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Young Harris College where he found a close group of friends who encouraged him to continue to write his poetic prose.

Reece didn't disappoint.

The *Prairie Schooner* journal published *Lest the Lonesome Bird* in 1943. *Ballad of the Bones and Other Poems*, a collection of Reece's poetry, soon followed, in 1945.

Reece was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for *Bow Down in Jericho*, his 1950 follow-up to his first, critically acclaimed publication. That same year, Reece published *Better a Dinner of Herbs*, his first novel. In 1952, he received a Guggenheim Fellowship for fiction, and he also published a third volume of poetry, *A Song of Joy*. In 1955, he unveiled his second novel, *The Hawk and the Sun* and his final volume of poetry, *The Season of Flesh*.

The Reece Farm and Heritage Center is a lasting example of Hub Reece's life, and what he had to do to survive before the first word of poetic prose was penned. The Reece Farm and Heritage Center is a prime example of Appalachian heritage. Farming was a way of life in early Appalachia.

From the sweat of his brow, to the ink of his pen, Reece is more celebrated today



Byron Herbert Reece during his heyday as a farmer and poet.

than the moments he toiled behind a plow, or endeavored to capture the thoughts inside his head on paper.

That much was evident on Friday. Yes, on Black Friday, the biggest shopping day of the year, those books and all things Reece began to fly off the shelves of the Gift Shop at the Reece Farm.

Many visitors saw the event as an opportunity to purchase a unique Christmas gift for someone special in their lives.

The Gift and Craft Shop

feature books by and about Reece and others on subjects pertinent to Appalachia such as Zell Miller's *Purt Nigh Gone*, *The Old Mountain Ways*.

Other hot items included note cards; homemade and handcrafted items including jewelry, baskets, soap, scarves, wooden bowls, pottery, ornaments, quilts, and Reece Farm embroidered towels and pillows. Like his volumes of poetry and fiction, Reece hats, jackets and t-shirts also were weekend best sellers.

Avis...from Page 1A

lived hard and lean lives.

"Everybody was kind of in the same boat as far as just making do," she said. "But I came up making do – you didn't waste anything. In fact, it was a sin to waste. If you couldn't do with it, you gave it to somebody, you didn't sell it to them. Everybody was self-sufficient. They grew their own food, everything was dried."

Avis was a sickly child at first, and found her inspiration to become a nurse in a visit to the doctor's office to be treated for both whooping cough and measles.

"I was probably 6 and a half, 7," she said. "Daddy took me to Lawrenceville – that was the nearest doctor, and Dr. Claude Kelly had been our doctor."

Maude Bean, a nurse at Dr. Kelly's office, made a considerable impression on Avis.

"She had her hair pulled back in a bun like women wore it back then, and she had a dress down to her ankles or just about, and it was white, starched, had long sleeves," she said. "And she was very kind, and she said she had to give me a shot, but if I wouldn't cry, she'd give me a dime. I cried anyway – first shot I'd ever had."

Bean gave Avis the dime anyway, and in a way it was her first paycheck as a nurse, because it was that encounter that ignited her passion for healing and helping others.

"I thought, you know, I believe I'd like to do that," Avis said.

Avis attended Duluth School starting in the first grade, where the reality of World War II was just a glance out the window – the Southern Railroad ran around the clock just across from the school.

"Day and night, those trains ran going South, loaded with airplanes, loaded with tanks, loaded with Jeeps – we'd never seen a Jeep in our life," Avis said. "And it just seemed kind of dumb to me that you would have something that wouldn't have a top over it in case it rained."

"Sometimes the teacher wasn't getting anywhere, so she'd let us go to the window and let us watch the trains pass by. You don't think much as a third grader about war, but one of my classmate's brothers was killed really early on in the war, and then that brings a reality to you that people are dying in this war."

Principal Claude Landrum came on board at Duluth School during Avis' last year, during a time when college wasn't even considered for most because people just couldn't afford to go.

