

OPINION PAGE

THE GUM LOG

By Van A. Tyson

Cotton gins in Atkins

The death of Milton Howell brought back memories of the time when cotton was grown and ginned in Pope County. Mr. Howell was manager of the Mc's Corner Gin, operating in the Atkins bottom at the T where Highway 105 turns west.

We printed labels for the cotton bales at *The Chronicle* in 1959 and 60. It was the last gin I was aware of operating in Atkins, which once had several gins. I have tried to find a newspaper article I remember about all the gins but can't lay my hands on it.

So I am going to combine my knowledge with items I have found in the *Heart Within a Valley* history book to tell about ginning through the years.

I know that there was a gin across from the Hopewell Baptist Church operated by my great-grandfather John Henry Matthews, who gave the land for the church and lived in the house that still stands west of the church. It burned and chunks of concrete were still in a hole that during my childhood.

Omner Matthews operated a gin north of Atkins beside the

river from Carden Bottom to the Galley Rock landing and brought to town in wagons or trucks. There was a Whitehall gin in Carden Bottom.

In 1921 the "four local gins" ginned a total of 3,708 bales or 90 percent of the crop. This was less than one-half the 1920 crop. Boll weevils covered 80 percent of the acreage.

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The January freeze of 1930 killed many of the boll weevils. In 1930, production was 19,201 bales.

Mc's Corner Gin produced about 2,000 bales in 1955, getting much of the cotton from Carl Embry off the McLaren land in the Atkins bottom.

In 1965, 1,250 bales had been ginned at Pope County's only gin, 90 percent of the crop, the gin was named Atkins Gin Company, Robert Kennen, owner, C. O. Tedford in charge.

Other gins listed in the Atkins history book are Albert Thatcher's People's Gin, Farmer's Gin, Murdoch Gins, I welcome other information about Atkins gins.

There was also a gin in Economy operated by the Burnetts. Other gins operating in Atkins were the Stepp Gin, and one or more gins owned by the Murdoch family.

There are several reports of gin production in the history book (edited by John Stroud). Cotton was usually stored in the "cotton yard" still vacant north of the Church of the Assumption. Thousands of bales were loaded onto train cars to ship to clothing factories. Some cotton was hauled across the

river from Carden Bottom to the Galley Rock landing and brought to town in wagons or trucks. There was a Whitehall gin in Carden Bottom.

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By Marcus Kilburn

Memorial and can say beyond a shadow of a doubt the sound level inside War Memorial is noticeably louder than Razorback Stadium. When it comes to affecting the visiting team's ability to make audible play changes at the line of scrimmage, there's no doubt War Memorial has the advantage.

War Memorial is also more intimate than Razorback Stadium with the fans much closer to the field. Football is a game played with tremendous emotion with momentum swings often influencing the outcome. A bowl stadium full of 55,000 screaming fans sitting in close proximity to the field can affect the ever-important momentum to a greater extent than 75,000 screaming fans in a stadium designed for increased seating capacity and not necessarily on the field acoustics.

As director of athletics Jeff Long is absolutely concerned about winning football games, but probably not as concerned about winning as with generating program income. As head football, coach Bobby Petrino fully understands the need for program income, but also knows the more he wins the more likely he will be to keep his job. Based on their somewhat competing priorities I would like to hear coach Petrino's take on which venue he believes gives the best chance for a win. Since Jeff Long is Bobby Petrino's boss, an honest answer is most likely not forthcoming.

tickets, it's difficult to deny the financial advantage of moving the game, but that assumes the LSU game to be a sellout and the Ole Miss game something less. Otherwise, there is no financial advantage for moving the LSU game to Fayetteville.

Based on past years' game attendance at Razorback Stadium, the Ole Miss game would likely have been a little less, but only a few thousand tickets. Nevertheless, if that number is as much as 5,000, that's still a nice chunk of change to leave on the table.

Excepting the financial benefit and assuming football recruits had rather be on campus for the LSU game than Ole Miss, the only question that remains is the effect the move would have, if any, on the team's ability to win the game.

Aside from Long's statement about traveling an extra weekend, which, quite frankly I see as a demonstrative red herring, does the team have a better chance to win against LSU at War Memorial Stadium or Reynolds Razorback Stadium?

That's a tough question to answer because when it comes to blocking and tackling it's difficult to argue with any of Long's points, but you can bet if the seating arrangements were swapped, traveling an extra weekend and supposed advantages in recruiting wouldn't be that big of a deal.

Best chance to win

Whenever you think it's not about the money, it's going to be about the money. Last week U of A athletics director Jeff Long announced the game between the football Hogs and Louisiana State University, traditionally played in Little Rock's War Memorial Stadium, would be moving to Razorback Stadium in Fayetteville for the 2012 season and beyond. As a consolation prize, central Arkansas fans will have the Ole Miss game played at War Memorial in place of LSU.

