

a credit to Irish homeland and colonies

Manufactures of the Nation being cramp'd and discourag'd, the labouring People have little to do, and consequently are not able to purchase Bread at its present dear Rate; That the Taxes are nevertheless exceeding heavy, and Money very scarce; and add to all this, that their griping, avaricious Landlords exercise over them the most merciless Racking Tyranny and Oppression. Hence it is that such Swarms of them are driven over into America."

In North Carolina, at this same time, "doors were thrown open to Protestants of all nations," as the Lords Proprietors withdrew, and

Edenton HISTORY



Mary Ann Coffey

Carolina became a royal colony, wrote Leyburn in "The Scotch-Irish, A Social History." Arthur Dobbs was among those opening doors to his countrymen.

The ancestral home of Arthur Dobbs was Castle

Dobbs, County Antrim, Ireland, but he was born in Scotland on April 2, 1689. His mother had taken refuge in Scotland during an era of Irish political and religious revolt. The Dobbs, who had arrived at Carrickfergus in 1599, were prominent members of the community in northern Ireland. While little is known of Arthur Dobbs' education, "it is obvious from his writings, his speeches, and his library that he received good training," wrote Richard Beale Davis in The Dictionary of North Carolina Biography.

Dobbs served in the dragoons for almost 20 years, and was elected high sheriff

of Antrim, and mayor of Carrickfergus. He joined the House of Commons in 1727, where he promoted the export of Irish goods. He aligned himself with the British government, but "throughout his long life...supported causes of the Irish, Protestant or Catholic, and was always concerned for the welfare and suffrage of the Irish people as equal partners in the British nation," Davis writes.

While Dobbs was fighting for the rights of the "commonality" in Ireland, he believed those rights belonged to all people in the British empire. He sent the prime minister a report

arguing for free trade between England and her outposts, including Ireland, the West Indies, and America. In pursuing this interest, he underwrote two explorations for a Northwest Passage across North America.

He also invested in land in North Carolina, and made plans to "bring a large number of Irish, especially distressed Protestants, to settle on them." In 1745, Dobbs and a partner purchased some 400,000 acres of land from Henry McCulloh (who would be instrumental in James Iredell's immigra-

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Tolson emphasizes safety on highways

Norris Tolson wants to run for governor, and he wants you to be alive to vote for him on Election Day.

Tolson, the state secretary of transportation, is clearly a longshot candidate for the Democratic nomination for governor. He has neither the name recognition, nor the political grassroots, of his two main competitors, Lt. Gov. Dennis Wicker and Attorney General Mike Easley.

In addition, Tolson's base for running his campaign is the biggest sewer in state government: DOT. Gov. Jim Hunt, who has prospered politically employing the benign neglect philosophy regarding DOT that has ruled since the horse and buggy age, gave him a broom last year and told him to clean up the mess.

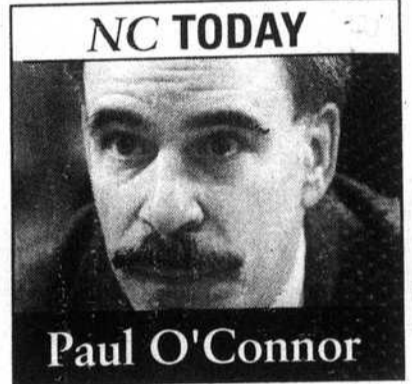
Tolson's been trying to lead DOT out of the scandals at the Board of Transportation and in the Division of Motor Vehicles, which is within DOT.

He's had a stable of infamous North Carolinians to handle from Larry Goode to Algie Toomer to Odell Williamson.

He's also had to tell the public the bad news about the Transportation Improvement Plan: It was way underfunded and overpromised, so don't expect that new road your town needs. And he's had to deliver the bad news on road maintenance. It, too, is way underfunded.

Spreading bad news is no way to get elected governor—that's why Hunt never does it. He leaves it to other people. But Tolson may have hit on a key campaign issue, something that can resonate with a public caught in traffic: Those roads are scary and dangerous.

