to come to the mountain, but I like talking to the new people who come into the store. I have a lot of good loyal customers and I really appreciate them."

A lot of people love and appreciate William Blackburn, too. He offers something the super-slick markets cannot; he is a friend who takes a personal interest, who goes far beyond mere service in providing a familiar, dependable place that is the hub of a wheel of friendship that represents the best of our community. You can count on William, and trust him—what better measure of a man?



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... antonelli

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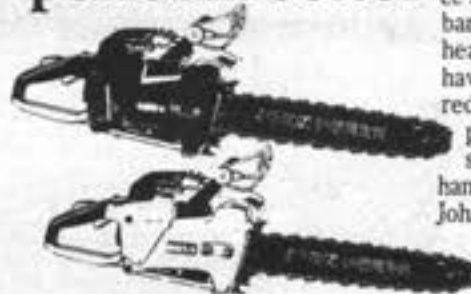
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Mountain Greenery

by Desmond Disney

Plant Selection

The selection of plants is one of the most creative acts in gardening, as well as being the most rewarding. As plants develop, the way they have been chosen and sited will determine the character of the landscape. Choosing the right plants for the right places and purchasing them knowledgeably are essential to the success on the landscape as well as the plants themselves.

Many people, myself included, have made the mistake of going to the local nursery or variety store, buying plants, and then after they get home, deciding on where to plant them. When purchased and planted in this manner you reduce the chances of the plants surviving. Like developing a landscape plan, the time invested in the selection of plant material will increase your success rate, which will save time and money later.

There are several things to consider when selecting plant material: climate, function, aesthetics, and maintenance. By considering each of these carefully and making decisions based on your taste and needs, you can create and maintain a pleasant outdoor living environment.

Probably the single most important factor in the survival of a plant is the climate, and the most important thing to remember when selecting plant material is each kind of plant has its own favorite place to grow. Take a careful survey of your yard, noting its unique environmental conditions, the effect of the sun (deep shade, partial shade, full sun, etc.), type of soil, drainage, prevailing winds, and existing plant material. Then keep your plant selection to those plants that will survive in your environment. Here in Mentone plants that grow well in central and south Alabama (even in Fort Payne) might not live through our winters, plants native to areas north of Mentone might have difficulty surviving our hot, dry summers. In order to increase the chances of survival of plants and the success of your landscape, climate is a crucial factor in plant selection.

Function is another important element in plant selection. Plants can be used to improve your environment and solve specific problems. Vegetation can be used to reduce glare, shade your house, reduce or increase wind velocity, cool the air, absorb air and noise pollution, provide shelter and food for wild life and define space. Any or all of these functions can be incorporated in your landscape design. It is important for the homeowner to learn what characteristics the plants need to perform these tasks. River birch and slough sumac which are quick growing and have dense fibrous root systems, are good selections for erosion control. American beech, Pin oak, and white pines are good trees for wind breaks while fringe trees or sweet scaled might be chosen for their fragrance.

Much of our visual experience in the landscape is spatial. It is this aspect that can be manipulated to create a design that works for you. Plants are able to form walls, ceilings and floors. Walls can be created by wide border plantings or narrow hedges, while ceilings

can be created by large canopy trees or overhead vines. Floors can be achieved by changes in texture, such as paving next to grass ground covers or mulch areas.

Plants can also be used to attract attention, enclose space, frame views, and direct movement. Single shrubs or trees are often used as sculptured elements with individual or seasonal changing beauty. A series of single plants can be massed together to form a visual barrier or direct movement, and it is the whole rather than the individual plants that create form and space.

Color is important in adding visual excitement and manipulating space in the landscape. Used properly, whether as a background or accent, color can add beauty to your landscape. However, used improperly color can be so distracting as to ruin an otherwise successful design. Avoid using colors that clash, like pink blossoms against red brick, and don't crowd too many different colors in the same area. Do consider using large masses of a single color. Color can also be used to create an illusory depth of perspective.

Since cool colors (blues, violets, greys) seem to recede and warm colors (yellows, reds, oranges) to enlarge, a small garden will feel more spacious if cool colors predominate, while a feeling of intimacy will result from the use of warm colors.

