

...Around

(Continued from page 1A)
 the graveside service of J.L. McNeill and was returning to my car at the cemetery, Lauchlin MacDonald walked along with me going to his car. He stated that during his days in high school there was no football coach at the school and that Willie Walters and Lawrence McNeill came out every afternoon to coach the high school football team.

Now this left an impression of Lawrence McNeill on Lauchlin that he will never forget. I began to think of the things that J.L. McNeill did during his lifetime, like coaching, that most folks don't know about in Hoke County.

I will not go into detail because his obit will appear elsewhere in this paper.

In sports: At his pond and mostly at his expense a supper was given and the Hoke High Booster Club was organized. All meetings were held in his office for the first year, but he would not be an officer in the organization.

He was one of the leaders that got Para-Thread to come to Raeford, now JRA industries. Robbins Mills purchased White-Tex Cotton Mill and expanded after the Hoke Development Co. built the 100 or so houses in Robbins Heights. He was a driving force in this project.

Lawrence was the first campaign chairman for the Hoke United Fund and along with H.L. Gatlin, Jr., Israel Mann, Crawford Thomas and Paul Dickson, got the organization started in the county.

The work and effort, along with many others, that he did saved the Hoke Corridor from becoming a part of Fort Bragg.

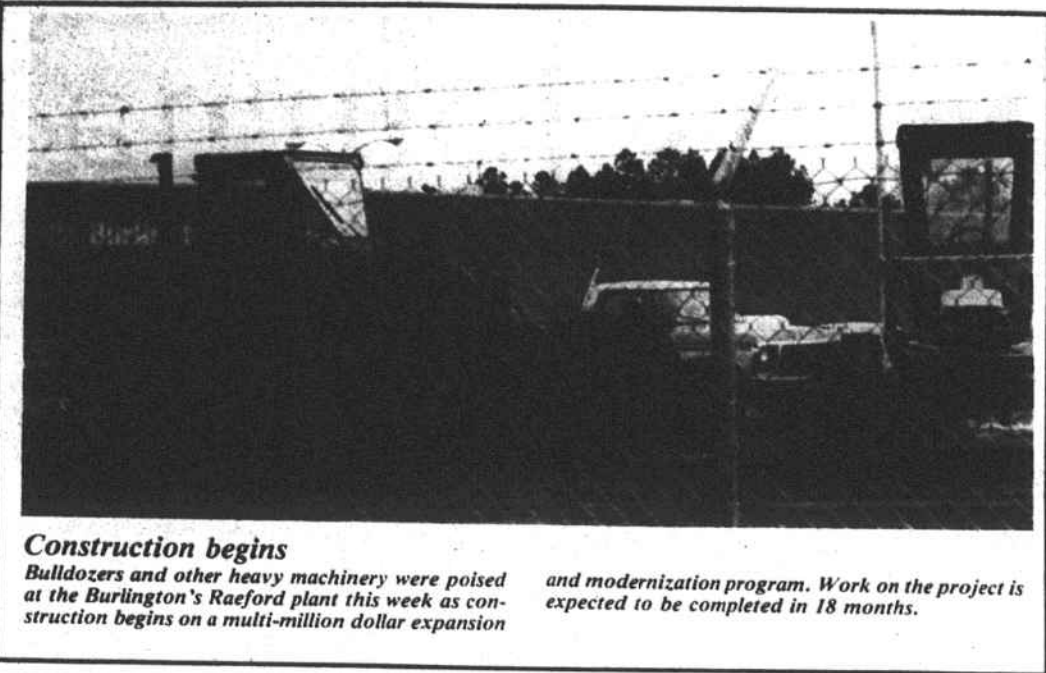
These are just a few things that I know much about concerning his work for the county. There are many others.

Hoke County is a better place in which to live today, because J.L. McNeill lived here.

Say You Saw It
 In
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Construction begins
 Bulldozers and other heavy machinery were poised at the Burlington's Raeford plant this week as construction begins on a multi-million dollar expansion and modernization program. Work on the project is expected to be completed in 18 months.

