

## Robert ("Bob") Dunlap Emerson's Chatham County Roots

I recently edited the book *You Be the Judge*, which had to be rushed because of the extreme illness (Parkinson's) of its author, Robert ("Bob") Dunlap Emerson. Born 1933, he grew up on a farm near Siler City and served in the U. S. Army, including a 16-month stint in Korea, in the early 1950's. He is a graduate of North Carolina State University in Sociology. In 1956, he began his nearly 50-year career in law enforcement with the U. S. Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS), working mainly in Charleston, SC. After serving with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), primarily in Montana, Idaho, and North Dakota, he returned to North Carolina. He was with the State Bureau of Investigation for several decades, was in corporate security for Winn Dixie, and served as a Law Enforcement consultant.

When Carol Davison and Marge Freerman approached me about Bob's project, I sensed that they weren't merely wanting me to put a call for volunteers in The Village Voice (which I edit). Finally, Carol 'fessed up: Before I could talk with Bob about editing his new venture, I was to read the first two books he'd written. That very request taught me a lot about his personality. So did those reads, which showed me why they so influenced *You Be the Judge* but let it blossom on its own. Once I started the edit, the unnamed chapters grabbed me and demanded titles. Everyone has to love, as one example, Chapter 19, "When Suspects 'Catch the Dog'" [The "dog" is a Greyhound Bus.]

Bob's first book, *Dancing with Devils* (1998),

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describes criminal investigation cases on which law enforcement officers face in investigating crimes and protecting society. Tales from Emerson Hill (2004) is the story of growing up with his parents and two brothers in Chatham County. *You Be the Judge* also focuses on law enforcement and criminal investigation but emphasizes the pleasant surprises, interesting twists and turns, and even some of the humor that law enforcement officers encounter in investigating and solving crimes.

As suggested, Bob's roots reach back thoroughly and impressively in Chatham County. His father, always a model for his son, was the Sheriff. His mother was Nannie Maude Dunlap Emerson. The acknowledgments in Bob's book underscore that heritage:

I wish to acknowledge the great influence that my dad, John W. Emerson, Jr., had on the development of my interest in Law Enforcement. He served as the elected Sheriff of Chatham County, NC, for nineteen years. His experiences as the lead Law Enforcement Officer of that County pervaded our home and family life and led me to follow his path.

I also recognize the tremendous encouragement and love that my wife, Victoria ("Vicky") Rose Moore Emerson, gave me throughout our marriage and my nearly-fifty-year career in Law Enforcement. Despite the moves and challenges over these years, she was always understanding and supportive. We were married more than sixty years and have two children, Gloria and John, and four grandchildren. Vicky is now deceased, and I miss her greatly.

I also thank those who worked for and with me directly. Dr. Lynn Veach Sadler edited the manuscript and played the key role in bringing the book to publication. Dr. John ("Jack") Vogt assisted me with writing the final four chapters and offered help and advice throughout. When Carol Davison learned that I wanted to do this book, she took it, as a project, to the Care and Concern Committee, chaired by Margaret ("Marge") Freerman. They asked Lynn to advertise it (in the in-house newsletter she edits) for volunteers to help getting it on



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computer for her to edit. They are all residents with me at The Village at Brookwood (TVAB), a CCRC (Continuing Care Retirement Center) in Burlington, NC. I must also mention Shirley Graves, my nurse. In the last year or so, I have experienced significant health problems, and her care and encouragement have enabled me to continue working. [Shirley had over 20 years of experience in Law Enforcement, e.g., with the Police and the Sheriff's Department and as a Dispatcher and a Deputy Sheriff. What a background for understanding and helping Bob!]

The role of Management was amazing. Marge Freerman went to Health Administrator Michael Garland with my situation. He came to my room, helped organize what I had done, and sent it to his computer for safekeeping. He also requested that the Nursing Staff assist me in any way possible to complete this book.

Finally, my son John, my daughter Gloria, and my brothers John and Tom have regularly visited me at TVAB and encouraged me to complete this book.

