

The Mount Holly News

By Sarah Nixon

Growing up in the family of nine children of Fred and Maude Huitt McIntosh in the country outside Mount Holly, I always felt close to the town and was involved in the community through school, church and summer recreation. I pitched for the town softball team coached by Ralph Leonard. My family subscribed to the *Mount Holly News*, and the town was small enough that I can remember hearing my Grandma Huitt often saying while reading the paper, “Well, I don’t know who that is. I wonder where they came from.”

Mount Holly News started in 1925, two years after I was born. I was always an avid reader of whatever I could get my hands on, but never in my wildest dreams as a child did I think it was destiny that I ever be a part of the *Mount Holly News*. My first job after graduating from Mount Holly High School in the Class of 1940 was on the third shift at Stowe Thread Mill in Belmont during World War II. Later I was changed to the first shift. I reeled, sometimes inspected the yarn and at times opened the shack during break times on my shift. I married Roy Nixon on my Feb. 22 birthday in 1947, a year after he returned from the war. In July 1950, I resigned my job at Stowe Thread because I was pregnant with my son, Clifton, who was born on Friday, Oct. 13. Our daughter Susan was born 19 months later, followed by daughters Kathy in 1955 and Miriam in 1958.

Becoming a newspaper writer was something that just happened with no clear warning. It all came about in the spring of 1959. *The Lincoln Times* in Lincolnnton ran a subscription contest giving away a car and numerous other prizes. To boost the contest, the paper hired reporters called Community Correspondents. The editor, Guy Leady, came down to Lowes Store at Lowesville asking about someone in this community to write for his paper. A clerk at the store

sent him to see me. I thought about it and figured it was a really great opportunity so I accepted. While writing for *The Lincoln Times*, I called Mason Rodden, the editor of the *Mount Holly News* and asked if I included Lucia and Riverbend in my news would he use it in his paper. He said send him something to see what I could do. My first column appeared in the *Mount Holly News* in October 1959. It was the start of my 44 years with the *News*.

Around the time the nation elected John F. Kennedy as president, the paper promoted me to Society Editor. Later my title changed to Woman's Editor. The Miss Holly column was my next adventure. Mary Dunn Warren who was writing that column quit due to a dispute with the editor, Pete Ellis. Pete asked me to take over the column. After a couple times, I knew I couldn't keep up with Mary's fancy vocabulary and select circle of friends, so I started the Personally Mentioned column and covered the entire community as a whole. That ran about 42 years until December 31, 2003 when then present Publisher Michael Blanton in the Kings Mountain office gave me two days notice that it was being discontinued.

The *Mount Holly News* was the training ground for several editors and reporters who stayed a while and went on to bigger things. You do all kinds of writing on a weekly paper and gain invaluable experience in all areas of writing. Between editors at one time when Dolly Dunn was working in the office, we were between editors. I asked then owner Garland Atkins if he wasn't going to get an editor, could I be News Editor as I was doing news, features, community, civic organizations, clubs, school, sports, church, weddings, parties, city government and anything else to fill the paper. He said I could be Editor if I wanted to, but I sure didn't want the responsibility that went with that job. I enjoyed what I was doing. Even today, most people probably think city council meetings are boring. But I covered city council meetings for 30 years and never got bored., it was like watching the city's history unfold. The past eight or nine years,

my connection with the *Mount Holly News* was continuing the Personally Mentioned column. During the 44 years and two months of my association with the paper, I made many good friends. Many only remember “the column” and still tell me they miss that. But the years gave me an opportunity to be a part in recording the history of Mount Holly by writing stories about people, giving an extra bit of credit and recognition they deserved.

Many changes have taken place in Mount Holly since I first started working with the *News*. It is the opportunity and challenge of a weekly newspaper to report more of the local happenings in more detail. I hope as long as I live that I will be able to read about Mount Holly in the *Mount Holly News* as the *News* will probably change just as the town became a city and is still changing.