

Paul's testimony of his salvation

By FICKLEN GUIN
Pastor and Columnist
(Acts 26: 15-23)

Paul gives his testimony of his acceptance of Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour, who gives him hope on Earth and everlasting life in Heaven with Jesus.



Paul was taught, schooled, and trained by the Jewish teachers to be a Pharisee, and Paul came to know all about the prophecy of hope the Jews looked for from God on Earth.

When the Gospel message of hope through Jesus Christ began to be proclaimed by the Apostles of Jesus, the Pharisees and Jewish leaders became angry, including Paul, who was being schooled to be a Pharisee, and he let this be known in his testimony.

To begin with, Paul was so dedicated to his Jewish learning as a Pharisee, he was determined to stop the Apostles' teaching about Jesus Christ, but God had other plans for Paul that he did not yet know about, and Jesus made a special visit from Heaven with Paul on the Damascus Road when Paul was on his way to Damascus to punish and even kill Christian believers.

Now Paul stood before King Agrippa and was proud to have this opportunity to give his testimony about Jesus saving him on the Damascus Road, and how God, through Jesus, had called him to be an Apostle of Jesus to the Gentile world.

With Paul's meeting with Jesus came the greatest testimony that any human being has received from Jesus, to give to the world, and it is still being given today through Christian lessons and sermons about mankind's conversion experience with Jesus as mankind's Saviour from sin.

With Paul's testimony came a call from Jesus to Paul for Christian service, and we need to see and understand our call to

Salvation from sin by Jesus for us to include a call to service in God's Kingdom on Earth by God's Holy Spirit in the Name of Jesus.

This turnaround in Paul's life began in Damascus, and continued back to Jerusalem, and to all the world, by the witness of Christianity, from then until today, in all Christian churches all over our world.

Jesus called Paul to be a special messenger to the Gentile world, and that is the reason Paul's witness and teachings are included in the teachings of our Christian churches of today.

This made Paul's Jewish Pharisee brother angry, and they wanted to kill Paul, but Paul's testimony made him press forward with the Gospel message, and that is the reason Paul's witness about Jesus Christ is such a great part of our Christian witness about Jesus, God's Saviour of all of mankind, throughout our world today.

Paul said, "Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision; but shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." (Acts 26:19-20)

Then Paul said to King Agrippa, "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing, both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come.

That Christ should suffer and die, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles."

Then Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul much learning hath made you mad." But Paul said, "I am not mad most noble Festus. I speak the truth. The King knoweth of these things. Then King Agrippa said, "Paul, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

King Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed to Caesar." (verse 32) But thanks be to God, we are all set free from our sins when we accept and trust in Jesus as our Saviour from our sins.

The Mayor's Corner

Washington's glass is filling

By WILLIAM DEGOLIAN
Mayor



Some years back, I came across an article by a British psychiatrist named Dr. Cliff Arnall of the University of Cardiff in Wales. He had devised a formula to measure the most depressing day of the year. Applying factors such as the letdown after the conclusion of the Christmas season, the coming due of holiday debts, the short days and long, dark nights, the cold and dreary weather, the already broken New Year's resolutions and the general lack of motivation, he calculated that January 24, my birthday!!, is the most depressing day of the year.

Interestingly, January is in fact viewed as a depressing month. It is considered to be a prime time for seasonal affective disorder (SAD), a mood disorder that occurs when the seasons change. It might start in the fall or winter and continue until spring. Lack of daylight can certainly cause depressive symptoms.

Dr. Arnall has long since acknowledged that there is absolutely no scientific basis to his formula and there is no proof of a rise in mental health referrals in January. In fact,

the whole "Blue Monday – Most Depressing Day" story is actually a public relations stunt created by a travel company looking to promote vacation bookings.

All that having been said, I have laughed that my birthday was found to be the most depressing day of the year. What better reason to party with friends and brighten up the midwinter?

In that regard, I had the distinct pleasure of participating in the Vine and Branches Development Company's ground breaking ceremony last week on Depot Street, where our new and dynamic Washington resident, Kimberly Cork, along with her business partner, Luis Guillen, who may be moving here as well, unveiled plans for a restaurant, an indoor/outdoor bar, and a distillery where there is currently a laundromat, a car wash, and an old brick warehouse with great character but in sore need of renovation. Kimberly stressed that they want this to be a place where young families can bring children while they dine and relax.

Kimberly and Luis have grand plans. I salute Kimberly and Luis for their vision and enthusiasm.

