

## Excerpts from Bob Edmonds' books

Samuel Edward Cowan was a classic gentleman and benefactor. At this point is a good place to briefly showcase his life.

In the mid 1890s, Sam Cowan had provided surrogate parentage for his niece Sissie May Tarrant while her divorced mother, Jennie Cowan, was away teaching in Florida during three school years.

Now a decade later fate dealt Cowan the responsibility for rearing Sissie May's two preschool age sons, Rob and Sammie Perryman – no small task. He accepted the challenge with his usual quiet strength, channeling his energy into what was most important. He loved and guided them and provided a secure home until they were young men ready to leave the nest. He impelled their attendance every time the doors opened to Willington Presbyterian Church where he served as a ruling elder.

Character building instilled by Sam Cowan upon these children during their formative years clearly reflected in their lives when they became adults.

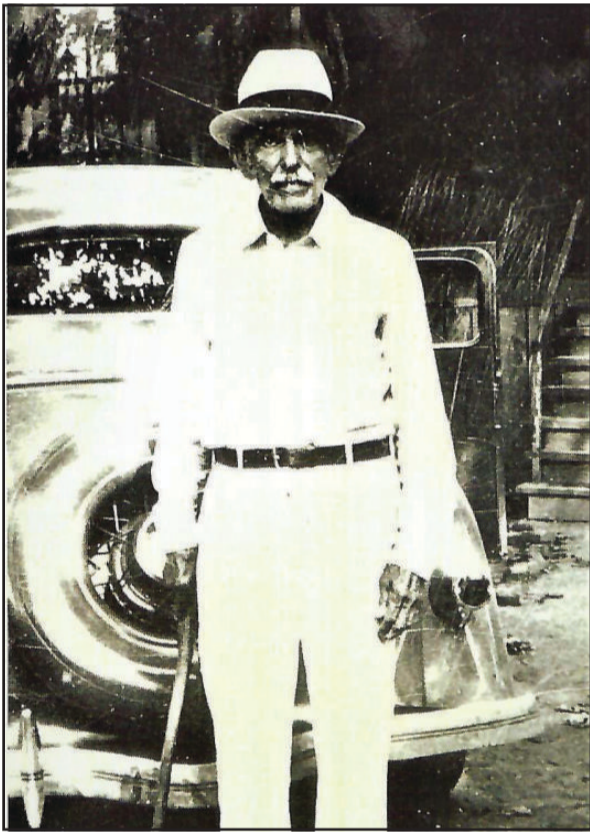
As a young man, Sam Cowan was a community builder during the founding of the town of Willington and was elected a warden on the first town council.

Few musicians excelled Sam Cowan's skill at entertaining on piano and on fiddle. He charmed his family and the community with his music often.

For most of his adult life, Cowan ran a general store in Willington and operated a farm that produced cotton, corn, grain, syrup, vegetables, fruit, cows, hogs, and chickens. This rural atmosphere provided for an ideal real-life experience for child rearing that was tightly bound to the land in a scenario of love and close knit family traditions, along with the hard work involved in hands-on training for producing food and shelter, mechanical know-how, and merchandising.

The extended Cowan family home clearly reflects continuity of the Scottish family ways in which nuclear households were highly cohesive, drawing strength from the support of other kin round about them. These traditions fostered an exceptionally strong sense of loyalty in a moral order, which recognized a special sense of obligations to the network of kin.

From *Destiny of the Scots-Irish*.



Samuel Edward Cowan, 1936.

## Kitty's Korner

By Kitty Craig - Jackson

Silence can play a very important part in our lives if we allow it to do so. In this world that's constantly bombarding our senses with sensory input, only in an environment of complete silence can we find the kind of peace that human beings have been searching for probably since we appeared on the planet.

Silence used to be easier to find, so people probably didn't value it as much – it was there when we needed it. Nowadays, though, there are many people who don't even know what silence is like, especially for an extended period of time. True silence is like a healing force that can allow us to find a depth in our lives that we generally don't reach when we're distracted or when others want our attention.

