

# Bill Greenlee Relates Time He Blacked Clemson's Boots

By JOHN LANE

Bill Greenlee, 71, retired garbage collector and employee of Clemson College for 51 years, and his wife, Annie Reid Greenlee, 63, celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary at their home in Calhoun last Saturday. When the photographer had snapped the couple in several poses, Bill said "Cap, how 'bout a picture of me an' my horse?"

Commenting on his fifty years of married life Bill said, "I had to steal dat Nigger, but she's been a good un."

Asked about the wedding, he replied, "Well, Sir, Judge Hook married us fifty years ago today."

"My first job at Clemson," Bill reminisced, "was blacking Mr. Clemson's high boots wid red tops—for ten cents a day. Of course I got my share uv apple and peach brandy from the cellar, and plenty to eat. He was good to me, too."

Continuing, he said, "Mr. Clemson used to call his hogs up in a deep gully where the college is now and feed 'em salt. He'd blow on a horn, and the hogs, all marked in dem days, would come fur dat salt."

"I used to drive him over to Pendleton on Sunday," Bill added, "sittin' up high and feelin' like a king. He'd let me drive around Pendleton during church, if I promised not to let no trashy folks git in."

A well known and universally-liked figure on the Clemson campus, Bill can be seen almost any day, sitting on his wagon, humming some improvised tune, holding out his hand ceremoniously for left and right turns, and giving a snappy salute to his "white folks."

Last Christmas he was sipping a lemonade a campus lady gave him. He looked up at her disappointedly and said, "Miss, dis ain't bad, but it would be better if dey was a liddle sump'n more 'thor'tative to re-solve on dis ice!"

When Bill was retired last June, from his rounds of Clemson back yards, a well known campus lady remarked, "Garbage has lost its glamor!"

Among the gifts from a few Clemson friends who learned of the anniversary were pictures of Bill and Annie sitting in various poses, the two best in a double frame. When Annie saw them she exclaimed, "Lawd, ain't I a sight!" and immediately began to call the neighbors in. There was quite a gathering within minutes, and much loud, goodnatured laughter. Bill was out making the rounds on his horse, lettin' the rest of the folks know about his anniversary, and suggesting that the donation should be at least "a cent fur each year uv service."

Next day Bill rode his horse round to thank the writer for his part in the "membrance" and sat for an interview. "Yes, Sir," he said, "I can tell the good folks fum de bad by dere trash cans."

"How do you do it, Bill?"

"Horse sense, Cap."

"You wouldn't want to give me the formula?"

"Cap, maybe we jest better leave dat out—NOL PROS it!"

"Bill, did you ever see Mr. Tillman?"

"Yes, Sir. I wuz 'round him and Mr. Simpson, Mr. Doc Lewis, an' Mr. Clemson, waitin' on 'em. An' Mr. Tillman would keep his John B. cocked over his bad eye—never take his off like de rest. But Cap, young Nigger as I wuz, I could tell dat Mr. Tillman could see further wid dat one eye dan any de rest uv 'em could wid two!"

"Bill, the colored folks are making application to enter Clemson, I see. Do you regret not being able to get an education at the college?"

"Naw Sir, Cap. I got so much mother wit I don't b'lieve it would take."

"I never saw you on a mule, Bill. Don't you like mules?"

"I rode one home from de chain gang," he said simply.

"Didn't know you'd ever been on the gang, Bill. What did you do?"

"I hit a Nigger on de head."

## FAMILIAR FACES AROUND CLEMSON



"Hurt him?"

"He died frum it!"

Bill then told the story of his altercation with the "Nigger" over a dollar Bill owed him. Said the "Nigger drew a knife on him." He served five months in jail and five years on the chain gang in Pickens County. Said he and the Sheriff left with commitment papers for the gang. The sheriff's wife fixed him a basket of chicken and cake. He added a bottle of White Rabbit. On the way up the mountains, the sheriff's horses gave out and Bill went the rest of the way, three miles, carrying a pistol the sheriff gave him "for protection." At the end of the first week he borrowed a saddle and rode a mule back to Clemson to see Annie and her young baby. Said when he came by the coal chute at Calhoun "a bunch o' Niggers that had swore a pack o' lies 'bout dat Nigger not drawin' a knife on him" broke and ran for the woods when they saw him coming.

"Know how much money I had when I got out, Cap? I had \$700 in a Easley bank."

