

## Excerpts from Bob Edmonds' books

Besieged with their problems over courts, outlaws, Cherokees and Creeks, schools and churches, the Back Countrymen were barely aware of ongoing American politics. Not many had heard of the Stamp Act of 1765, and fewer understood the growing quarrel between the colonies and Great Britain. Stamped legal documents meant nothing to a man in the Back Country who saved himself a long journey to Charles Town (Charleston) for a marriage license by having the wedding ceremony performed by an unlicensed wandering preacher.

Referring to the colonial political organization, there was but one South Carolina. Actually South Carolina was composed of two distinct societies without a close intermixing of the two. Such has always been the case. There was perhaps a more marked and dangerous schism on the eve of the Revolution than at any other time in South Carolina history.

Charles Town, homogeneous in flavor and occupation, by 1750 was still spread mostly along the coast and had come to include the plantation areas around Georgetown and Beaufort. By 1775 all roads seemed to diverge from Charles Town, a town that had developed to serve the needs of a rich agricultural hinterland. In a little more than two decades rice exports grew threefold and indigo fourfold, while large plantations with slave labor became firmly rooted. The Low Country was at once a land of opportunity for a few entrepreneurs and the large planters, and in per capita wealth and income Low Country whites led all Americans. The Low Countrymen clung to their status of being gentlemen carved from the English patterns.

By any scale of comparison, the Carolinians of the Back Country differed from those on the coast. In the Back Country there were the subsistence farmers – the Scots-Irish, Germans, and French Huguenots, and only a sprinkling of African slaves, trying to eke out an existence. Near the coast, the Anglican Church was strong with the plutocracy; in the Back Country, it was the Presbyterian and the Baptist.

During the eighteenth century there was serious friction between the two South Carolinas, upper and lower. This was not because one was wealthier than the other was; but because one enjoyed the privileges, advantages and, most of all, political control. The older low country faction, a minority, ruled the majority. The Assembly in Charles Town, in a mild response, had recently given an aspirin to the Back Country in the creation of six new judicial districts with a circuit court in each. The cards appeared stacked, but shortly the Back Country was going to hold some aces.

While the people in the Back Country had been struggling for order, the Assembly in Charles Town had begun a conflict with Great Britain. King George III and Parliament had embarked on courses that would bring them into dire collision with the American colonies. Parliament enacted several controversial laws. It required that colonies furnish quarters for Royal troops. Under the Townshend Act it levied an import duty on such basic commodities as paper, paint, glass, and tea, and it revived a statue of Henry VIII requiring that all persons accused of treason be sent to England for trial.

The Assembly condemned the statue regarding treason. In a showdown the House refused to provide quartering to Royal troops bound for Jamaica. Parliament rescinded the Townshend Act, but the clash grew worse.

Merchants in Charles Town formed an Association, bent on non-importation. The Association declared their allegiance to the King. But they determined that the Association would encourage the use of goods manufac-

ured in America, especially South Carolina, and that, with certain exceptions, they would not import products of Great Britain, and would refuse to trade with anyone not signing their agreement of Association and Non-importation.

In reaction to the tea party in Boston, the General Committee of the Association called a meeting. Leaders sent invitations to every section of the province of South Carolina. Though the people of the Back Country scarcely understood the quarrel, they sent delegates to the meeting held in Charles Town on July 6, 1774. Delegates attended from Ninety Six District.

Delegates from South Carolina attended the first meeting of the Continental Congress held in Philadelphia on September 5, 1774.

In daring moves the Patriots formed a Council of Safety and created a Provincial Congress. Henry Laurens was elected president. President Laurens pressed the Congressmen into assuming greater power of government. The Provincial Congress issued £1 million in paper currency, authorized a standing army of fifteen hundred troops, and sealed allegiance within the Association.

The Provincial Congress adjourned on June 22, 1775, leaving its extralegal government of South Carolina in the hands of the Council of Safety. President Laurens could frustrate any move by Royalist Governor William Campbell in Charles Town. William Henry Drayton, Provincial Congressman, could provide arms and ammunition for Provincial militia that was ready for action against Loyalists or British soldiers.

