

'Couldn't Be Done':

Harrington Picked Up Pieces Four Times

LEWISTON—The history of the Harrington Manufacturing Company, biggest business in Lewiston, reads like an "it couldn't be done" story. J. J. "Monk" Harrington, president, says it's a case of bulldog determination—on the part of management, personnel alike.

The late John L. Harrington, grandfather of Monk Harrington, started the whole thing in 1908, when he invented and patented a peanut picker. It was 1913 before the machine got into production, when six were built in Greenville and sold through an International Harvester dealership.

In 1916, John L. Harrington moved his operation to Winston-Salem, where he introduced a different type picker called the "Hustler." It took hustling to sell the Hustler, however, and his son, J. C. Harrington, and brother, Cecil H. Harrington, traveled peanut areas in Georgia and Texas, over bad roads, to service the machines.

By 1919, the Harrington operation had moved to Columbus, Ga., to get into the heart of peanut territory. Another combination peanut picker and wheat combine had also been patented by Harrington that year.

But the bottom fell out in 1921, when depression hit the United States, and John L. Harrington with his son, J. C., returned to Lewiston. Undaunted, they formed

the present Harrington Manufacturing Company and changed the trade name to "Roanoke." Things were slow, and in 1927 the founder died. The presidency was assumed by another brother, lawyer H. G. Harrington, who got more operating capital by selling half-interest in the firm to T. N. and J. R. Peele of Lewiston, and C. W. and E. D. Sprull of Windsor.

By 1928, things looked bright. All of the 125 pickers made that year were sold, and the firm planned to build 250 in 1929. But with another depression, it took the next four years to collect for machines sold in 1928—the money came in at the rate of about \$15 daily, and many payments were made in groceries and foodstuffs.

In 1931, H. G. Harrington died, and his son, L. Gay Harrington, became president. It looked like the worst of the depression had eased, and plans were made to build 150 pickers—when fire completely destroyed the uninsured wooden factory building.

So the Harringtons started all over, for the third time. They moved to a little building nearby, and introduced a stationary hay baler in 1934. Slowly they recovered their losses, and the war years aided economy. However, the death of L. Gay Harrington in 1944 was a blow to the company and community for he was a civic leader and the town's only lawyer.

In 1945, the company was purchased by one of its founders, J. P. Harrington, and farmer-merchant C. B. Griffin, Sr., whose son took his place after his death in 1948. At that time, the hay baler had wider appeal than the peanut picker.

Fire struck again in 1949, when quick action by Lewiston and neighboring fire departments limited damage to one-fourth of the plant. In 1950, the company lost its third president, J. J. Harrington was elected to his father's place, and with C. B. Griffin, Jr., introduced the Roanoke Automatic Hay Baler. With the 1951 combination picker, sales increased, and in 1958, the Roanoke Combine met with great success.

J. J. Harrington credits air travel with easing the company's problems in servicing. A four-passenger plane enables key personnel to visit southern merchandising centers frequently, and the firm now plans a private airstrip near its factory.

Three children of the original founder, J. L. Harrington, have continued their interest in the company's progress. They are Mrs. J. O. Early of Lewiston, Mrs. Hanes Carter of Winston-Salem, and J. C. Harrington of Lewiston. President J. J. Harrington also credits longtime employee J. M. Joyner with a valuable contribution to the firm's success.

C. N. Ricks, Jeweler, Holds Trade Record of 56 Years

AHOSKIE—C. N. Ricks, at 77, holds the title as Ahoskie's oldest watchmaker and jeweler. It was 1903 when he first opened his first jewelry shop in Boykins, Va. By 1906 he had decided to learn more about the watchmaker's trade, so he attended a Norfolk watchmaking school for a year before returning to business in Boykins.

From Boykins, Ricks went to Franklin, Va., and then to Emporia, Va., where he owned a jewelry shop when he and Miss Lelia Parker of Murfreesboro were married in 1912. They lived in Emporia three years, then moved to Weldon, where Ricks owned a jewelry shop until 1928. The Rickses moved to Ahoskie just after street lights and water had made it a real "city." But the streets were still mud, and Mrs. Ricks remembers the horses and buggies which used to get stuck in front of the jewelry store.

C. N. Ricks Jewelers moved into the former location of the Farmers-Atlantic Bank, which had built an impressive stone building and moved three doors down Main Street. After 31 years, the Ricks store is still in the same spot.

In recent years, Mr. Ricks has delegated most of the watchmaking and repair work to a trained employee, and Mrs. Ricks has had occasional help in waiting on customers. Except for some years in which she took time out to raise a niece of Mr. Ricks, Mrs. Ricks has been in the store to help her husband.

The Rickses have been members of the Methodist church in the three towns in which they have lived, and Mr. Ricks is now an emeritus member of the board of stewards of the Ahoskie Methodist Church.

