

Lines from Linda

by linda ayers turner knorr



Timing Is Everthing The T. Carroll James Family

"The great fall tree" MUST be decorated and in place on the first day of October. "Ozzie" the scarecrow is perched on top of bales of straw surrounded by pumpkins, yellow mums and Indian corn. This long time "Ayers Family Tradition" gives me another excuse for stopping by the home of Mary and Carroll James. I will drive the pickup truck my daddy bought me, because I thought of shopping for a farm. He said, "Linda, you can't have a farm unless you own a pickup truck." (My dady always gave me everything I ever even dreamed about owning.) I miss him!

The triangle at Fork Shoals Road and Holcome Road is a welcome sight. A sign reading T. Carroll James & Son, Inc. is on the front of a large building surrounded by huge farm equipment, grain thrashers (gleaners), and tractors (so many pieces of machinery I cannot name). Not far behind the business is the James' home.

My trip will be to purchase straw for my holiday decorations. If I time it just right, and I always do, Mary will insist that I join them for one of her southern home cooked meals. First I will sit in front of the stone wall fireplace. It is just like the one in my parents' old home in Stone Mountain, Georgia, where I grew up and we had our Conrad Collie Kennels. Mary will serve tall glasses of iced tea. She makes the world's best. It reminds me of my mother's. Mother grows her own mint and puts it in the pitcher. All of a sudden, out comes a feast of fresh vegetables; corn, green beans, okra, potatoes, peas and tomatoes. Then there's the chicken,

cantaloupe and always fresh South Carolina peaches. Mary James' refrigerator is just like my mother's. Did I mention the homemade biscuits, cornbread and always cake of some kind. So you can understand why Timing is everything!



Tommy, their son, almost always stops by when I'm there. He's like Roy Jr., a brother to me. Tommy and I will hop in the pickup truck and head off to the hay barn to get the bales of straw for my scarecrow. If the timing is right, some of the cattle will come up to visit with us. The view is magnificent! What a life! When we get back to the house, I get hugs and kisses from Carroll and Mary. Somehow I feel like I've been home to Georgia to see my own mother and daddy. Carroll and Mary James are my Greenville family.

The day begins before sunrise for Thomas Carroll James. He joins his neighborhood buddies at the Greenville Fire Department for early morning coffee. He only has to walk up the street for the traditional gathering as the fire department building is

built on the James family property. Looking in any direction as far as the eye can see, the view is all land belonging to Carroll and Mary James. Local dog fanciers have long benefitted from this abundance of acreage as the James have welcomed them for club picnics, puppy matches and training classes.

You know them as professionals in the show ring. In Greenville, South Carolina, the James' are mainstays of the community. The family business is run by Carroll and Tommy. They sell and repair farm equipment. It is fas-

cinating to browse through his shop. If you ask him, Carroll James will tell you he's a farmer. He is much more than that! Growing up on a dairy farm, Carroll started milking cows when he was six years old. His mother died that same year, leaving his father with nine children. The elder James was very strict. He taught the children old fashioned southern values and ethics. The older sisters in the family helped to raise the younger children. As a little boy, Carroll always loved dogs. His father would not let him have a pet. Every animal on the James' farm had to produce. The family did have some rabbit hunting dogs for which his father paid eight dollars a pair.

The James and Ray (Mary's maiden name) families lived in the same community. They attended the same high school



Mr. Alexander told him of a Toy Manchester kennel selling all of their dogs. He even took Carroll to see them. Falling in love with the breed, Carroll bought all the dogs and built a small kennel of his own. This was a dream come true for a young man who had no pets as a child. One of the dogs had some points and Carroll hired a handler to take it on the Virginia-Carolina circuit. On show day in Charlotte Carroll decided to go and watch. As it happens many times, Carroll's handler faced a conflict. He could not get to Carroll's dogs on time. Carroll told the handler he had been watching and believed he could show the dog himself.

and church, the Reedy Fork Baptist Church where they are still active today. In fact, I happen to know that when anonymous donations are made for sending children to camp, missions, or various different important causes, Carroll James always steps in and sees that the money needed is there. He never takes credit as he prefers to be in the background anonymously enjoying the benefits of his generosity.

During World War II, Carroll enlisted in the Army and served three years. Combat duty took him through France, Belgium, Germany and into Czechoslovakia. His group, the 89th Infantry Division, was attached to General George Patton's army.

While on furlough on December 16, 1944, Mary and Carroll were married. He was assigned to Camp Butner in Durham, North Carolina where Mary joined him. After his World War II duty ended in 1947, Carroll went into business with his older brother, opening a garage and farming business.