Patriots intercepted a letter written by British agent Alexander Cameron, from the Long Canes that confirmed an alliance between the Cherokees and British. Cameron wrote he “could lead down any number of Cherokees that Indian Agent John Stuart thought proper, whenever called upon in support of his Majesty’s government to make war on the Patriots in Back Country.”

The Back Country was greatly alarmed. His mission revealed agent Cameron escaped to the Cherokee Nation and settled into the security of his plantation on the Reedy River. The Council of Safety hastily formulated plans for an anticipated attack.

The Council of Safety, determined to take firm control over the Back Country, readily realized the strategic importance of Fort Charlotte on Savannah River (near present-day Mt. Carmel). To prevent the British from sending any of the gunpowder stored at Fort Charlotte to the Cherokees, President Laurens on June 26, 1775, ordered immediate seizure of the fort in the name of the Council of Safety. The President directed Colonel William Thomson, “to march with his whole Regiment, or such part as may be necessary to take possession of Fort Charlotte – arms, ammunition, and stores – demand the keys of the magazine and stores, and to station at the fort the first troop of rangers raised.”

President Laurens directed that Captain Whitefield and his militia company holding Fort Charlotte for the Crown be given, “all proper encouragement to remain in the Fort provided (Whitefield) will be subject to your orders. We are very desirous of retaining him in the service of the Colony, and therefore you may propose to him pay equal to his present, which, if he accepts it, (we) will appoint him to the first vacancy in your Regiment.”

*The Making of McCormick County.*



Bob Edmonds

## Kitty's Korner

By Kitty Craig - Jackson

We see very often that people try to overplay their hands, that they try so hard to do something or control something or somebody because they want others to think that they're super strong. They're posing. Many kids in my high school classes are posers in this way. Someone hurts them and they say they don't care when they really do. Someone takes something of theirs and they have to threaten the other person with physical violence, just so that others can see that they're “strong.”

But real strength doesn't manifest itself in overexertion or threats against others or in being “better” than others. Real strength is seen in the person who can look at a situation and act truly and authentically, without worrying what others may think of him or her. Real strength is seeing the situation and determining what is an appropriate response no matter what onlookers may think of it.

One of the strongest people I've ever known never, ever had to prove her strength, and she never talked about how strong she was. She did the work she needed to do without doing 60-hour weeks, and her work was better than that of others who were killing themselves at her job. She was confident and she knew what needed to be done and she did it well, without forcing herself to do more.

If we want to be successful, it's important that we keep in mind what Rabindranath has said here. It's the calm strength that comes from deep inside that helps us to be truly successful, that helps us to accomplish wonderful things. We may do some things well without that calm strength, but that success is fleeting, and we can't count on it to repeat itself. The inner strength is the great gift that we can give to the world, for with it we can contribute great successes that are lasting.

## Stockton's View

### McCrackens led *Messenger* more than century; we owe them for keeping us informed

By Bob Stockton

Thirty-two years ago, my wife and I succumbed to a Savannah Lakes Village salesman's pitch and a bought chunk of McCormick County because we loved the climate and topography.

Since then, we've learned a lot more about the county's background, warts and all, but we're still here and more committed than ever.

I've been writing for the *McCormick Messenger* for more than 15 years, and have loved every moment. When I started, my intent was to give Savannah Lakes Villagers better presence in the county's paper, but my role gradually expanded to much more.

General manager/editor Vicki McCracken Dorn's family has been associated with the *Messenger* since 1904. The paper was established June 5, 1902.

Dorn took a gamble and appointed this northern newcomer a staff reporter. Since then, I've learned that McCormick County's divides are much more than the Village newcomers vs. the local long-timers.

There is, of course, race, north vs. south, wealthy vs. poor, and increasingly Republican vs. Democrat of course, but we do have our commonalities. Pastor Jim Kinsler has brought pastors of all faiths together with his ministry alliance, and manager/editor Dorn has published not only all my stories but also letters to the editor from one and all.

My career has taken me from entry level journalism assignments to management level public relations positions with major companies. While I've witnessed some regrettable management decisions, I can write without reservation that Dorn has made the right editorial decisions 99 percent of the time ... and she's been a pleasure to work with.

This paper's new ownership and the merger of the *Lincoln Journal*, *Washington News-Reporter* and *McCormick Messenger* heralds an entirely new era in McCormick County journalism. It's not only new management and energy behind the next paper you will be reading, but the merger represents a bridge across the Savannah on the north end of the CSRA.

