

# 'Molasses Making Time' has hope, tragedy, triumph

## A Review by Ken Bell

Item City Editor

**Molasses Making Time** by Grace W. Looper. Bella Rosa Books, 141 pages. Trade paperback

Every so often a book comes along that's just enjoyable to read. "Molasses Making Time" by Rock Hill's Grace W. Looper is such a book.

Set in the 1930s in Yancey County, N.C., "Molasses Making Time" takes readers back to a time when families got together more often than they do now, a time when neighbors helped their neighbors, when doing chores meant more than making one's bed. It was a time when the community gathered

for many activities, including shucking corn.

After the corn shucking, the community would gather for a night of food, fun and games. Everyone would drink their fill of apple cider and eat until even the cakes and pies were almost gone. The music and dancing usually lasted until midnight.

Eleven-year-old Aaron Gilbert Fowler lived in such a world. Aaron loved to fish and go raccoon hunting with his pa. It gave him respite from the criticism from his stern ma.

But his favorite time of year was molasses-making time. He enjoyed chewing a piece of sugar cane stalk to "test" its sweetness. He loved working with his pa to gather the cane and the aroma as the cane was boiled to make molasses.

Aaron was a typical youth of the time. He had a crush on his teacher, thought the preacher's daughter was a pest and loved playing tricks on his sister. Aaron's world seemed perfect.

But when an accident changes Aaron's world, he blames himself. And the guilt is so unbearable he can't even speak about it.

Suddenly, everything around him seems to change and he must deal with the fact that things will never again be the same. Even though Aaron doesn't want to change, he eventually accepts the fact that change is inevitable and begins to embrace the changes around him.

"Molasses Making Time" is a book about growing up in a changing world. It's a book about families

and relationships. It's a book for those yearning for a simpler time, before the days of computers, televisions or cellular telephones. It's a book that will make readers realize what is truly important in life and yearn for those times again.

But more than that, "Molasses Making Time" educates readers that time moves on. And people move in and out of our lives. And it let's us know that it's OK for that to happen.

Nostalgia, love, hope, tragedy and triumph - "Molasses Making Time" has it all.

*Rock Hill author Grace W. Looper will be signing copies of her latest novel, "Molasses Making Time," from 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday, June 3, at Waldenbooks in the Sumter Mall.*

