

John Hendrix Prophecy Article – Earliest documented account known to exist, part 2

(As published in *The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking* column on June 6, 2006)

EDITORS NOTE: *The following is the conclusion of a two-part story which reprints an article about John Hendrix, originally published in 1944 in The Oak Ridge Journal.*

HIS TROUBLES WITH the authorities over, John Hendrix returned to his ascetic life. Each day he would go into the woods, to meditate and pray. And one day, Braden said, he came out with a wondrous tale.

“John came out from the woods, accordin’ to his wife, lookin’ like he’d seen a ghost,” Braden went on. “They asked him what was the matter and he said he’d been spoke to. He said a voice as loud as any clap of thunder had spoken to him.

“John, sleep with your head on the ground for forty nights and I will show you the future developments of your country in visions,” the voice said.

“Old John decided he’d do what the voice told him. He went out there to a clump of trees near Scarboro School and he slept with his head on the ground for forty nights. About the twenty-fifth or twenty-sixth day, I forget which, it came a wet spell and he got pueumonie, but he toughed it out,”

“Toughed it out, did he?” I asked.

“Toughed it out,” said Branden nodded solemnly.

“Did a vision come then?”

“No,” said branden, “not just then. It wasn’t until a coupla months later he was shuckin’ hay over above Edgemoor and he got overhet. Well, he fell over and while he was in bed he got the first vision. He foresaw the surveyin’ of the L & N railroad. He said the Southern would survey it first but the L & N would beat ‘em to puttin’ through the spur. That must’ve been around 1901. Well, about 18 months after he died they sarterd surveyin’, and it wasn’t more’n a month after that they begin construction work.

“Old John told where each and every station would be. He said it would run from Joe Cox’s place, at Edgemoor, to Tom Braden – my father’s farm – down to Katie Worthington’s placy at Elzy. He said a Clinch River bridge would be built at the lower point of Bradley’s Bluff, where it was. He said the Black Oak Ridge tunnel would be made under the Butcher Spring and that it would sink the spring, which it did.”

HENDRIX’S SECOND VISION came about two months later, Braden explained. In between times, the prophet told of spending three weeks in Paradise. “He said an airyplane with wings two hundred foot long, painted all white, come and get him,” Braden explained. It was a metal airplane, he said.

“The second vision come while he was shuckin’ hay again,” Braden’s story went on. “This time he took sick in Ben Wilkins’ meadow and while he was in bed from bein’ overhet he foresaw the buildin’ of 300 miles of branch line of railroad from that main line he prophesied at Katie Worthington’s right down Lupton Valley to and through the New Hope Gap. He said a Union Depot would be built at Holloway’s Tanyard – that’s where Scarboro School is now. That’s the only part of the prophecy that wasn’t fulfilled.

“John said that Bear Creek Valley would contain factory buildins and that they would hep toward winning the greatest war that ever was or ever will be.

“Then John said that there would be a city on the Black Oak Ridge, and would finally be called Paradise.”

“Paradise?” I queried.

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"That's right," said Braden, 'Paradise. Furthermore, John said that the center of government of the city would be in the fields halfway between Joe Pyatt's farm and Sevier Tadlock's. That's where the Administration Buildin' is right now."

There wasn't much more I could say to that. If the old man's prophecy was indeed as Braden described it, he had hit everything on the nose. He would have been a great man for the horse-playing ring. I asked Braden what he thought about the prophecy.

"Well," he said slowly, Sometimes I think he really had visions and sometimes I don't. I don't know what to think. All I know is that when they built the railroad a coupla years after old John died, the people all around said, "Well, Old John just happened to hit it. But now, with this project here and all, it makes you think."

Braden and I went out later to see John's house. It's overgrown with weeds, vines and bushes, and hasn't been occupied for years. A redbird flew across the porch and a couple of jays squawked in the bushes. There was an old rocking chair sitting in the front yard and an atmosphere of decay and death all around. Braden stood and looked over the place, occupied with his thoughts. He didn't say much of anything.

