

# Freeman returns 'home' to sign copies of 'Oxpatch and the Hill'

By DON WHITTEN

People growing up in the 1950s and 1960s certainly lived through a wide range of changes – in technology, lifestyles, relationships, politics, war, civil rights – and it's often difficult to keep everything straight when you add all of the advances they've seen while moving on toward becoming "retiring baby boomers."

Thanks to a recent book by Oxford native David Freeman, however, there are plenty of memories for local residents – and their children and grandchildren – to talk about. Freeman, who now runs a successful publishing company in Roanoke, Texas, recently released "Oxpatch and the Hill – Dixieland Memories" and will be in town Saturday, May 24, to sign copies at 1 p.m. at Off Square Books.

Freeman's book has been out a short time and people have had nothing but

good things to say about their former Oxford High School (the Class of 1966, which is holding a 60th birthday party this weekend) classmate's memoir.

"The feedback has been good," Freeman said. "What I've often heard is more stories and more memories. There definitely is enough for an 'Oxpatch-2.' I've also gotten a lot of response to the book's Web site ([www.oxpatch.com](http://www.oxpatch.com)) and with people wanting to contribute more photos from that time period. I've put some of mine on there, but we need more."

## Growing up in 1950s, '60s

"Oxpatch and the Hill," whose title refers to an often-used slang name for Oxford and to the nearby community of College Hill, takes a look at growing up in the 1950s and 1960s through the eye of a youngster and his friends and neighbors.



Freeman

Many of the people Freeman includes and names in his stories are folks who will be very familiar to those who have lived in the Lafayette-Oxford-University community for any length of time.

There are stories of backyard ponds, fields and crops near his College Hill home, Hollywood coming to Oxford, hunting, buying and selling and driving cars, horse shows, frog gigging – you name it and it's in "Oxpatch and the Hill." Descriptions of the Square and "old" Oxford will trigger memories for longtime residents and for those who, like Freeman, remember the carefree lifestyle for youngsters 40 and 50 years ago before everyone started locking their doors and having to worry about every little thing.

The book has been a work in progress for some 10 to 15 years.

## Memories, stories become book

"Over the years, as my sons were growing up, I'd tell them about various things from my early days and they'd say, 'You ought to write that down.' Finally, I did

and eventually I got it in the form that led to the book," Freeman said. "I showed the original manuscript to people and asked them to share some of their memories. It just took off."

Freeman attended University and Oxford high schools and graduated from Ole Miss. He was a medical evacuation pilot in the U.S. Army, including a one-year stint in Vietnam, and has worked in the aviation and computer industries throughout his career. He's authored several books, including Vietnam adventure novel "The Jesus Nut" and aviation book "Highways in the Sky – Adventures of a Working Pilot." His passions, obviously, are writing and flying – and recalling his memories of growing up in Lafayette County.

"I think it's something you go back to (more) as you get older. I know it's been that way for members of our class (of 1966)," Freeman said. "I'm glad to be helping spark some of those memories with the book."

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