When Farflung Godwin Business Started, RR Street Was Woods

AHOSKIE—Railroad Street was mostly a forest of pine when Norman S. Godwin and his father, the late Charlie S. Godwin, opened a little feed business in 1923.

They built a small wooden building on a lot which had been used by loggers to load cars on the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad.

C. S. Godwin, descendant of a long line of Godwins in Hertford County history, had moved to the Center Grove section of Bertie County after his marriage, where he was an extensive farmer. His sons liked the soil, too, and N. S. Godwin farmed before he got the idea that a feed business would be profitable in fast-growing Ahoskie.

Father and son, with two helpers, did well in the feed business, and soon added a line of heavy groceries, which they sold both retail and wholesale. Within a few years, N. S. Godwin moved with his family to Ahoskie, and

purchased 17 lots—then thickly forested—along the North Railroad Street. These same lots have since become the scene of much activity, with some of Ahoskie's major business firms purchasing or leasing them.

C. S. Godwin and Son eventually became primarily a wholesale grocery firm. The elder Mr. Godwin, who died about five years ago at the age of 94, remained active in the business until January, 1940, when his son purchased the father's half-interest. The name of the firm was then changed to N. S. Godwin and Son (younger son Norman Earl joined his father while elder son Lloyd was in service) and to N. S. Godwin and Sons after the elder son's return.

A line of light groceries, to round out the wholesale offering was added, and Lloyd Godwin became manager of the wholesale operation at its location two

blocks from the original Godwin building.

N. S. Godwin continued to manage the feed and fertilizer division, now known as N. S. Godwin Storage Company, and Norman Earl Godwin is now active in that operation. Both sons started their careers traveling for the wholesale operation, however. N. S. Godwin and Sons now employs 25 persons on the regular payroll.

In recent years, N. S. Godwin has added to his other interests a distributorship for bulk and bottled gas, an operation separate from the other businesses.

He has been actively engaged in civic enterprises, served on the Ahoskie town board for eight years, and is now acting president of the Hertford County Building and Loan Association. A member of the Baptist Church, Mr. Godwin has also been extremely active in the Ahoskie Kiwanis Club, of which he is a past president.

Bryan Is Busy Oil Distributor

AHOSKIE—W. H. Bryan looks like a truck driver, and he wouldn't deny it. But looks are deceptive, for Bill Bryan is one of Ahoskie's busiest fuel oil and gasoline distributors, noted for his civic activities.

Bryan started in Oxford, back in 1925, driving a truck for a wholesale grocery firm. After a year at State College, he went back to the same firm as a salesman. In 1928, he started work for the Gulf Oil distributor in Henderson as a general utility man—and that's what he says he still is.

During the 12 years he worked in Henderson, Bryan did a little

of everything from driving a fuel oil truck to signing checks. In 1940 he had a chance to buy the Gulf distributor franchise here, and on February 1, moved to Ahoskie.

That first prewar year, he operated with two trucks and one assistant, D. W. Harrell, who is still with him. Now the Bryan firm employs five men, and has four trucks in operation, delivering fuel oil, kerosene and gasoline.

Back in Henderson, Bryan took over a troop of Boy Scouts, and he's been a Scouter ever since. Last year, he was honored with

the Silver Beaver award for 30 years of distinguished Scouting service. He is also a member of the Boy Scout Order of the Arrow.

Besides Scouting, his chief activity is in the Ahoskie Kiwanis Club, which he heads this year. He has been on the board of stewards of the Ahoskie Methodist Church since 1941, and is a Mason. He and his wife are parents of three sons—twins, Bob, who is employed by his father's firm, and Bill, who is a veterinarian now in Raleigh and Floyd, a sophomore at the University of North Carolina.

McPherson Started Work in 1923

AHOSKIE—Bottled soft drinks were still pretty much a novelty in 1923, when the Orange Crush Bottling Company began operations in Littleton. J. E. McPherson got in on the beginning, and purchased plants in Littleton and Elizabeth City in 1932.

Partners in McPherson Beverages, Inc., with J. E. McPherson of Elizabeth City were the late Dallas W. McPherson, Mrs. Alma Jones, and W. C. Jones, who became president of the firm after the death of D. W. McPherson in 1950. Sam Brown is sales manager.

Original output of the Littleton plant was about 600 cases per week, with nine employees and two trucks operating. Today there

are over 40 delivery trucks, bottling plants at Littleton, Elizabeth City and South Hill, Va., and warehouses at Ahoskie and Emporia, Va., distributing Pepsi-Cola, Nu-Grape, Orange Crush, Seven-Up.

The Ahoskie warehouse began operation before 1938 from a small rented garage at the home of one of the employees. One truck, working from the warehouse, sold about 250 cases of soft drinks which were bottled in Littleton.

