

Still Serving

After 60 Years

Sixty years ago yesterday, when a group of Hoke County leaders got together to form the Raeford Kiwanis Club, the world was looking a little dim.

Many county residents were feeling the pinch of a failing economy, particularly the farmers who were suffering after the price of cotton dropped to six cents a pound.

The nation was still getting over the shock of Teapot Dome oil lease scandals in the administration of President Warren G. Harding, and Americans were mourning the death of former President Woodrow Wilson who died in January after years of illness.

As dark as things might have appeared in the world during the first two months of 1924, there were some positive things going on in Hoke County. Not only was the work on paving Main Street in Raeford completed that year, but the new Raeford High School also opened to students and the school had a winning football team.

In 1924 Walter P. Baker purchased Hoke Drug Company, D.M. Parker resigned his post as vice president of the Bank of Raeford and W.L. Poole became the secretary-treasurer of the Raeford Savings and Loan.

Hoke County was 13 years old. Raeford had a population of 1,235.

One of the most significant events to happen in the community that year was birth of the Kiwanis Club.

On February 22, 1924, 66 county residents got together under the leadership of Raeford High Principal and winning football Coach J.M. Stackhouse to form the Raeford Kiwanis Club.

The first meetings were held in the grade school building. Stackhouse served as president, furniture dealer W.E. Freeman was vice president, Sheriff Edgar Hall held the district trustee job, farmer and insurance salesman Paul Dickson was secretary and banker R.B. Lewis Jr. was treasurer.

Farmer Clyde E. Upchurch, Dr. Kenneth B. Geddie, Dr. R.B. Wilkins, dentist Harry Cromartie, farmer Arch McEachern, builder Marcus W. Dew and attorney N. McNair Smith made up the board of directors of the club.

The Ladies of the Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian churches, the Mother's Club and the U.D.C. alternated preparing the meals for the Kiwanians.

Later in the year the club moved to the large room which became the Kiwanis Hall located above what is now Howell Drug Store.

Raeford Civil Engineer Robert Gatlin, who served as president of the club in 1949, says he can remember clearly when he was a youth and had to help his mother carry piping hot dishes of homecooked food up the long stairs to the Kiwanis Hall.

On the Charter Night the members and guests dined on Grapefruit Maraschino, turkey and dressing with rice and gravy, English Peas in Cases, hot biscuits, Neapolitan Ice Cream, Modern Pound Cake and coffee, while Miss Bennie Lee Upchurch entertained them with a song.

When the Raeford club formed, Kiwanis International was just nine years old, and the local group was a welcomed addition to the worldwide service organization.

Charter night was well attended. Kiwanians from other clubs in Fayetteville, Pinhurst, Aberdeen



On the deck of the Raleigh

Members of the 1931 Raeford Scout Troop 1 pose here for a photographer on the deck of the cruiser Raleigh during jamboree activities in Wilmington. The troop, which was organized and sponsored by the Kiwanis Club, finished second in the jamboree. Scouts in the 1932 troop won the jamboree amass-

ing 375 points, 120 points ahead of the nearest challenger Wilmington. During the trip the Raeford scouts were in the charge of Scoutmaster and Mrs. F.B. Sexton, Assistant Scoutmasters Younger Sneed and Clifton Conoly and Troop Committeeman C.E. Upchurch, and Mrs. Upchurch.

and Southern Pines attended the Raeford event.

The governor of the Carolina's District Harry Adams from Raleigh and Lt. Governor W.A. French of Wilmington were the guests of honor, along with "the man who brought Kiwanis to Raeford" Joe Bowles of Columbia, South Carolina.

In addition to the charter presentation by Adams and the good food, the evening was filled with music and such songs as "The Mummy Song" and "Li'l Liza Jane."

Throughout the 1920's Kiwanis continued to grow under the leadership of such presidents as: Arch McEachern, The Rev. Watson Fairley, Paul Dickson, R.B. Lewis Jr. and Edgar Hall.

What was started by these men in the 1920's, has led to a continuous 60-year effort to better the community. Although the exact figures are not easily obtainable, Kiwanis has probably raised and put to use over \$600,000 in Hoke County, and members have devoted millions of dollars more in man-hours of service.

Members started early by sponsoring the first Boy Scout troop in Hoke County and one of the first in the Cape Fear Region. The old Troop 1, which was started in the late 1920's, is going strong today with about 20 scouts, who carry the banner of Troop 401.