In making the announcement, Long said moving the game to Fayetteville benefited the program "in a number of ways." First and foremost Long noted that 20,000 additional fans could see the game live in Reynolds Razorback Stadium as opposed to War Memorial. Long also said moving the game would help remove a competitive disadvantage of traveling three straight weekends during a crucial part of the season and provide a recruiting advantage of hosting prospects on campus. It's difficult to argue with any of Long's points, but you can bet if the seating arrangements were swapped, traveling an extra weekend and supposed advantages in recruiting wouldn't be that big of a deal.

At \$75.00 per ticket at 20,000

Pleasant Grove News

By Pat LaRue

(Last Week)
Beautiful snow coming down out there this Monday morning. I guess that means I have to stay in today.

Me and my sister-in-law, Juanita VanOhlen went for a nice drive after church yesterday morning, but we didn't see any elk this time -- only two deer. We had lunch at Jasper.

My sympathy is extended this week to the Elaine Berry family, Alfred Kinslow family and to the Yarbors, J.W. and Clevon, brothers who died within four hours of each other. God bless each and every one.

Also my prayers are with the families that lost so many in the car wreck at Centerville. Bless their families also.

(This week)
We had good services at church this weekend.

My sympathy goes out this

week to the families of Archie Reddell, Pearl Taylor, Iva Laymon and to the families and friends of Adella Willis (Dannymy and Donny's mother from Deer). God bless each and every family.

Birthdays last week and this week are: 15th - Rachel Collie and Rick Chisum; 16th - Mary Cash, Joyce English, Coy Myers and Joyce Hampton; 17th - Alton Turnbow and Fern Partain; 18th - Nita Combs; 19th - Viola Thompson, Donald Byers, Ali Carpenter and Daniel Freeman; 20th - Ava Leigh Turnbow; 21st - Kelly Loveland; 22nd - Shawna Bull, Jaxon Bull and Roger Henderson; 23rd - Samara McClendon and Auira Smith; 24th - Carl Henderson; 25th - Margaret McVay, Bazzel Bates and Turner Meadows; 26th - Chandra Carpenter; 28th - Cindy Smith. Happy Birthday everyone and God bless you!

Wedding anniversaries are:

19th - Floyd and Nita Combs; 20th - James and Gwen Collins and Dennis and Karen Brown; 28th - Shannon and Amy Renfro. Happy Anniversary and I wish you many more.

Pat LaRue and daughter-in-law Thula LaRue attended the funeral of Adella Willis at Jasper. After the funeral we took the long way home and saw 38 elk. (Of course neither one of us had a camera!) They were beautiful and we also saw the big swan up there. That makes my day when I can get out and drive around like that.

Chandra Carpenter and son, Cameron, came by and saw parents and grandparents, Danny and Donella Willis. They were here from Texas for her grandmother's funeral.

Thought for the week: There are dreamers and there are planners; planners make their dreams come true!



In praise of snail mail

By "Pete Moss"

What are you reading at the moment? I am rereading a book that my spouse searched for and gave to me shortly after we returned home from England in 2001. Neither of us can recall whether it was for my birthday in August or if it was given me before that time. This doesn't matter, because it is a delightful book and worthy of being reread. Besides that, it has an even greater significance. Be patient, we'll get to that later...

The book is called *The 3,000 Mile Garden* and its two authors are Leslie Land and Roger Phillips. The first edition dates from 1992. The gist of the story is that these two people met at a "mushroom room" in New Hampshire. He lived in London, England and she lived in a very-rural section of Maine. At this point, I'm not positive what a mushroom foray is, but I suspect it has something to do with spotting and gathering them and then going back to the house and cooking them for a grand meal - provided they have been properly identified. If not, well, then a final meal.

I'm quite certain they were enthusiastic about the foray, because I remember the words "Come quickly!" we heard in the woods on an Arkansas Native Plant Society weekend. "Hurry up and see the fruiting bodies on the slime molds!" Isn't that just like a mycologist? (That's someone who studies fungi, of which mushrooms are a part.) We experienced that same sort of passion on another trip when we discovered and photographed a patch of black molds.

Roger Phillips is a gardening and nature photographer, while Leslie Land is a food writer. They hit it off immediately and when they returned to their respective homes, the letters started flowing. That's how this book came from. Those let-

ters span the time from September 6, 1989 until November 12, 1994. The edition of my copy of the book is 1996 and so includes those later letters.

Roger is the main keeper of Eccleston Square, a three-acre private park in London. Squares like this are scattered throughout the city and are what we call "green space." Each occupant of the houses surrounding the square pays an annual upkeep fee and has their own personal key to the gate. For this, they have the privilege of using the interior of the square and enjoying the amenities, whether they be tennis courts or just gardens. Eccleston claims fame to the national *Ceanothus* collection.

Leslie gardens in Cushing, Maine in the summer and lives there in the winter. Just eye-balling the globe, London is roughly ten degrees further north, yet has a much milder climate. Cushing is, well, it's in Maine. Enough said.

Their collection of letters was saved and eventually became the book I am enjoying all over again. Not only were they published as a book, they also became a television show on the BBC.

When we arrived in London and got settled in our hotel, we started to walk toward town and saw a sign on the fence of Eccleston square saying that it was their open house, with tea being served. This only happens once a year and we were fortunate enough to stroll by on the appointed day.

