



This grove of oaks is remembered as the site of John Terres' discovery of the little golden mouse. PHOTO BY KEN MOORE

FLORA
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from the top of the dike is now closed in by groves of tall trees. Some of John's studied fields are now young emerging forests. Sadly, the quail field is now a dense forest thicket, but John's endearing story of the quail that roamed and nested in that former cornfield brings nostalgia and joy with every rereading.

John would appreciate new fields opened under N.C. Botanical Garden management. In time, the bobwhite quail's plaintive call may be heard from the edge of one of these new fields. Special places remain, like the corner of Big Oak Woods where the old farm road crosses Yancey Brook. On that walk in October 1981, John stopped and described how he placed a possum carcass inside the base of a hollow tree to test his theory

of the turkey vulture's extraordinary power of smell. Further along the way, we paused to hear John's account of spending numerous nights along the roadside to observe the nocturnal habits of the flying squirrel that nested in a dead hickory just inside the forest edge. Perhaps John's happiest discovery was the elusive golden mouse, a mouse that makes a football-shaped nest high off the ground. I think of that golden mouse every time I pass the grove of oaks where the little mouse was finally found. Mason Farm is vibrant in late winter. Signs of spring are everywhere: twigs of trees and shrubs take on brilliant colors, bird activity increases, demonstrative hawks circle high above and burgundy patches of *Penstemon* rosettes announce the sea of white beardtongue flowers to arrive in June. Mason Farm is a community treasure to be visited over and over; John Terres' book is a treasure to read over and over. Honoring both, the Botanical Garden has scheduled a walkabout on Feb. 20, tracing John's footsteps around Mason Farm. See ncbg.unc.edu, "Guided Public Tours and Hikes," for information and registration.

Email Ken Moore at flora@carrborocitizen.com.



Otter Patrol, 1961

In every boy's life, there should be a moment like this: The happy Scouts of the Otter Patrol, Troop 39, posing with some swagger at our campsite's trench table while chomping on homemade toothpicks. And with good reason: The proud patrol leader shot this with a Kodak Brownie because we had just been named the Honor Patrol – outscoring all other patrols in Orange County at the District Camporee on May 20, 1961. The Otters are, left to right, Burton Craig, John Radford, Bruce Carriker, Billy Wood, Alan Bream and Jimmy Horn. That was 50 years ago this spring. I can only wonder where these 60-somethings are now. I've seen Jimmy Horn around town, but I've lost touch with the rest of our gang. Maybe the Otters will be reunited when Troop 39 celebrates its 100th anniversary next year. Happy Boy Scout Week, guys!



A THOUSAND WORDS
BY JOCK LAUTERER

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