At the same time, salesmen called on the business to sell auto parts. One such salesman was Mr. T. C. Alexander, who was a breeder of Toy Manchesters. Knowing of Carroll's love for animals,

And do you know he took the dog in the ring and won! From that time on the fever for showing dogs was there. Eventually, he quit breeding and showing Manchesters and became interested in Basset Hounds, a breed he bred and showed for many years. In the beginning, Carroll would go off for weekends to dog shows and show his friends' dogs for free. The entries handled by the young James increased in number.

Billy Lang, the AKC Representative at that time, advised Carroll to apply for a license as a professional handler. That he did and his love of showing dogs as a professional has continued for forty-seven years.

Carroll and Mary have been long time active members of the Greenville Kennel Club. Carroll served as President on seven

different occasions, the first being in 1960. This month he relented and was elected First Vice President. It seems the club cannot do without his leadership. In 1976, Carroll's older brother and business partner passed away. Carroll then



*Above: Carroll at age 7, with his father's hunting dogs which cost \$4.00 each
Below: Granddaughter Shelby Bert pictured with sister Nikki and brother Eric*



increased his business to include dealing with tractors and farm machinery. On his farm he raises grain, hay, and beef cattle. Mary and Carroll have two children, a son and a daughter. Thomas "Tommy" James is Carroll's business partner. His wife, Judy Taylor, is the principle of Bryson Middle School in Simpsonville, South Carolina. Tommy's

sister, Diane James Bert, teaches at Kings Mountain High School in North Carolina where she also coaches tennis and track. Four grandchildren: John, a twenty-two year old paramedic; Shelby Bert, a twenty-one year old junior at the University of South Carolina; Nikki Bert, a seventeen year old high school student in Shelby, North Carolina; and thirteen year old Eric



*Above: Mary with Ivanwold Chinatown Express and judge Toddie Clark
Below: One of 28 Best In Show wins for Ch. Lord Timothy Scott, owned by Mr. & Mrs. Robert Scott of Florence, South Carolina. The judge is Mary Nelson Stephenson*



Bert, an eighth grader, are considered by Carroll and Mary to be their greatest assets.

In 1979, Thomas Carroll James II was five years old. He had chicken pox, which developed into Reye's Syndrome from which he did not recover. He was the son of Tommy and Judy. Losing this grandchild was the great heartbreak in the life of this family. Proudly displayed in the

living room of the James' home in the center of a bookcase, enclosed in glass is a tiny spaceship. It was the favorite toy of their young grandson. While their children were growing and involved in school activities, Mary stayed home and was full time chauffeur. With Tommy

playing trumpet in the band, and Diane a majorette, high school football games were important. Family life is the center of the James' marriage.

When their children were grown and away from home, Mary joined the dog show game, traveling with and helping Carroll as the world's best assistant. During my most recent visit to their home, Mary and I sat in front of the fire-

place looking at family scrapbooks. Behind a creased page was "A Farmer's Creed." I asked Mary if I could borrow a copy. To her it describes her husband best of all.

A Farmer's Creed

I believe a man's greatest possession is his dignity and that no calling bestows this more abundantly than farming.

I believe hard work and honest sweat are the building blocks of a person's character. I believe that farming, despite its hardships and disappointments, is the most honest and honorable way a man can spend his days on this earth.

I believe farming nurtures the close family ties that make life rich in ways money can't buy.

I believe my children are learning values that will last a lifetime and can be learned in no other way.

I believe farming provides education for life and that no other occupation teaches so much about birth, growth and maturity in such a variety of ways.

I believe many of the best things in life are indeed free: the splendor of a sunrise, the rapture of wide open spaces, the exhilarating sight of your land greening each spring. I believe true happiness comes from watching your crops ripen in the field, your children grow tall in the sun, your whole family feel the pride that springs from their shared experience.

I believe that by my toil I am giving more to the world than I am taking from it, an honor that does not come to all men.

I believe my life will be measured ultimately by what I have done for my fellowman, and by this standard I fear no judgement.

I believe when a man grows old and sums up his days, he should be able to stand tall and feel pride in the life he's lived.

I believe in farming because it makes all things possible.

I have borrowed photos from their albums picturing some of my favorite dog people: my daddy, of course; J. J. Duncan; Marie Meyer; Percy Roberts; Maxwell Riddle; Phil Marsh; Virgil Johnson; E. W. Tipton; Frank Foster Davis; Ed Stevenson; a special photo of Carroll bringing a miniature horse into the ring and showing it; Carroll riding his Best in Show St. Bernard. The James' enjoy our game! Wow!

If we time it just right... Jim and I will find ourselves in front of the fireplace just in time for a fresh crop of turnip greens and sweet potatoes. Hey, if you're not southern... you may not be at the right place at the right time!