This could be a transformational development for the Depot Street area. For years, the City has hoped for the right entrepreneurs to step up in District One with a viable, creative development. We have already seen the opening of the new Dollar General store. This new project just might be the catalyst for other investments in an area of town where there is great opportunity for innovative growth.

I noted in my remarks at the ceremony last Friday that some of the indicators that a city is dying are aging population, loss of population and lack of commercial activity. We hope to have new housing under way in Washington within a year, which will bring new and young residents to our city. Kimberly and Luis' project will certainly help provide entertainment for folks here in their free time. It may well also stimulate more commercial activity.

Maybe it is best that Kimberly and Luis scheduled their grand reveal during this the "most depressing time of the year". As I said last week, Washington's glass is half full.

It is an honor and privilege to serve as your mayor!

VINTAGE WILKES

Hodge Academy and Wilson Chapel

By SKEET WILLINGHAM
Local Historian

Education in the late 19th century was starkly segregated with minimal opportunities for Black children to receive training beyond bare basics of literacy. Widespread public education for all Wilkes County



children was a long time coming. Washington had a town academy as early as the 1780s which, though nominally public and charging a tuition, was supported by an educational lottery.

There were no accommodations for Black students until after the Civil War. In 1880 Wilkes County had 54 schools with 1023 pupils (14 schools were for 396 Blacks students). More sobering was the fact that the county had 4048 school-age children, revealing only one in four was receiving any schooling at all. Truly accessible public education was still a long way off.

The 1890s saw a coordinated effort for a quality educational institution in then called Freedman-

ville (now Whitehall, previously Wylieville). This movement, in some respects paralleled the town's movement for a white public school on North Alexander Avenue.

This effort, however, was organized through the guidance of the "Northern" Presbyterian Board of Missions for Freedmen (like most denominations by the Civil War, the churches had "split" into north and south factions). The local Washington Presbyterian Church, though, wholeheartedly supported this project.

The Knox Presbytery, an organization of Black Presbyterian Churches in Georgia, sponsored the development of Wilson Chapel, likely named for Woodrow Wilson's father, Rev. Joseph Ruggles Wilson, who at one time ministered in Washington.

Clergyman selected to lead the church was Rev. John R. Harris, a native North Carolinian and graduate of Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. Around 40 when he arrived, he was newly married to Lillian B. (Lilly) Woods. They would have three children: Richmond J., Estella Myrtle, and Viola. He purchased a home on Mercer Street not far from the church. Lilly Harris' mother, Amelia Woods, resided with them.

With Presbyterian zeal for education, Rev. Harris led a movement to build a school to train and teach in the community. The groundwork had been laid a few years before by Rev. David Laney and his daughter the renowned educator Lucy Craft Laney who had established Haines Institute in Augusta. It was on this template that Hodge Academy was begun here on Alabama Street, even before the famed Boggs Academy had been founded in Burke County. Hodge probably received its name for Rev. Charles Hodge, famous Presbyterian minister and Princeton professor. The school developed a strong academic and vocational curriculum.

Wilson Chapel Presbyterian Church had hardly been moved into when Rev. Harris hosted the Knox Presbytery in April 1901. With help from the Washington Presbyterian Church the more than forty delegates were provided free housing for their stay.

A severe windstorm ripped off the roof of Hodge Academy in Jan. 1909. Repairs and improvements were quickly made with cooperative efforts from Rev. Harris and Washington Presbyterian's Rev. J.F. Matheson. The Northern Presbyterian denomination provided \$200 for every \$100 raised locally. The Washington "Reporter" frequently published news from the school and encouraged contributions from the town. For a decade, Rev. Harris edited "The Missionary Presbyterian," a monthly paper for 60 cents a year.

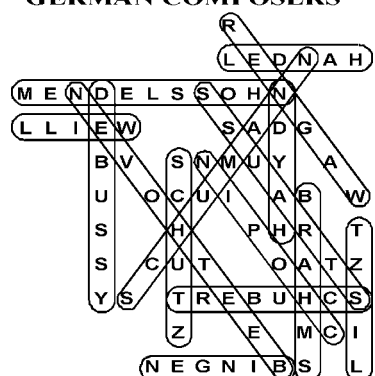
Hodge's 1915 graduation speaker was Rev. F.G. Hartman of Washington Presbyterian who stressed the good work Rev. Harris' institution was performing for the entire community. Hodge Academy was an active participant at the East Georgia Fair in the "Teens." In Feb. 1918 Rev. Harris organized a branch of the Red Cross to serve as local support for the large number of young Black men from Wilkes County who were serving in World War I.