"Where'd you get it, Bill?"

"White folks give it to me! I'm jest a 'right Nigger', Cap!"

"How'd they treat you on the gang?"

"Cap, dey ain't never put a stripe on me, an' I wore better clothes dem five years dan I ever have since."

Bill's income under the State Retirement Plan is "Thirty-two dollars and one nickel." He says Annie warned him, "Don't you take no checks for doin' jobs an' haulin' trash right on; dey might stop yo' pay." Bill added, "Dr. Poole an' Mr. Littlejohn done tole me dey ain't got nuthin' to do wid how much I work right on. Dr. Poole say I oughta be gettin' old age pension. My Insurance agent say maybe sump'n comin' up soon."

"How many horses you had, Bill?"

"Nine. Bought the fust one frum Judge Fowler—uh back yonder when Mr. McGee was killed by dat corn shredder."

"You really love that horse, don't you, Bill?"

"Fesser, I feeds my horse fust. Den if anything left, I eats."

Bill sat back on his horse and grew slightly sentimental. Said he'd "wrote a song for Annie and sung it to her Saddy night, 'cause she'd been so good 'bout puttin' up wid him." He threw back his head and sang in a voice with genuine appeal:

"Precious Lord, take my hand; Lead me on 'cause I can't stand. Precious Lord, take my hand an' lead me home.

First I'm weak and den I'm wise, 'Cause I know I'm satisfied, Precious Lord, take my hand an' lead me home.

A story is told of Bill's reaction to the People's State Bank failure some years ago. It is said that he was talking to the local banker:

"Cap, couldn't you see dat minus sign comin' up on yo' books?"

"No, Bill."

"Couldn't none of dem phrenographers in dere see dat minus sign?"

"No—but suppose they had—suppose you had been in there, Bill. What would you have done?"

"Boss, I'd a NOL PROSSED! Or in diffrent words—I'd a got mine!"

"How'd you spend Saturday night, Bill?"

"Well, Cap, you see, some of my friends slipped me a bottle of Four Roses. An' you know I ain't had nothin' better dan Old Wilkins Family. Well, Sir, I went home, got me a glass an' a rockin' chair, opened dat bottle—an' frum dere on, I jest set and let dem roses bloom!"

At the end of a very enjoyable interview, Bill got off his horse and handed the writer a thank-

## Treasurer's Staff Unta Tape To Pay Governm

By HOWELL ARTHUR

Tuesday afternoon the treasurer's office began paying 1147 government uniform compensations ranging from nine dollars to nearly fifty dollars to cadets in elementary and advanced ROTC programs.

The actual dispensing of envelopes and packets was no simple task, and required infinite patience on the part of the office's small staff of cashiers. But that phase of the undertaking was not on a scale with the preliminaries.

On April 26 Mr. Brown, the treasurer, received the money, an unstated sum, from the Federal Government. A few days later the commandant gave him an approximate list of men who would receive money and amounts they would receive. A voucher showing everything but amounts of individual payments was formulated from this.

Still later, a change list was compiled from the information on hand, and on May 4 the bank was notified as to how much change would be needed—something over one thousand one-dollar bills, for instance.

## Staff Write Red Tape

"Hello Sonny, Did you want to get a book?" the attendant at the desk asked between chomps on her bubble gum.

"Precisely why I am here my dear," I reiterated. "I want 'Swattermania, A Disease Prevalent Among Houseflies' by Shrdlu."

"Heh, heh, there were only three issues of that book published and two of them were burned in the fire that destroyed the great Alexandria Library," was her comeback.

"Heh heh hell," I said, "it's on my parallel list."

"My nose bleeds for you," she said and turned back to the newest True Detective.

"Okay, I'm not so long to get a hard with, gimme the September 1937 copy of 'Birdlover's Guide' so I can get my termpaper written," I said.

"Those books have been sent off to be bound. Now, dammit, lemme alone so I can read."

The individuals that inhabit libraries are intellectuals who find it hard to sink to the levels of the undergraduate. Therefore, any attempt to carry on a bit of friendly chit-chat soon turns into a monologue.

I tried to console myself in looking through the file. It didn't take me long to see that no new sex-books had been added, but I did find a book that was

you note from Annie. Here is the gist:

"I want you to please thank all that had a hand in the surprise—Oh, what a surprise—Thank you all!"

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