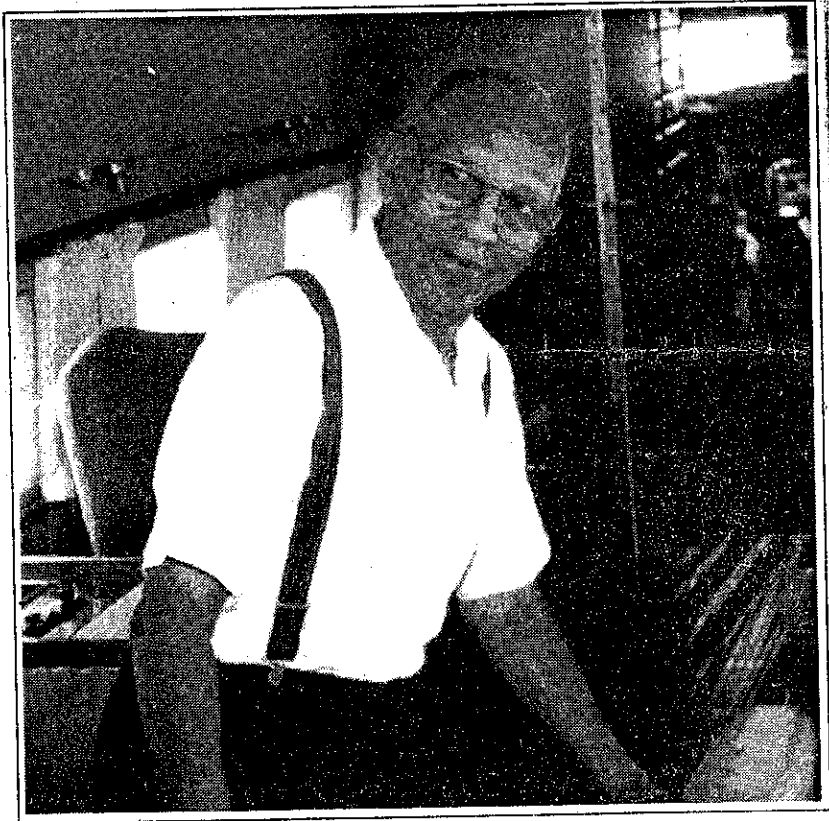


★ *Local Color . . .*

# Jim Henderson: cooked for Browns, Starks remembers past



Jim Henderson (above) was brought back to Orange recently as a surprise guest at the Orange County Aviation Association's air show. Brown's famous DC-3 was one of the featured walk-through displays.

BY RUSSELL TURKEL

**J**im James Henderson does not get around as well as he used to in his younger days. At 95 years old, though his physical capabilities slowly wane, his mind is as sharp as a tack.

He sits down, looks to the sky and fondly reminisces about his life in general. The special affection he had for both the Brown and Stark families is plain in his voice.

Henderson was born in the East Texas town of Rockland.

# Jim James Henderson remembers past

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"My father was originally from Orange. He moved up there (to Rockland) to marry my mother, and then brought her back with him," Henderson remembered.

Back in Orange, Henderson and family worked for W. H. Stark.

"My old grandfather worked for them for a long time, and they hired me when I was big enough to work," Henderson recounted. He believes he started working for the Starks at age 14 and remained with them for 48 years. He remembers W. H. Stark as "a fine man."

Henderson said his duties with the Starks were primarily "to tend to things outside." They taught him to cook as he would replace "people who left or died."

"I worked for Ms. Nelda during that time for about seven years. I had been with the Starks so long, I did pretty much what I pleased," he said.

However, Henderson left the Starks in favor of a pay raise offered by the Browns.

"I worked for the Starks for 48 years and wasn't making enough to live. I was earning \$40 a week with them," Henderson stated. "Then I was offered \$50 a week to work for the Browns'

until Lindenwood was finished."

Henderson eventually worked for the Browns for 14 years. He traveled with Edgar Brown on the famous Brown DC-3 "everywhere they had to go."

"I was the top cook," Henderson said with pride. "I'd work from 2 in the afternoon until 10 that evening. I kind of made sure everything was going all right. If they had a party, we'd work all night. When they went to their ranches, I'd go with them. I traveled to Florida, Red Top, San Antonio. Oh, all over the place," Henderson recalled.

While working with the Browns, Henderson had the chance to work with his brother, the late C.W. Henderson. C.W. was the Browns' florist for a number of years.

Henderson remembered the living arrangements he had while employed by the Browns.

"Once Lindenwood was finished, the Browns built me a nice, nice house on their land. It had six rooms. Several families lived out there. He built homes for all of their workers. He had a milk dairy and we had all the milk and butter we needed. It was all free," Henderson said.

He recalled Edgar Brown as a kind, compassionate friend.

"He was a fine man. They didn't get no better," Henderson said. "He wanted you to have the same things he had. They didn't get no better than him."

Henderson now resides in Call. Age and distance prevent him from visiting the area much any more. Time has taken much of his family and many of his friends from this life.

He left Orange for the same reason his father before him was lured away.

"I married a woman and moved up there. That was about 40 years ago," Henderson said. "I hadn't been to Orange in ages."

Henderson was brought back to Orange recently as a surprise guest at the Orange County Aviation Association's air show. Brown's famous DC-3 was one of the featured walk-through displays.

"I was down there for that air show and met several friends that I know. That was nice, getting to see people," he said.

Jim James Henderson is a living link to Orange's history. He remembers much about growing up and working with two of Orange's most prominent families in the early 20th century. He, himself, remains a fine man.

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