Many people find silence and immediately become afraid of it, so they turn on a TV or a stereo just to banish the silence. There's something about the idea of not having something to latch their minds on that terrifies them, and it just could be that they're afraid that the silence may be something

very positive for them.

We have to give silence a chance. We have to search it out and allow it to be a part of us, and then we have to find out where our minds can go when we're not overwhelmed by outside sounds. When we do this, we can see and feel the world in new and different ways – we can experience our lives in deeper ways when we're not struggling to sort out the hundreds of sounds that tend to follow us wherever we go.

But where can we find silence? That's one of the most important questions we can ask ourselves, and it does often take a lot of effort to put ourselves into a silent environment. But it is important to find such a place – or such places – for the sake of our well-being.

The challenge of finding places where we can experience silence, and then putting ourselves in those places on a regular basis, may just be one of the most important challenges that face us in our lives. I've found that silence doesn't have to be the complete absence of noise, and that we will recognize silence when we find it.



- Tom Poland photo

## Across the Savannah Noble ruin of the south

By Tom Poland

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When man abandoned it, the traffic diverted west, and the forest began to claim it. Today, sycamores, cedars, and oaks console it, and wind and water song replace the hum of tires. If you know when and where to look, you can glimpse this noble ruin of the South. A mere second, my glimpse, but it whispered, "Take time to visit me," so I did. I knew the place would give me a good feeling, and it did. The place? The old U.S. Highway 25 bridge that used to straddle Turkey Creek.

"Used to, you say?"  
"Yes, men cut away its mid-section."

Now like bookends, its truncated ends stare at each other across a westward-flowing creek. You won't see books suspended mid-air, but this place is a book, and it deserves to be in a book, and I just might put it in one.

In winter light, the north end looked Romanesque. The snow-white limbs of sycamores added brilliance to the dry brown of January, and the azure sky reigned perfect, not a cloud in the sky. Only man's orange safety netting, a band-aid of sorts, marred the setting. Rains had the creek swollen and muddy, a chocolate-colored torrent.

I like ruins. I've been to Rome's Coliseum. I like going to the Glendale Ruins up Sparkle City way. I've never been to Cumberland Island's Dungeness Ruins, but I will. Best of all I like the ruins beneath my nose, the ones no one cares about but me. And so it was I found myself walking toward this old bridge. On the way in I walked past coyote scat and a deer stand. A refugee from the Old West and primal instincts seek safe harbor here

near this bridge to the past.

When I got to the old bridge, right off I noticed that missing midsection. I noticed, too, two strange steel towers, green moss, white quartz embedded in gray cement, and those dazzling sycamores – a majestic setting for majestic ruins. This bridge speaks to me. "Like you, I was younger and essential once, but to see me is to see your future."

Time and something called progress leave many a bridge behind. Many get razed, like the vanquished Silas N. Pearson/Cooper River Bridge. But the old Highway 25 Bridge stands still, and it gives me that ancient Rome vibe. It's truly a bridge to the past. I think of old makes and models of cars and trucks it ferried north and south. Old Coca Cola trucks. Women in labor. Men bound for labor. Surely an old crew from the abandoned chain gang camp five miles south worked the highway here. Come torrid summer days I bet they leaned over those cement guardrails and dreamed they were swimming.

The chain gangs are dead now. All those trucks and cars rusted to death. Those who built the bridge are dead. Those who traveled it? Many are dead. When you and I are dead, it will still be there as it holds its place among the ranks of forlorn bridges forced into retirement.

On a cold, windy afternoon I stood on the old bridge's south end watching the newer distant bridge ferry traffic across a creek turned small river when rains come. None, I daresay, knew a man was watching from the past, but I was, a witness to God Change. I watched them speed along oblivious to the old bridge and God Change who's patiently waiting for them as well.

## Note of Thanks

The McCormick County Department of Health & Human Services & Department of Social Services would

like to thank the following for their generous Christmas donations to the citizens of McCormick County: Good Shepherd Catholic Church, Mt. Zion AME Church of McCormick, Buffalo Baptist Church, Marion Parnell, John de la Howe, Clemson Extension, and those who gave anonymously. Your generosity was very much appreciated by our agencies along with the families that received your gifts of love. May God continue to richly bless each one of you!