Early Kiwanis' minutes also reflect that the club "voted a dollar per member" and the service of each member to erect two bath houses for boys and girls at the old "Swimming Hole" on Rockfish Creek.

The club also worked to support the public high school and labored tirelessly to get just 10 miles of hard surface roads in Hoke County.

Neighborliness was also on the minds of members, as the new club

met jointly with the Aberdeen Kiwanians.

Secretary Dickson recorded that it was the first "joint meeting, but not the last by a JUG FULL." There was no explanation for the capitalization of "jug full," but since it was during the days of prohibition, one might wonder.

Other programs included a spelling bee, which charter member and attorney H.W.B. Whitley won. Flora Macdonald students performed musical selections, and the club entertained the eastern championship baseball team from Raeford High.

The minutes of the 1920's also reveal that some of the mood of The Great Depression might have been felt by some of the members.

Dickson recorded in 1926: "At this point, Kiwanian Currie (the treasurer) lapsed into a rather pessimistic vein, and President Fairley promptly shut him off."

After several other matters were considered, the secretary resumed: "J.W. Currie emerged from his former pessimistic state of mind and arose to say the finance committee had found the Club finances to be in good shape. President Fairley commended Kiwanian Currie and urged him to talk as long as his optimism held out."

1930's

The 1930 U.S. Census showed an increase in the population of the county and Raeford had grown by 68 residents during the previous decade to 1,303. Hoke County showed a greater growth, increasing by 2,522 to 14,244.

State Rep. Laurie McEachern, who had served as secretary in 1927, started off the 1930's as president. Dickson, who had started *The Hoke County News* in 1928, was again called on to devote his journalistic talents to the keeping of the minutes.

During a 1930 meeting Dickson wrote: "Former Kiwanian Will Blue talked on and on and on and

on his trip to Scotland, and touched on Scottish history."

In another meeting, Dickson reported that a trained monkey had entertained the club and implied that the monkey was a "close friend of Tommie Upchurch."

Upchurch became president of the club shortly after that in 1931. James Benton Thomas was vice president, and E.E. Fridell replaced Dickson as secretary. Paul Dezern served as treasurer.

Under the Upchurch administration, the club showed an increasing awareness of the needs of the community during the peak of The Depression.

The club built a chimney for the Boy Scout Hut, bought a suit of clothes for a needy "country boy," sponsored tuberculosis clinics in the school, donated \$75 to the Boy Scouts and gave \$25 to a fund for shoes for needy children.

In 1932, which saw Hoke County vote 1,780 for Franklin Delano Roosevelt and cast 65 votes for Herbert Hoover, Raeford Lumber Company owner Ryan McBryde became president of the Kiwanis Club.

On May 2, 1932, Raeford Troop 1 captured the Camporee title in Wilmington by amassing 375 points, which was 120 points over the nearest competitor.

The local troop had finished a close second in 1931.

Minutes also reflect that during 1932 money was raised to buy 100 pair of shoes which were distributed to unemployed families.

During 1933, under the leadership of Sheriff D.H. Hodgkin, Kiwanis took on the sponsorship of a community playground, a 4-H Corn Club and a curb market where local farmers could sell truck crops.

In October, Kiwanis sponsored a Farmer's Day meeting and invited Hoke agricultural leaders to hear I.O. Schaub of N.C. State College speak.

At another meeting in 1933, Congressman Walter Lambeth spoke to the club about the New Deal programs being offered by Washington.

Disaster struck that year when fire destroyed the Kiwanis Hall. Club members were undaunted by the fire and continued to serve the community, although they had to move the meeting to the basement of the Presbyterian Church until June, when the new hall was finished.

Records note that the club expressed appreciation to Mrs. Ina Bethune and other ladies for their assistance in furnishing the hall and getting it ready. The new hall included a piano on which Mrs. Bethune accompanied the Kiwanians during "song-fests."

In 1934 Dr. Robert L. Murray assumed the helm. Programs during that year included appearances by state Treasurer Charles M. Johnson and the head of the state Highway Patrol Charles Farmer. Furniture merchant H.L. Gatlin Jr. took office as president during 1935.

During his administration, the club started a beautification drive for Raeford and had a Bridge and Rook tournament for the benefit of the Sanatorium.