The next day I got John Malone, a Roane-Anderson employee who knows the exact spot where the grave is located, and he and Sgt. Abe Levitt (who had told me about the story in the first place) and the photographer and I went up to see it. The grave is located at the top of a hill in an overgrown field, surrounded by a flimsy wire fence. A huge boxwood grows at the foot. The grave is marked by a rude, scratched little stone. We stood looking down at the grave while Ed Westcott took pictures. It was a cloudy, quiet day, and somewhere off in the distance, thunder sounded in the sky.

It gave me kind of a funny feeling.

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This ends the reprint of the earliest documented account of the John Hendrix Prophecy that I have been able to locate up to now. If you know of earlier documented evidence of any part of the John Hendrix prophecies, please contact me at 482-4224 or draysmith@comcast.net

Ed Westcott gave me some insight into the author of the above article reprinted as first published. Joe Oakes (Journal Prophecy Expert) is the way the author signed the article. Ed sent me an e-mail stating that "Joe Oakes" was actually one of the many bylines used by Richard B. Gehman. He spent four years in the US Engineer Corps. He was a close friend of Ed's. He was Associate Editor for the Oak Ridge Journal. Gehman also published under the pseudonyms Meghan Richards, Frederic Christian, Martin Scott, and F. C. Uffelman (a friend of his who worked at Y-12).

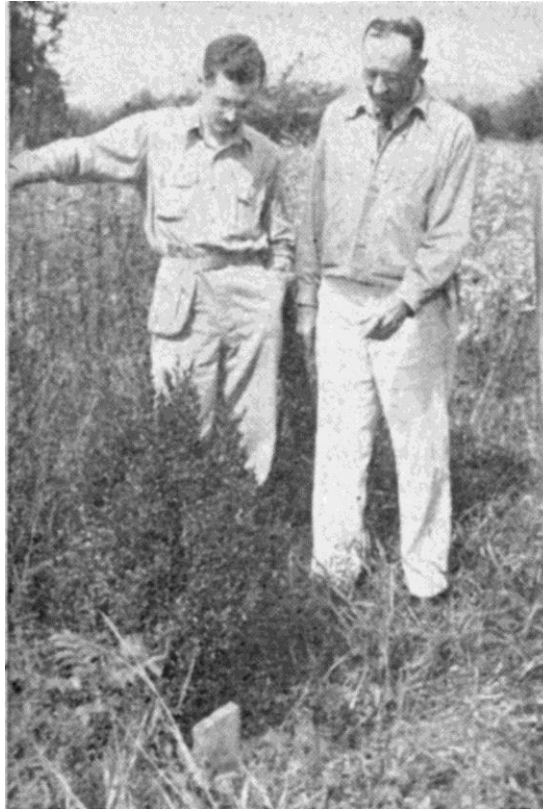
As you must know by now, the amazing John Hendrix story intrigues me and I delight in finding new evidence regarding his life and unusual circumstances. Many descendents of his have contacted me as a result of the material I have published on www.SmithDRay.net even those who are descended from his first wife and children who went to Arkansas. Many local individuals, such as John Rice Irwin can claim kin through some Hendrix relatives. Several families locally still cherish their ties to arguably Oak Ridge's most famous character even if he did die 27 years before the major elements of his prophecy were fulfilled.

Interestingly, Faye Childs, a granddaughter of John Hendrix and a daughter of John's son Curtis Hendrix and his wife, Thelma Lee (Linda) Haney Hendrix recently mentioned to me that there was one part of the John Hendrix prophecy that had not yet come true. She said, "He missed the name of the city on Black Oak Ridge because he said it would be named "Paradise." Now that was BEFORE I found the above article that mentioned the very fact that John Hendrix said that the city that would be built on Black Oak Ridge would be named "Paradise."

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Look out - we may yet prove that prophecy true – any one for changing our city's name to PARADISE? Notice that in the reprinted article that the account of this particular part of the prophecy is stated as, "would *finally* be called Paradise!" It is never too late to prove "Old John" and his prophecy accurate even to this final detail.



John Malone points out the grave of John Hendrix to Sgt. Abe Levitt. (Journal photo by Westcott)

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Part of the farm on which the prophet lived. (Photo by Westcott – from Don Raby collection)



The porch of Hendrix's farmhouse, on which he would sit and study the scriptures, perhaps in this same rocking chair. (Journal photo by Westcott)