Texture can also be used to manipulate space and add interest to your yard. By placing coarse-textured plants in the foreground and finer textured plants farther away, you can increase the feeling of depth, or you can use a single coarse-textured plant for accent. Finer-textured plants look best when planted in mass for maximum impact. This is true for birches, willows, and ferns. Many of these plants naturally tend to grow in clumps, so when placing fine textured plant material, this is a logical way to arrange them. Coarse-textured plants make such a strong statement that they need to be used cautiously. A good rule is to use no more than one-third coarse-leaved trees or shrubs in a landscape composition. When thinking about plant textures for the landscape, don't forget the winter. Evergreens remain the same throughout the year, but the texture of bare twigs, branches and trunks of deciduous trees and shrubs come into their own once their leaves fall.

And finally, it is important to decide from the beginning how much time you want to spend on maintenance (grooming and cleaning up). Low maintenance may be your top priority, or you may love gardening/yard work and welcome seasonal chores. Whichever, now is the time to do some soul searching and decide on a general approach.

Lawns with gently curving edges are easier to mow than those with small, lousy areas. High maintenance areas like flower and vegetable gardens should be kept few in number, easy to get at, and a size that is easily manageable. Stay away from trees and shrubs that demand regular pruning or trimming and avoid plants that will actually create work. Keep fruiting trees, like crab apples and cherries, away from paved areas where their squashed fruit will be a nuisance, and, unless you like raking leaves, don't plant large leaved deciduous trees close to patios or lawns. To achieve a pleasing, low maintenance, natural landscape make sure that all the plants you select are healthy and well adapted to the use and location you plan for them.

The Written Obsession

by Greg Purvis

Everyone has an obsession. Some people are habitual shoppers, eaters, dieters, the list never stops. An obsession has the power to possess the mind, soul, and body of a person, it can be good or bad. The passion of obsessions is all consuming. I know, I have an obsession too. I collect, read, write, and promote the written word.

Inside my closet, stacked on the book shelves and in three attics in two states, I have books waiting for my attention. On every subject, from the abacus to zoology, from biographies to thrillers. Classics such as Kurt Vonnegut's *Gatopostol*, Albert Camus' *The Plague*, and Thomas Hardy's *Return of the Native*. Dark horror from Stephen King and T.E.D. Klein. I own a rare copy of science fiction stories by Edgar Rice Burroughs and diverse political theories such as *The Prince* by Machiavelli and *Plunkett of Tenmany Hall* by William Riordan. J.R.R. Tolkien, Michael Moorcock, Robert Jordan, Faulkner, and Hemingway. They're all there. In all, 978 books.

Books are not the only "vice" I indulge in. I have a portfolio of about fifty short stories and three-hundred poems which I have written in the past three years. The stories are on all subjects from fantasy to theological themes. The poetry varies between romantic conventionalism to modern symbolism.

If I were to decide to sell any part of this wonderful collection, how would I go about doing it? My tastes are varied and radical. The way to sell such a collection would be advertising and marketing.

The Filipino ex-consort Mrs. Marcos is currently endorsing a line of shoes for a fashionable New York firm. Perhaps using her method, I could endorse the books written within my collection. Then it wouldn't matter if Hemingway or King wrote a particular book, as long as the great literary genius Purvis touched the pages.

Realistically, I'm not interested in selling my books. But I do get enjoyment from seeing other people take pleasure out of them. So if anyone out there wants to read anything in most all categories, just come by. I'm not a library, but I sometimes think like one.

Shakespeare Festival Produces History Book

A book detailing the history of the Alabama Shakespeare Festival has been published by Cherokee Publishing Company in Atlanta. *Shakespeare Never Slept Here*, written by ASF Managing Director Jim Voiz, chronicles the unprecedented development of the theatre from its humble beginnings in Anniston 15 years ago to its remarkable transformation into one of the nation's largest professional theatres.

Containing over 225 color and black-and-white photographs, the book illustrates the festival's growth from its first productions in an Anniston high school auditorium through the theatre's historic opening in its present multimillion dollar complex in Montgomery. The book will be distributed nationally at bookstores next year. Advance copies are available through the Alabama Shakespeare Theatre, P.O. Box 20350, Montgomery, Alabama 36122-0350; telephone (205) 272-1640.