H.L. was the first of three Gatlin brothers to serve as president of the club, which still stands as a district record.

Robert served in the post during 1949 and Marion assumed the duty in 1952. Both of the younger Gatlins are still active in the club and will be honored during this year's Ladies Night for having 40 years of perfect attendance at club meetings.

Efforts were launched in 1936 to organize the Cape Fear Boy Scouts Council. Raeford Kiwanis members, under the leadership of that year's president Dr. R.L. Matheson, met with representatives from Scotland and Robeson counties to get the scout organization started.

Members of the Kiwanis Club worked with others in the community to get the new National Guard Amory built with WPA funds during 1937. School Principal J.W. Lowrance was president that year.

In 1938, Raeford businessman T.B. Lester took over the reins as president. During the year Superintendent K.A. MacDonald spoke to the club about the needs of the schools in the county, and Mrs. J.W. McLaughlin told the members about China and other foreign countries.

Druggist Walter Baker became president in 1939. That was the year that Raeford attorney A.D. Gore spoke to the Kiwanians about "Women."

The club also bought a hospital bed for indigent ill residents, and sponsored a "pig chain" which made loans to 4-H members to enable them to buy pure-bred stock.

In 1939, the club also met in different communities around the county during July. Meetings were held in Antioch, Wayside, Allendale and Dundarrach.

1940's

During the early 1940's the names on the Kiwanis roles changed from month to month because of the War.

Members like R.B. Lewis, Paul Dickson Jr. and Dr. R.A. Matheson were among those Kiwanians who answered the call early.

In 1940, the War was also the main topic for club programs. N.H.G. Balfour talked about Britain's role in the fighting and Col. Bob Lewis spoke on National Defense.

J. Benton Thomas served as president that year and H.C. McLaughlin was secretary.

A minstrel show put on by the club netted \$115 for the Boy Scouts. The show was performed a second time for the patients at McCain.

Service station owner Neil A. McDonald served as president in 1941, businessman C.D. Thomas in 1942, Johnson Company Manager C. Marcus Dew in 1943 and H.C. McLaughlin in 1944.

Kiwanians lead every local defense activity during the war years. The club also initiated a Key Club at the high school, scrap drives were started, defense and war bonds were sold and first aid classes were sponsored.

Speakers during those years included Lt. B.F. Currie, Sgt. Buie Bethune, Lt. Bruce Morris, Lt. Sam Morris, Capt. T.B. Lester Jr., Capt. Paul Dickson, Ens. Watson Gillis and others.

Kiwanis members also manned air-raid shelters, scanned the sky for enemy aircraft, sponsored a D-Day prayer service, Victory gardens and the U.S.O.

Under the leadership of dentist and club President Dr. Marcus Smith, Kiwanians spent much of 1945 trying to find jobs for returning veterans. The club also raised \$1,300 for the fight against paralysis and \$225 for cancer during that year.

Businessman Tom Cameron took over as president in 1946. In 1947, Superintendent Kenneth A. MacDonald was in charge and A.H. McPhaul served as secretary. During those years programs took on a lighter note.

In 1948, under the direction of President Lewis M. Upchurch, the club sponsored a clothing drive. Members were supposed to wear the clothes they donated and take them off at the meeting.

The records reflect that Upchurch was the winner of a prize, after he took off the most clothes. Photos were taken of the event, but have since disappeared.

Silver Anniversary activities highlighted 1949. Robert Gatlin was president. On February 10, 48 Kiwanians and 81 guests recalled the past 25 years at a banquet held in the Fellowship Hall of the Raeford Presbyterian Church.

1950's

In the 1950's the Kiwanis Club continued its work with youth development, community service and church and spiritual growth.

During the decade the presidents were: Auto dealer Younger Sneed, school Principal W.T. Gibson Jr., Marion Gatlin, dentist Dr. Julius Jordan, merchant Israel Mann, farmer Julian H. Blue, businessman Crawford L. Thomas, McCain Superintendent John W. Flannery, attorney Charles A. Hostetler and insurance agent J.H. Austin Jr.

In an effort designed to create fellowship among clubs in the area, someone in Fayetteville came up with the idea of giving a pair of rabbits to the Raeford Club with the understanding that after a period of time, Raeford members would visit another nearby club and pass the rabbits on.

(See KIWANIS, page 7B)