Hodge Academy operated for many more years with Rev. Woods, possibly Lilly Harris' brother, following Rev. Harris. Tuition in the 1920s was 25 cents a month. Rev. Harris' sister, Amanda Harris Lancaster, also taught at Hodge as did another sister. Oral history relates that one of Georgia high school's first Black football teams originated at the school. Kay Finnell's enlightening "The African American Experience: Education in Wilkes County" provides several stories about Hodge Academy.

Please share any anecdotes or memories of this historic school and the dedicated people involved with it. I know we'd all love to learn more.

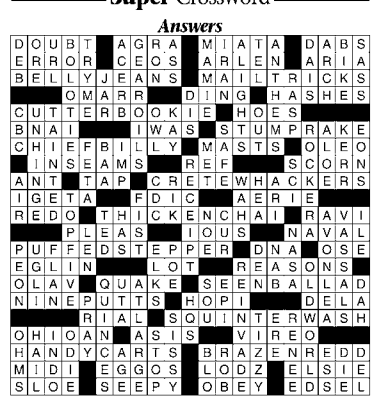
Last Week's Answers

GERMAN COMPOSERS



This week's answers

Super Crossword



ACROSS THE SAVANNAH

The Emperor's Hem

By TOM POLAND
A Southern Writer

In the late 1990s, a time that seems ancient, I touched the Emperor's hem. That is I corresponded with a writer whose words revealed a style original and mesmerizing. Somehow, I hoped, might his gift rub onto me? I first read him in Esquire before modern, less genteel ways soiled it. That was in June 1986. His story, "The Captain's Wife, told how he fell in love with a friend's wife but did not pursue her. The story's subtitle told you all you needed know, "Once Upon A Time There Was Honor In Love."



His style of writing and his life view made you want to read more. And so I found his book, Burning The Days, Recollection in 1997. I had lost my way in the Sea of Life, and his book became my compass. I took his book wherever I traveled. I read it in hotels, at my parents' home, wherever I ended up. I bought other books of his, and the idea came to me I should get him to sign them. But how?



I contacted a writers' organization in New York. "Ship the books to us and we'll send them to him and he can sign them for you. Some money was involved. I waited and waited. Then day-of-days my books came directly to me from Salter. Now I had his address. I wrote him a thank you letter, not expecting a reply, but he wrote me back speaking of the difficulty of getting published. He wrote some more.

Later he sent me a beautiful card, "Blue Nude III," a 1952 cut and pasted paper print by Henri Matisse. On its back he told me he had just come back from Chamonix, France, where he had been shooting a documentary, largely based on his novel, Solo Faces, for German TV. "Oddly enough," he wrote, "my biggest sales are

in it. He had no idea Salter had become a writer of high merit.

In his book Salter wrote much about Phil "Casey" Colman, who was an ace. Here's a bit. "It was May when Colman flew what no one except him knew would be his last mission. Colman left that day. He was lighthearted and self-promoting. Day-to-day truth was probably not in him but a higher kind of integrity was, a kind not wasted on trivial matters. He had an infectious spirit. We were unalike. I adored him."

I handed my book to Colman. "Look how many times you are in this book."

For an hour or more he read the book. By now he was old and frail, but I knew exactly who and where he was at the moment. He was back in Korea and his youth had returned as he held an F-100 high above the Yalu River. In Salter's words, "He and a MIG roared across mud flats wide open, needles crossed, the MIG like a beast of legend fleeing ahead. The controls were unyielding. The ground rushed beneath him. Destiny itself, unrehearsed, shimmered before his eyes."

Writers, well this one at least, worship the divine works of writers whose talent takes them to rarified heights. I admire these: James Dickey, Harry Crews, and James Salter. Salter's alone at the top.

in Germany." He mentioned two new books coming out and something called the Internet. "I've never looked myself up on the Internet, must be frightening." He closed his note, saying, "Am very grateful to you—embarrassing to talk about myself. Sincerely, James Salter."

In Burning The Days you'll read about Hemingway, Balzac, Roman Polanski, Irwin Shaw, Leonard Bernstein, and Robert Redford. No name appears more than Phil "Casey" Colman's, a Georgian, a fighter pilot in Korea alongside Salter. I crossed paths with Colman at a family reunion in Lincoln County, Georgia. Many pilots attended the reunion. Colman among them. He lived in Augusta. I had my book with me, of course, and showed him he was