

A Treasured Heritage

The Jesup Sentinel

Weather	Looney's Ino	8	56 3/4	56 3/4	56 3/4	-	1/4	Steele's	2	65	61 3/4	64 3/4	-	3/8
Wain	Looney's Corn	2	44 3/4	44 1/2	44 1/4	-	1/4	Jesup, GA 1950	8	11 3/4	11 1/2	11 3/4	-	1/8
...	Looney's P	3	9	9 3/4	9	+	1/4	Stebels	14	7	7	7	-	1/4
...	Lee Wil Biscuit	6	20 3/4	24 3/4	24 3/4	-	3/8	Stone & Web	10	8	8 3/4	8	-	1/4
...	Lordlard P	8	18 3/4	18 3/4	18 3/4	-	1/4	Studebaker Cp	33	10 1/4	10	10 1/4	-	3/4
...	...	3	71 1/2	71	71 1/2	-	3/4	Sun Oil	1	61 3/4	61 3/4	61 3/4	-	1/4

By Dottie Rhoden Bailey Hicks

As a little girl in elementary school, I remember climbing up a huge stack of very large paper that reached almost to the top of the ceiling, stretching out on it and falling asleep. Where was I and for what was this paper used? It was the old Jesup Sentinel building on South West Broad St and the paper was used for printing the newspaper, The Jesup Sentinel. My parents, W.B "Bill" and Dorothy Rhoden owned the newspaper and worked diligently to make it a success.

They purchased the newspaper from Mrs. C. A. Pound in 1950 when I was ten years old and we moved to Jesup. A dream of my dad's since he was a teenager was becoming a reality. He came from

one of the largest newspaper families in the state of Georgia. When he was in high school, he worked with his dad, L. M. Rhoden who owned The Tattnell Journal in Reidsville. Working in the mechanical operation and doing some reporting gave him great experience in what it would be like to run a newspaper and it got in his blood. In fact, five of L.M.

Rhoden's seven boys entered the newspaper field.

Upon graduation from high school, my dad attended Brewton Parker College and the University of Tampa on football scholarships. After getting his degree, he became a high school principal and coach. Later, he left teaching and became an Executive for the Boy Scouts of America working in N.C., Fla. And Savannah, Ga. Mother says she remembers his talking about getting into the newspaper business and always looking for an opportunity. Whenever he heard about newspapers for sale, he looked into them. In 1949, he found out about several for sale and narrowed his search down to two. One called "The Telephone" in Sylvania, Ga and the other known as "The Jesup Sentinel" in Jesup, Ga. After much investigation, he felt that

Jesup was the more progressive of the two towns. The agreement to purchase the business was made in 1950 with the deceased owner's widow Mrs. C.A. Pound. Having no extra money, he borrowed \$5000 from his brother Harold who owned The Lyons Progress to make the down payment and \$400 from his brother Russell who owned



W.B. "Bill" Rhoden at work on his Newspaper

Unit Dye pi	30	73 1/2	73 1/2	73 1/2	-	3/4	Unit E Cool	1	77 1/2	77 1/2	77 1/2	-	3/4
Unit Fruit	7	67	66 3/4	66 3/4	-	3/4	Unit Fruit	7	67	66 3/4	66 3/4	-	3/4

The Tattnell Journal to use for operating expenses. This was an exciting and apprehensive time for my parents because they were stepping into big shoes owning a a business and owing money. My father was very confident that he could do this job and he wanted to be an encouragement to this small growing community.

Mother had also been a school teacher for the 3rd grade, but when she had me, she stayed at home and loved it. However, with the purchase of this new endeavor, she had to pitch in, too. So for the next four to five years, she worked at the Sentinel everyday. It was her job to fill in wherever she was needed from doing a little bookkeeping to learning to operate some of the small presses. She did this willingly, but her desire was to be a housewife again and she was thrilled when that opportunity came later. Her enjoyment was her family, her church, volunteering as a pink lady, baking, encouraging others and sending cards.

In the beginning of their ownership, the news



Bill and Dorothy at their Leaving Party in 1976

paper was folded by hand. Each one was cut with a string attached to a nail. The string was placed in the middle of the large printed paper, the left side was folded over and then the string was jerked to the left which cut it. Each paper was folded individually. How time consuming! Our joke was, "we better not find one in the trash"! As I got older, I began to help with this job and some of my friends would often come and help on Thursdays, too. One of our "treats" was for daddy to take us to "The Pig" restaurant after the newspaper was finished - no matter how late. Later daddy bought a "folder" which fed each sheet singly into the machine and came out cut and folded. Both mother and I learned to operate this "fancy" machine.

Some of my early memories of the newspaper come from the large part of the building that was beyond the nice office supply front which the public saw. It was dirty with black print and had that newspaper smell. Mr. Berry sat at the linotype and printed out the metal letters which daddy and others would set in sentences, then roll black ink over

it and get it ready to print on a piece of paper.

Mr. Berry would often type my name or my friends' name which always came out backwards. We thought that was really something!

In 1964, The Jesup Sentinel moved from its old location to a completely new and modern building on Walnut Street. It was built specifically to house an offset plant. Daddy was on the cutting edge of things and made a decision to purchase the first Goss Community Offset Press in southeast Ga. This was a two color, two unit press capable of printing the newspaper in a fraction of the time formerly required. It was a huge investment, but paid off and daddy began to print many other small newspapers in the surrounding areas as far as 100 miles away. It was a blessing for him as well as many others.

The purpose of the newspaper was to print news about local citizens, events and happenings in Wayne County, as well as advertise businesses



The staff threw a leaving party for the Rhodens in 1976

and services offered. It was an anticipated weekly occurrence.

In the 1970's daddy was approached by Dink NeSmith about selling the newspaper. After much negotiation, he did sell it and the merge of The Jesup Sentinel and the Wayne County Press was achieved. It then became and is today - THE PRESS SENTINEL.

It's fun to reminisce about bygone days and to remember those who worked hard to be successful in a community and for a community. Both my mother and I have fond memories of Jesup and the friendly community it was and I am sure still is. Thank you, Jesup, for giving me a treasured heritage! †WCM



Bill and Dorothy Rhoden