"All the kids who wanted to go to school, he got them in," Avis said. "He encouraged them. If you don't want to go to this, go to a trade school – learn to do something, learn to use this talent that you have. And that's how I got into nursing school."

Aside from chemistry, which Avis described as "unmercifully horrible" because she hadn't studied it previously, she excelled in nursing school. She worked at Emory for a time upon graduating before she and her husband decided to move to Alaska.



Avis Shaw gets paid for her nursing duties at UGH in silver dollars, courtesy of Board Member Benn Carr.

Fortunately, Mr. and Mrs. Shaw located to Blairsville, where Avis worked in the hospital from 1960 until 1969, when she started at the Union County Health Department.

"Betty Barnes was Public Health Nurse, and they had only had a health department about two years," Avis said. "And she wanted to go back to school, and she said, 'Avis, I'm going to be leaving if you want to apply for the job.'"

Avis started what would become an illustrious career in Public Health, where she served the various health needs of the county for nearly 32 years.

Full retirement for nurses in public health required 34 years on the job, but Avis decided to retire early.

Tragically, in 1995, Mr. and Mrs. Shaw's eldest daughter, Avis Marie, passed away following surgery to remove a brain tumor. Avis Marie's sister, Carla, suffered a bout with cancer just three years later, but she responded well to intensive chemotherapy.

Avis made up her mind to retire because Carla's doctor wanted to perform a second-look surgery to check for anything out of the ordinary.

"I said to Carlton, I can't do this anymore," Avis said. "I cannot be up here worried about my child in Duluth, and I cannot be down there worried about a job. So, I went to the state and retired in September 1999, and then my last day was the 31st of January in 2000."

Carla turned out to be just fine, and Avis was able to enjoy the rest of her retirement – all eight months of it. She spent her time cleaning, quilting and sewing, but after eight months, she told her husband that she wanted to go back to nursing.

"I enjoyed being with him, and we did things, but he was always busy doing something," Avis said. "He was not a person who could just sit down. So, I checked around at different places and they didn't need anybody here at the nursing home. I didn't want to go back to the hospital because in 30 years, it's like science fiction, the way medicine moves."

She applied for a position at Heritage Healthcare of Blue Ridge and enjoyed working there for 18 months, when a position became available at Union County Nursing Home.

Avis would spend the next 11 years taking care of the elderly before retiring this year, a few months shy of her 80th birthday.

"I loved working with the elderly," Avis said. "And people say, how do you stand it? And I said, I'm an old person myself. I know their needs, I know how they feel. I know how they think. And I just loved it."

Coming back to work in Union County was "a blessing in disguise" for Avis.

"I came in August, and Carlton was diagnosed not that coming January but the next January," said Avis, whose husband had ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease. "So, I'm thankful that I was here. I worked most of the time unless he was really feeling bad and I stayed with him. But, I loved working at the nursing home."

Carlton passed away from his illness in 2005.

"He had great faith, he had great confidence," Avis said. "He did not worry about it, he just worried about me. And he wrote constantly, 'Life goes on. You have to go on with life.' And I think, you know, that is so true, because most people, when something bad happens to them, they just want to sit down. And you can't do it."

"My granddaddy used to say, 'We have to work until our time on earth is done.' And I said, how do we know when our work is done? And he always said, 'You'll know.'"

Avis spent her career championing all aspects of public health. She focused on dentistry, mental health, immunization and women's health, with contraception and preventive care – but the list goes on.

"Women's health to me, it wasn't just contraception – it was women who were dying of breast cancer young, women who died of uterine cancer young, who died of cervical cancer young," Avis said. "I think that has been one of the best things – we did pap smears, and it's amazing how many young women you pick up with abnormal pap smears."

One of the reasons Avis found women's health so rewarding was because "you could see a difference in a woman's life, you could see them taking better care of themselves – healthy mama, healthy family."

After Union County Nursing Home gave her a proper sendoff the day she retired, Avis says she hasn't had time to miss it. She has been busy canning for Thanksgiving and Christmas, and looks forward to quilting more of what she calls "love quilts" for her friends and family.