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Meet Zora, author of MENTONE ALABAMA: A HISTORY

All Mentone citizens and friends are invited to a reception at the Mentone Inn on Sunday afternoon, November 23, from 2 till 4 to see the first copies of *Mentone Alabama: A History*, by Zora Shay Strayhorn.

The history was first published in *The Groundhog*, beginning with the centennial edition in October 1984 and running until March 1986. Mrs. Strayhorn will autograph copies of the book for those who desire.

The book is sized 8½ x 11, with large, readable type. There are eight pages of photographs in the center of the book. Mentone Area Preservation Association members and residents of Mentone may purchase the book for \$5.00. It is \$6.00 by mail and may be priced slightly above \$5.00 at book stores and gift shops outside Mentone.

"We are happy it will be ready by Christmas," says MAPA Director Amelia Kirk Brooks—MAPA is publishing the book. "It will make very appropriate gifts for people in all walks of life." Chances are that your family and friends will be mentioned in the book.

Readers of *The Groundhog* were asked to submit corrections from chapters first printed in the local monthly paper. Proceeds of this first edition go toward the projects of the sponsoring organization. Proceeds from any future editions are the property of the author.

The broad span of the history of the town is indicated in the chapter headings: An Overview; A Description of the Mountain; Mentone's First Inhabitants, the Indians; The Explorers; The Civil War; Post Civil War Times; The Turn of the Century; Heyday to the Depression; The Camps; The Churches; Personalities and Legends; Decade of the Centennial.

Locally, the book will be on sale at the Hitching Post, DeSoto Park Restaurant, Cragmere Restaurant, the Log Cabin Deli, White Elephant Galleries, and the Mentone Inn. In Fort Payne, there will be autographing at Marjorie's and Harco Drugs as well as in other locations.

The author will present copies to the Fort Payne Library and to the Summerville, Georgia, Library.

In 1980 the Rhododendron Garden Club of Mentone published a historical booklet of 18 pages by Nelda E. Howe. Mentone is also featured in *Lookout: the Story of a Mountain* by Robert Sparks Walker; Elizabeth Howard's *The Yagabond Dreamer*; *Lookout* by John Wilson; and *Landmarks: Pictorial History of DeKalb County*.

The new, illustrated and completely researched history should serve scholars for years to come.

Arrangements for publication and distribution of the Strayhorn book are being coordinated for the Mentone Area Preservation Association by Jean McGehee, who with her husband Charles edited this unusual publication.

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Dear Friends

The opportunity to join the Mentone Area Preservation Association (MAPA) is yours. We have been excited and encouraged about the activities of MAPA during the past year and are about to embark on even new challenges.

The reasons for joining MAPA are numerous. They include:

- Approximately 12 meetings per year, one each month.
- Opportunity for community involvement and getting to know your neighbors better.
- Participation in encouraging controlled growth in the area, with emphasis on a quality environment for everyone to enjoy.
- Preservation of historical landmarks throughout the region.
- 12 issues of *The GROUNDHOG*, filled with information about regional activities and
- Low cost of \$10 per year, which is also tax deductible.

The main reason is that MAPA needs you. The organization exists to serve the community, a community of which you are an important part.

Send your check to Greg Frith, MAPA Membership Chairman, P. O. Box 50, Mentone, Alabama 35984.

ENGINE



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Nightingale Graphic Designs



Thanksgiving is just around the corner, so let us give thanks that the political races are history; it's now safe to put away the hip boots for another two years.

I was sorry to see that the voters in Fort Payne decided to keep their city dry; by the time I can buy a beer with my pizza I won't have any teeth left to chew it with.

The premier social happening of the year "happened" a couple of weeks ago at Steve and Mary Anne's house. They threw a gala Halloween ball with everybody who's anybody in attendance.

The most original costume of the night belonged to the young lady who arrived as a nun with child (you know, pregnant); Ray Strickland, however, ran a close second decked out as a deranged street biker in search of cheap thrills (Cindy, Ray's wife, reported that Ray looks like that everyday). Ray Padgett, in a successful attempt to outdo a previous appearance as one of the Pointer Sisters (see photo page 1), came as the Mentone Flasher—no relation to the Mentone Troubadour—and thrilled many a female, with the exception of the pregnant nun, who was unphased, responding only by crossing her chest.