Much like Augusta and North Augusta are joined at the south end of Lake Thurmond, Lincoln, Wilkes and McCormick counties just might be working more closely together up here. I know some folks will question this, but progress creates strange bedfellows.

Welcome new owner John Stone, but please do not forget the contributions of the McCracken family, and especially its latest member, Vicki Dorn, absolutely the best client this free-lance photo journalist ever had.

We owe Vicki and her ancestors an infinite debt.

## Thank you

Dear *McCormick Messenger*,

It's hard to believe that the fourth generation of a McCracken at the *Messenger* will be coming to an end this week. I remember Mr. Johnny McCracken and his daughter Vicki as reporter/salesman/typesetter and whatever was needed to get the *McCormick Messenger* out on Thursdays.

We are sad to see the end of the McCormick Media Group's ownership with Mr. Bobby Edmonds and others making the decision to sell the newspaper. The many articles reporting on the efforts of community groups, governmental agencies, churches and individuals will live on in the archives of the *McCormick Messenger*.

I would like to say thank you for the many years you all worked to get the community news out in a timely fashion. Vicki, you and all the staff members are to be commended for a job well done. Thank you for your service to our community, wishing you the best in your new endeavors.

We look forward to a great working relationship with the new owners and reporters.

- Jackie Brown

## Reader expresses appreciation

Thank you *Messenger* for being you for all of these years.

- Mary Lou Hoyt

## Tamala White for County Council District 5

We seem to have two opinions on whether the county is divided or not divided. Most people having the latter or the former opinion are very passionate about their belief. I want to be a part of erasing that line in the sand. I want to help move us toward the prosperity and safety of McCormick County. I want to be a positive unifying representative of District 5 and the county as a whole. We can do this, if you will vote for me as your District 5 council person. I want to work for everyone.

I wanted to share more of what I would like to do for the residents of council district 5 and the county as a whole. I believe it is one thing to say what we need to do but it is a whole “nother” thing to say how I think we can do it. Last week, I addressed the “biggies”, industry, business, education, housing and infrastructure and public services retention. The following will be a few more things I want to focus on.

We have substandard roads in county council district 5, that taxpaying citizens are trying to traverse daily. I will work diligently to get these issues addressed and not have the residents left in the dark.

I want to address the deteriorating county airport; our airport is a huge asset to the county's future business and industrial development. This must be addressed sooner rather than later as county officials have been made aware that if the airport is deemed condemned and closed, we will never be able to reopen it or establish another one.

While I am thankful that soon, the lower and upper ends of the county will both have an EMS substation; I would make it a high priority to add an office inside the EMS substations, for the sheriff's department to occupy as needed.

As it currently stands, the limited number of deputies on duty, have to drive all the way back to the McCormick office to make their incident reports before they can continue their patrols. This is causing a significant waste of work/patrol hours and fuel. I believe this would allow the officer more time on the street, thus making the county safer. Getting the secure internet capabilities required by law will be the most difficult part but does not make it even slightly impossible.

I want to explore the possibility of development of the nearly 150 acres of prime lake front property owned by McCormick County. This development could fund the update of the infrastructure that would allow us to attract the industry we need and would also give us the need for small business to provide services to those new property owners.

I believe that county jail trustees should be utilized by county departments to perform non-hazardous tasks. Such as weekly official county vehicle fleet cleaning for all departments and support staff for the recreation department to line ball fields and pick up litter before and after events. Along with janitorial duties.

Finally, I believe that it is our most honored duty to keep our elderly safe and healthy and will do everything I can to make that happen. I believe that as a county council member, we have a platform to help the elderly and the sick with not only local benefit matters alone but state benefit issues as well.

- Tamala White

## Re-elect Charles Hegler for commissioner of public works

I have 32 years of dedicated service as a CPW commissioner.

My profession was mostly as project manager constructing water plants and waste treatment plants.

As commissioner we have obtained federal and state grants to replace electric lines and poles, waste treatment plant, water lines and water plant. We recently replaced the 97 year old water plant.

I would appreciate your vote to continue to serve you! Vote at McCormick One Stop April 5, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

## McCormick Messenger

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