In 1938, the lease expired on the rented warehouse in Ahoskie and no renewal was available. The firm had 90 days in which to build a warehouse. A lot on Main Street, across from Ahoskie High

School, was purchased, and plans drawn for the building. In spite of hot weather, the present building was completed in 13 days and occupied in July, 1938.

By 1950 there were five trucks operating out of the Ahoskie warehouse, distributing about 5,000 cases of drinks per week. This figure has now climbed to over 7,000 cases weekly distributed. Plans have recently been announced to build a new warehouse on Memorial Drive, on land purchased from W. C. Godwin.

McPherson's Littleton plant was equipped in 1956 with the most modern equipment which insures a complete washing-sterilizing-bottling-inspecting operation, all without contact with human hands.

Freeman Mill Completely Modern

AHOSKIE—The most modern sawmill equipment money can buy—that is what O. C. Freeman of Colerain and his brother, C. J. Freeman of Rich Square have installed in their lumber mill in Ahoskie.

Over \$100,000 in equipment has been added during the past year, says veteran lumberman O. C. Freeman. In addition, Freeman Bros. Lumber Company has built a handsome new office building near the sawmill, which they occupied last Thanksgiving.

About seven million feet of

lumber is milled each year by the Freeman Brothers plant. This includes both rough and finished lengths of Southern pine and hardwoods.

The finished pine is sold locally at retail, but the hardwoods—primarily oak and gum—go to North Carolina furniture manufacturers, as a rule.

O. C. Freeman started in the lumber business as a youth, working at the Myers sawmill in Colerain. He operated a sawmill in Colerain from 1936 to 1950, when he bought the site of the old Bell sawmill in Ahoskie.

The mill had burned, but Freeman cleared the land and set up a new operation which includes a generator to provide the plant's own electricity.

Freeman was joined in the operation by his brother, C. J. Freeman, who had operated a cleaning plant in Rich Square, O. C. now handles the buying and selling end of the business, while C. J. is sawmill manager.

There are about 35 employees at the sawmill and planing mill, in addition to loggers who work on contract to furnish timber for the mill.

COUNTY

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December 18, 1759, the bill passed the Commons and went to the Governor's Council. On December 19, 1759, the Governor's Council endorsed the bill and sent it to the upper house. On December 29, 1759, it became law.

The new county included all the present area of Hertford, and much of Gates—all that area north and west of Bennett's Creek.

Boundary Trouble

But there was difficulty in running the boundary between Northampton and Hertford.

In 1764, the Assembly ordered the boundary between the two to be run. The main area of concern was in the "middle border," where tributaries of Mellerrin River were used as boundary lines and there was apparently some question as to what stream was what.

The act setting up the county's boundary was altered slightly.

Said the law: "the dividing line . . . shall be altered followeth, to wit: Beginning on Kirby's

Gates Men of 52nd Regiment Fought With Lee's Legions

Some men of Gates County served in the 52nd North Carolina Confederate regiment, a unit which fought in most of the major actions of the Army of Northern Virginia.

Capt. J. N. Harrell was officer in command of Company C of the regiment after its first commander, John Gatling, was named as-

sistant quartermaster of the regiment.

The unit fought at Gettysburg and in the Wilderness.

Before joining the Army of Northern Virginia, it helped guard eastern North Carolina.

The handful of Gates County men surrendered at Appomattox with the remnant of the Army of Northern Virginia.

Creek, where the Dividing Line joins said Creek, running thence up the Creek to the fork thereof; then up Turkey Creek to Maple Fork; thence by direct south course, till it intersects the present dividing line."

Gates Formed

Gates was formed from Hertford and Chowan in 1779, and Hertford was stripped of its across-the-river area.

The Hertford - Northampton

boundary still was vague, and an act was passed as late as 1870 authorizing that the boundary be better marked.

The Bertie boundary also gave some trouble.

In 1877, a small portion of Bertie was allowed to be annexed—an area just east of present-day Powellsville. The boundary was finally settled in 1907 by an act which described the Bertie - Hertford boundary.



1934-1959

OUR
25th
YEAR

Our Interest Has Paid Big Dividends...

We mean, of course, our interest in the people of the Roanoke-Chowan area. These people have placed confidence in our bank by depositing their money for our safe-keeping. We, in turn, have shown our confidence in their ability and spirit by investing in their enterprises. These enterprises have made the Roanoke-Chowan progress through the years. We believe in the people of this area and we know our interest has paid big dividends.

WE JOIN IN CELEBRATING A MILESTONE IN NORTH CAROLINA HISTORY . . .

Hertford County's 200th Anniversary

FARMERS BANK OF MURFREESBORO

Member of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.



OUR NEW DRIVE-IN BANK