There is nothing bluer or more soulful than the Mentone Blues; for the second time this year I had the luck to see and hear Jimmy Blalock play and sing the blues along with Brian? (I didn't get past first names). The two combined to produce the real stuff.

The evening was a great social success—there were no lives lost, though Mrs. Catherine's mailbox was ruthlessly slain by a hit and run driver (who shall go unnamed at this time seeing as how restitution has been made).

Over the last few months I've heard a lot of concern voiced about the young kids congregating on the brow, playing their radios too loud, driving too fast, etc. Many have suggested that stricter law enforcement might solve the problem. I think the problem lies not with the kids but with we the adults.

We have failed to provide a place where kids can meet to dance, talk, and do the things that all kids do. The brow or other secluded areas provide the only places where kids can get together and talk. Sure, I've seen the kids turning circles in the parking lots late at night, but I doubt they would do something as boring as driving in circles if there was something else more interesting to do—kids, like mature adults, do not cope well with boredom. One alternative might be to open the Moon Lake gym to the kids on Friday nights?

When I was a kid—which wasn't that long ago—my friends and I did the same things that these kids are doing now because we had no where else to go.

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Did you know that over 1 million people had cosmetic plastic surgery last year. I'm scared to death of getting a shot; I wouldn't go under a knife blade even if I came out looking like Robert Redford. And what kind of mind could invent a fat sucking device?

I went to a wedding last month; a friend of mine was marrying a man who was running in a political race for a county commission seat. As expected, he asked me if I would cast my vote his way. I told him that I lived in Alabama (the wedding was in Atlanta) and in any case I wouldn't vote for him because I don't vote. This brought a lecture on responsibility and the duties of every good citizen and so on and so forth. A man I didn't know, who had been listening in on the one-sided conversation, stepped forward and said he'd "send all the crooks in Washington packing, then send a few dispossessed farmers in to take their place." I told the blushing groom that I'd changed my mind: I'd vote for that man if he ever decided to run.

Cold weather is here, and for the elderly or disabled it can be a tough time of the year. If anyone needs help (or knows of anyone that might need help) with the stove lighting on cold mornings, or cutting, splitting, and stacking wood, here's a number to call: 634-4891. If there's anyone who'd like to pitch in and help those who need help, please call and leave your name, number, and times you would be available. (I often times read about people in Atlanta or other large metropolitan areas needlessly suffering and in some cases freezing to death in the winter simply because age or other factors have made it hard for them to care for themselves. That's not good.)