UCB Closing Downtown Branch

By Sherry Matthews
 Although United Carolina Bank (UCB) announced this week that it would be closing the Raeford Main Street Branch, Hoke Chamber of Commerce Director Earl Fowler does not see the future vacancy as a "bad sign."
 "I think overall, this will be a plus for Raeford and Hoke County," Fowler said.
 "It will be sad to see the branch close, but we have known for a long time that it was inevitable," he added.
 "When they built the new office, everyone knew that the Main Street branch would eventually shut its doors," Fowler said.
 Although Fowler said he was "sorry" to see the branch, which was the main office for the old Bank of Raeford, close, he was optimistic that another "good use" would be made out of the building.
 "We have been looking at that building very strongly for use as our satellite of Sandhills Community College," Fowler said.

"Should this materialize, I see UCB's closing as an overall plus for this city and county," he added.
 Fowler and members of the Progressive Action Committee (PAC), which was set up by the Chamber in August, have been investigating possible ways to develop a local community college branch.
 "An evaluation is still being worked on," Fowler said.
 "The group should be pulling together again in the near future to determine what possibilities we have," he added.
 If the community college becomes a reality, Fowler believes UCB is ready and "willing" to turn the building over for that purpose.
 "They are very concerned about this community. They want to see it utilized in the best way possible," Fowler said.
 "I think a community college in that location would assist this area in many ways. It could even help strengthen downtown revitalization efforts," he added.

Even if plans for the satellite college fall through, the Chamber director does not see the UCB building lying dormant for long.
 "I don't think it will be vacant for very long...absolutely not," Fowler said.
 "I think it will be utilized in some way, if not as a community college then for something else that will benefit the community," he added.
 "In the long haul, I think this vacancy can be a benefit to the entire community," Fowler said.
 "Nothing is certain now...there are a lot of if's," he noted.
 UCB's Main Street Branch is scheduled to close its doors March 16.

BUSIEST AIRPORTS. Nine of the world's ten busiest airports are in the United States. The top three are Chicago's O'Hare, Atlanta's Hartsfield International, and Los Angeles International. London's Heathrow is the only foreign airport among the world's ten busiest.

Hoke County Leader Dies Of Heart Attack

One of the driving forces behind the development of Hoke County, John Lawrence McNeill, died at his home of an apparent heart attack last Wednesday. He was 78.
 McNeill was buried Friday afternoon in the Raeford Cemetery during well-attended graveside services conducted by Raeford Presbyterian minister Dr. John Ropp.



John Lawrence McNeill

Prior to his retirement several years ago, McNeill served as the eighth president of The Bank of Raeford and Chairman of the Board.
 The Hoke County native also owned and operated the McLauchlin Co., serving as president of the firm from 1945 to 1972.
 In 1933, when banks were closing all over the country, McNeill, R.B. Lewis and Jessie Bright Ferguson got customers to promise not to withdraw funds and were able to keep The Bank of Raeford solvent.

During 1953, McNeill again joined with other county leaders and stopped a move by the U.S. Army to develop a corridor connecting Fort Bragg and Camp MacKall.

After a six-month battle by the local leaders, which included trips to Washington and extensive lobbying, the Defense Department abandoned the plan. McNeill and the others felt that had the Army move succeeded, it could have meant the end of Hoke County.

In addition to his other duties, McNeill served as an Elder in the Raeford Presbyterian Church and was an accomplished golfer.
 For his contributions to the community, McNeill was awarded the Raeford Kiwanis Club's Citizenship Award as man of the year.

Many county residents sought his counsel on business and other matters, which he gave freely.
 "One of the best ways to characterize Lawrence McNeill is to say that he tried to teach pride and accomplishment," one close associate said.

McNeill is survived by his wife Edna Adams McNeill; one son Dr. Lawrence McNeill Jr., of Southern Pines; three daughters: Mrs. Virginia McNeill Maddy of Norfolk, Virginia, Mrs. Evans McNeill Clark and Mrs. Anne McNeill Brisson, both of Fayetteville and six grandchildren.

During the service Friday, City Councilman Benny McLeod, Neill A. McDonald, Crawford Thomas Jr., Jake Austin, Younger Snead Jr. and Neill McFadyen Jr. served as pallbearers.

Drinking - a Family Problem?
AL-ANON MEETING
 WED. - 7:30 p.m.
 Hoke Co. Health Dept.

PHONE FOR FOOD
 Fish, Shrimp, BBQ, Chicken...
SPECIALS DAILY
 875-5752
 Wagon Wheel Restaurant

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