When we were leaving, we spoke with a few of the residents of the square and I noticed one house with a veritable forest on its roof. "Oh, that's where Roger Phillips lives," "Who's he?" "The book and TV show." That's how my spouse came to track down

a copy of the book for me. Another, more-recognizable, earlier resident of the square was Winston Churchill.

Why am I rereading the book now, you ask? It has something to do with a phone call I got almost a month ago. Ordinarily, if I don't recognize the caller's number, I don't answer. I don't know why I took the call, but I did. It turned out to be someone I knew in Turkey - forty-five years ago! I suppose anyone can be tracked down on the internet nowadays. This time I'm glad.

Just like the letters in the book, emails ensued and they revealed something. We had been in a play together over there. What was its name? Good grief, I didn't even remember being in a play, much less know its name! The question persisted and I suggested trying the archives of the Turkish American Association in Izmir. Neither of us checked, but a few days later I remembered something else. I was a good child when I was there and wrote my parents every week. My mother saved all those letters and post-cards and I knew they were in my possession - somewhere.

When I returned from work that day, I put my finger on the little cedar box of mail and after quite a bit of reading, found a newspaper clipping about the play. That certainly answered the question!

Though the USPS might be having problems, I'd like you all to know that nothing beats a letter in the hand. What I've already read of those long-ago letters has brought back so many great memories - some we remembered and others I'd forgotten. I STILL don't remember being in that darn play, but the letter says I was and so does the newspaper article!

Country Living

By Paula Allison

Watching all the birds, in the last few days, reminds me of migration, and flight of said species, to other parts of the states. I know that now, there are many that have chosen to hang around to wait out the "so called" winter. However, there are still some that fly "South" for the winter, and come back through around what is usually the time for spring. Since the weather has been so mild, late, I am wondering if the birds, along with many others, have concluded, it is just fine to stay and retrieve sustenance right where they are? It seems that way to me. I enjoy feeding the little two legged, winged, aero-dynamic acrobats, and many others must also. Reason being, there is often one or two bird feeders, in many yards at the present time.

The eagles must be in the process of finding and keeping nesting sites. This is the third week in a row I have spotted one of the lovely acrobats high above in the air. The last one was seemingly, in a hurry to get somewhere, as he was flying rather quickly to get there. Their white heads, and tails are the easiest way for me to make sure they are eagles, otherwise I would certainly be questioning, my abilities to spot them in the higher elevations of the air. There are more people enjoying the graceful

articulations of the bird every day. Some with binoculars have related how they have spotted the bird as high in the air as they could possibly see.

Another little item going on in the near-by areas, squirrels running everywhere, even in some attics. Squirrels, though cute little culprits, are also destructive around the farm and house. If found in the attic, many are distressed concerning what to do. I suggest calling the county agent for information about ideas and cures to rid ones' self of said creatures.

Fishing is just around the corner! Yeah! I am certainly looking to invade the privacy of these little swimmers, and have a good mess of fresh fish very soon. My birthday is just next month and I will qualify for a "life-time" hunting and fishing license. That

will help me out, because I always forget when it is time to renew these things. (Well, I am just me, so what can I say?)

The rains are in and out now. The sun is also the same. These statements said, we unfortunately, have to remember the particular time of year it is, almost anyway. We are casually, wondering around between winter and spring. Our roller-coaster, weather, has continued on since fall. Slightly, differing in temperatures, we have almost made it through the first quarter of the year. Our one actual snow was quickly washed away with a torrent of rain. Thermometers went back up, and here we have a stale-mate. Now we are back to point A and for the most part, we are a happy bunch. Just as it always is in Country Living.

Spam Casserole.....

A woman was waiting in the check-out line at a shopping center. Her arms were laden with a mop and broom and other cleaning supplies.

By her actions and deep sighs, it was obvious she was in an extreme hurry and was not happy about the slowness of the line.

When the cashier called for

a price check on a box of soap, the woman remarked indignantly, "Well, I'll be lucky to get out of here and home before Christmas!"

"Don't worry, ma'am," replied the clerk. "With that wind kicking up out there and that brand new broom you have there, you'll be home in no time."

THE DOVER TIMES (U.S.P.S. 011-121)

Periodicals postage paid at P.O. Box 547 8888 Market St. Dover, AR 72837 479-331-3875 Fax 479-331-4728	Published every Wednesday by The Atkins Chronicle, Inc. Fax 479-641-1604 479-331-3875 479-641-7161	Staff Van A. Tyson Editor & Publisher Ginnie Tyson Business Manager Elizabeth Brown Dover Managing Editor Joseph Brown Sports Editor	Beverly Davis Circulation Manager Zack Murdoch Webmaster Mark Murdoch IT Manager	YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION RATES: Pope, Va and Johnson Counties \$18 In State \$27 Out of State \$32
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Card of Thanks & Memorials - 20¢ per word • Classifieds - 20¢ per word Combo - 32¢ • Engagement, wedding and anniversary handling fee \$15

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POSTMASTER: send address changes to *The Dover Times*, P.O. Box 547, Dover, AR 72837