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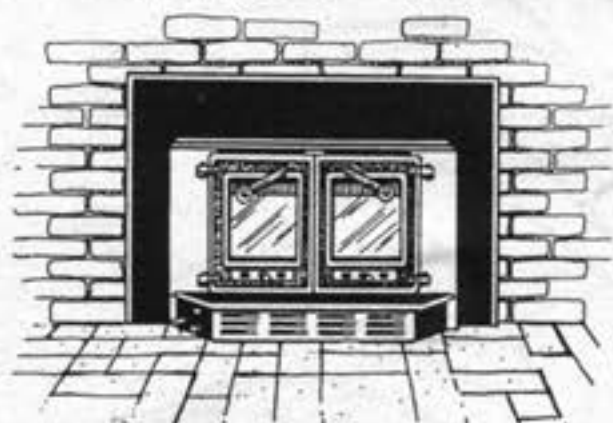
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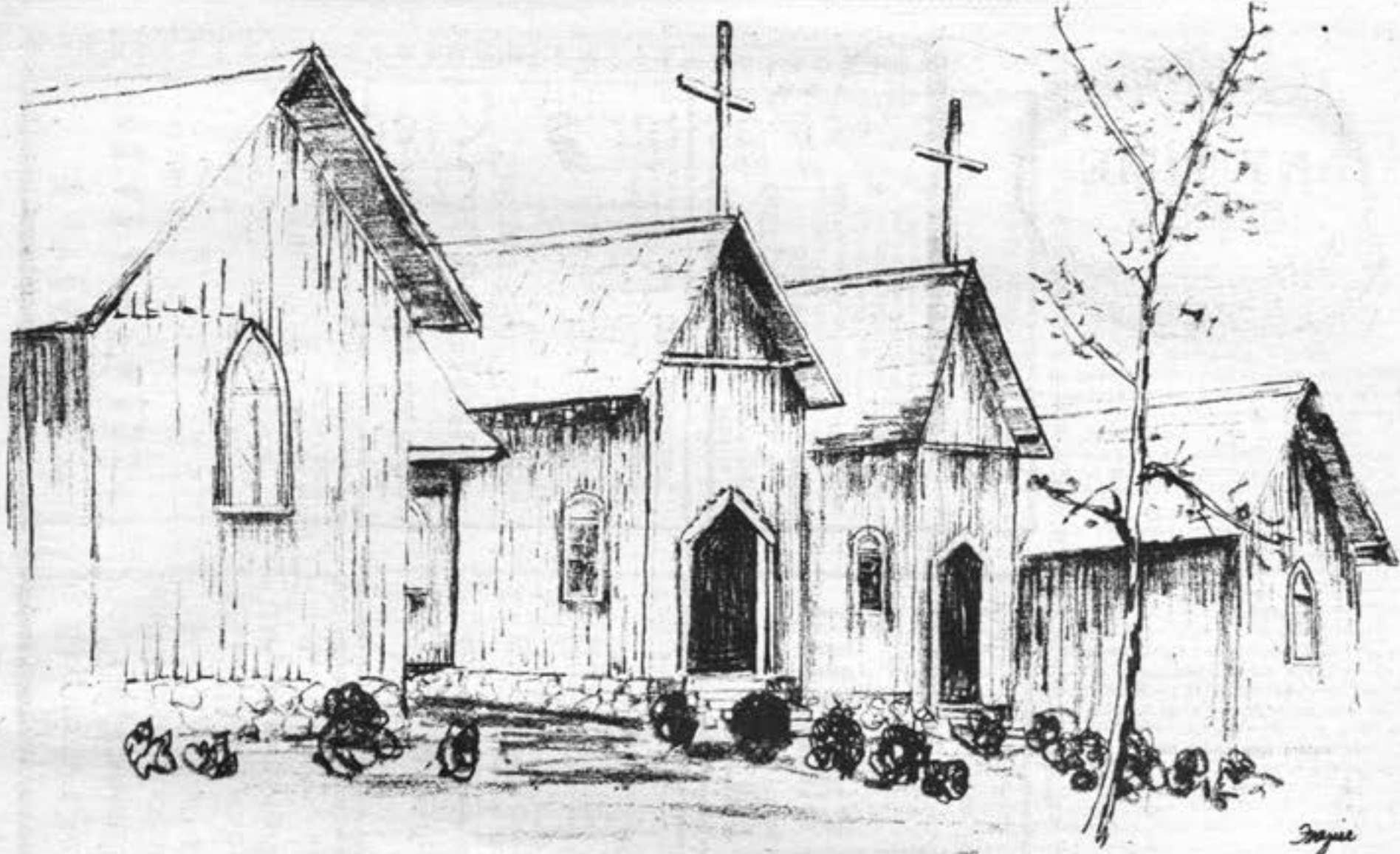
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Saint Joseph's history is a long and interesting one—so too is the life story of George Washington Carver. As a boy, Carver was enslaved on a farm outside Diamond Grove, Missouri. When just an infant, Carver was abducted by a group of thieves—he was later ransomed for a race horse; his mother, who was abducted with the young Carver, was never heard from again.

Carver was internationally recognized for his agricultural research. During his life, Carver served on the faculty of Iowa State College, the Tuskegee Institute (where he worked with Booker T. Washington), and in 1916 became a Fellow in the Royal Society of Arts in London. During his lifetime Carver received a number of honors: the

Spingarn medal in 1923 for his work in agricultural chemistry; the Roosevelt medal in 1939 for his scientific achievements; and the establishment of the George Washington Carver Monument in 1951 to honor Carver and his accomplishments. At the time of his death in 1943, eighteen schools had been named in Carver's honor.

While on the staff at the Tuskegee Institute, Carver developed a stain that he used to preserve and beautify the wooden pews at the Episcopal Church in Tuskegee. Those long dark pews came to St. Joseph's from Tuskegee as a gift; they now occupy the chancel area, their unusual history intertwined with the unique history of Saint Joseph's-on-the-Mountain —LYK

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