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## Another view of the lessons of history – Observations on science in the 21st century, Part XI

By Chuck Cook

Over the past hundred years or so, we seem to have lost our ability to rationally differentiate between science and the scientific method – both of which were defined in Parts I & II of this series. In particular, we confuse scientific knowledge with the modeling of, as yet, unproven scientific theories, which is an essential aspect of the scientific method. In substantial part, this confusion is the result of our increasing reverence for virtually anything associated with the new high priests of materialism who have blessed us with the magical technology that dominates so much of our daily lives. We don't really understand very much – or any – of it, but have come to believe that if it's derived from scientific research, it's both legitimate and valid.

Unfortunately, scientific modeling – as explained in Part X – is normally just another tool that is necessary to test and verify a scientific finding. It may or may not be a valid combination of available scientific knowledge, limited supporting data and assumptions made for the sole purpose of testing the theory. As also shown in Part X, a model is highly subject to political and other non-scientific assumptions based on the biases of those with a clear stake in verifying the theory it is intended to prove.

My personal experience with the foibles and difficulties of scientific modeling began in the mid-1980s during my tenure as team leader of a U.S. conducted agriculture and water project (AGWAT) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. One problem to be solved under this Saudi funded project was whether there was sufficient ground water in the Kingdom to support the Saudi government's long-term subsidization of wheat production, which required enormous center-pivot irrigation from underground aquifers. The model to be used to help answer this question was essentially identical to one used successfully by the Saudi oil industry to predict the amount of underground oil reserves. Some of the data to be plugged into the model regarding the quantity of water in the aquifer had been developed by the U.S. Geological Survey, a component of AGWAT. In addition, a number of assumptions had to be made, including the dimensions of the aquifer, its anticipated rate of depletion and its expected rate of replenishment.

The results of this modeling effort were – at best – ambiguous. Depending on even minor adjustments in the assumptions made to quantify various elements of the equation, the model would predict that the Kingdom would either run out of fresh water supplies sometime during the next decade or have sufficient quantities to continue subsi-

dizing wheat production for centuries. Take your pick. Not surprisingly, the Saudi Ministry of Agriculture and Water preferred the assumptions that produced the second option and, subsequently, continued their subsidy programs despite legitimate questions and protests from other Saudi ministries. Only time will tell if their assumptions were valid, but the risks – if they are wrong – may be enormous.

Regardless of whether they are being used to predict groundwater availability, the severity of climate change, the number and rate of coronavirus infections/fatalities, or anything else upon which government policies will be based, the accuracy of the models is almost entirely dependent on the quality of the data and assumptions being inserted into the equations. It is also becoming painfully obvious, as shown in this series, that the scientists and elected officials who are making the decisions about what data and assumptions to plug into the models they are using to make public policy are often and increasingly using political and ideological criteria that may have little or no firm scientific basis.

The inescapable conclusions about this sad state of affairs are – (1) there is growing doubt and a lack of trust on the part of our citizens regarding public assertions by our leaders that their policies are, indeed, legitimately based on "the science" involved; (2) our public leaders – based on ignorance or deliberate obfuscation – are feeding this doubt and uncertainty by their growing tendency to pass off modeling – an otherwise legitimate tool of the scientific method – as legitimate scientific discoveries; (3) the media, including those corporate entities that provide a substantial portion of our access to on-line information and social media platforms, are using these models of doubtful accuracy to hype support for or opposition to the public policies on which they are based; and (4) the nation as a whole is becoming more hypersensitive to and polarized by what they perceive as the failure of "science" or – more accurately – the pseudoscience of modeling to both accurately predict real-world outcomes or the development of effective public policies to alleviate the adverse impact of these outcomes.

Ultimately, there does not appear to be any human belief or process that cannot be subverted and sullied by those who seek to use it to achieve objectives totally unrelated to the purposes for which those beliefs or processes were created. This includes one of the purest forms of human endeavor – science. And, like religion, we sometimes and most regrettably pervert or misuse it at our peril.

More in Part XII.

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