Although all the folks mentioned helped me to finish *You Be the Judge*, I alone am responsible for the contents. The Law Enforcement stories included reflect my experiences or those of other Law Enforcement Officers I knew, worked with, or "knew of" through the years. I am grateful to the men and women in

Law Enforcement; they perform a valuable service in protecting and providing safety for our society. Thankfully, as you see in this book, they can also find occasional comic relief in their work and laugh at themselves.

Bob's book-signing was Sunday, 2/11/2018. The *Burlington Times-News* sent intern Adelaide Elliott to cover the event, and her article appeared 2/12. On 2/17, the signing was listed first in the paper's "All thumbs up to a positive week" — "Thumbs up to Robert 'Bob' Emerson, a resident at the Village of Brookwood, who at 84 just finished writing his third book, *You Be the Judge*. And another thumbs up to staff at the Village who helped Emerson because he has advanced Parkinson's disease."

I add my appreciation to Yossi Faybish, of Aquilrelle Press, with which I have a long-standing association. Without his willingness to put by other projects [including two books of my own], we could not have completed *You Be the Judge* with such amazing timeliness. Pictures of Bob and his family are on the Aquilrelle Press Website.

I've been encouraging Bob to write another book!

*Dr. Lynn Veach Sadler, of Burlington's The Village at Brookwood, a former college president, is widely published in academics and creative writing and works as a writer and an editor.*

## Tormentil Hall: A Review

by Susan Collins Thompson



Tormentil Hall: The Eighth Penny Weaver Mystery by Judy Hogan. ISBN-13: 978-19775235709 Paperback \$15. E-book: \$2.99. 212 pages. Published: Hoganvillaea Books, Moncure. March 2018.

*Tormentil Hall* takes readers of this series back to Gower Peninsula in Wales where our poet-sleuth, Penny, met her husband since 1992, Kenneth. The mystery is set in two bed and breakfast venues in the village of Pwll-du. Penny and Kenneth are in Pobbles House caring for Penny's long-time friend and B&B owner, Evelyn Trueblood, who is recovering from a hip injury. Penny's and Kenneth's traveling companions from the USA are lodging in Tormentil Hall, which is owned by Kenneth's younger sister, Gwyn and her spouse, Tristram. Penny hopes that her close friends from North Carolina will find the Gower Peninsula as appealing as Penny has found it over nearly two decades.

The author, Judy Hogan, provides what I believe is very useful to readers. She includes a list and brief description of the book's 18 critical characters at the book's beginning. At the end, Judy provides a recipe for Welsh Cakes using American ingredients, which rounds out the crime mystery set in lovely Wales with delicious implications.

Three major complications arise in the mystery narrative almost immediately. First, the normally spunky guest and American friend, Sammie, feels unwelcoming attention as soon as she and spouse, Derek, a lead detective from America, arrive in the United Kingdom. Their African American heritage seemingly causes rude stares and thoughtless comments. Second, the other two guests are repeat boarding guests at Tormentil Hall. Wife Gilda is both demanding and "pushy." Husband Lloyd has been present and perhaps involved with Gilda's own accidents over the years on the Gower Peninsula. The final complication arises when Derek is accused and arrested for Gilda's death at Tormentil Hall.

This modern, yet classic, mystery prods the reader to discern whether Gilda's demise results from her own accident-prone behavior, or from some character who is prodded to push the "pushy" Gilda down the stairs at Tormentil Hall. Was the fatal fall an accident or intended? Would Derek have had a past reactionary button pushed when racial discrimination occurred in Wales?

In addition to the reader's search for clues and resolution of this mystery, he or she is treated to descriptions of the amazingly beautiful Welsh countryside as well as contemplation of tricky family dynamics, plus some of Penny's poetry. I recommend reading *Tormentil Hall*, to see how "push comes to shove," and how Penny's and Kenneth's friends, Sammie and Derek, fare on their friends-inspired trip abroad. Was it fair or not in Tormentil Hall? Was justice served? Was torment perpetrated?

Review by Susan Collins Thompson, formerly of Siler city and a CIS of Chatham County Volunteer. She presently resides in Perry County, Arkansas, since 1-14-2018.



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