His first move was to find money to speed the installation of median barriers on more than 900 miles of high-speed divided highway. This is a no-brainer. Highway



Paul O'Connor

planners have long known that medians stop the great majority of the deadliest accidents, the head-on crash. Yet the state scrimped and saved on the installation of these barriers for too long, and people died.

Tolson rearranged priorities and will have all of the projects completed in less than three years, not the seven that was outlined in the TIP.

His next move has been to respond to the state's terrible record with truck safety. It's in the same league as our SAT scores. North Carolina ranks as the fifth most dangerous state for truck safety.

Tolson told legislators recently that he wants several changes in state law to go along with some changes in DOT and DMV procedures. All should make truck traffic less dangerous, he said.

His plan calls for higher fines and increased license points for truckers who break traffic laws, electronic and camera surveillance of truck speed in high-danger zones like work areas, and bans on all alcoholic beverages in commercial vehicles.

Tolson did not, however, take what many consider to be the most important step—requiring regular safety inspections of trucks similar to the annual inspection system that exists for private cars.

Tolson said he first wants

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Newly elected Gov. Jim Hodges of South Carolina has just announced plans for a program called "First Steps." The Democrat, who beat incumbent Republican David Beasley last year, has visited with North Carolina Gov. Jim Hunt and sees early childhood programs as a political winner.

Perhaps cooler heads will prevail in South Carolina and Hodges' plan will undergo serious review. Unfortunately, North Carolina politicians and policy analysts have spent little time in the past six years thinking about Hunt's Smart Start program, viewing it not as a policy alternative to be evaluated objectively but instead a quasi-religious cause to be advanced with missionary zeal.

If Hunt has his way this year, Smart Start will receive nearly \$240 million in state taxpayer funds. Next year (2000-2001) the Smart Start budget will reach \$325 million. That would make Smart Start one of North Carolina's largest public assistance programs, exceeding the cost of Work First cash welfare (\$225 million).

Given the massive "investment" state taxpayers are making in Smart Start, the lack of careful consideration of its potential benefits at its creation in 1993 is particularly galling. It was sold as a

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Waving goodbye to WWI vets

A few days ago the *Carteret County News Times* reported that the French government is awarding the Legion of Honor to Harvey Gray, a 100-year-old resident of the North Carolina coast.

Why? The French want to make the award to every living American veteran who served on French soil during World War I, and Harvey Gray is one of the few who is eligible. Only about 3000 World War I vets are still alive.

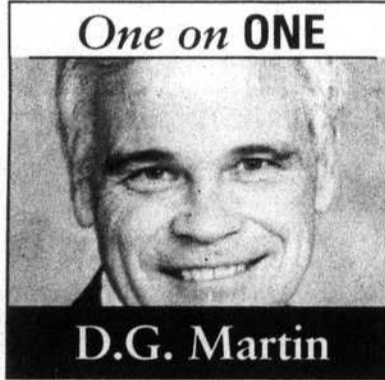
This report took me aback. The same thing happened a couple of years ago when I saw a headline in the *McDowell (County) News*:

County's Last World War I Veteran Dies

The passing from our scene of the World War I veterans should not surprise me. After all, that war ended in 1918. Its youngest participants could not have been born much after 1900. Those still alive have past, or are fast approaching, their hundredth birthdays.

But this passage is important to me, and I am not sure how to explain why.

Maybe this way: When I was a young boy, there were still a few Civil War veterans



D.G. Martin

alive. They were just about as rare as a World War I veteran is today.

You are thinking, aren't you, that this is just another way of saying that the World War I is about the same distance back in time now as the Civil

War was in the early 1940's?

You are right, I guess. But for me there sure is something more.

Back in the early 1940's when the Civil War veterans were fading away, most veterans of World War I were in their prime—just moving into middle age.

Some were still young enough to go to war a second time in World War II.

But mostly, for me, they were the men who ran things

when I was growing up. The store owners, barbers, church leaders, and government officials came from the World War I generation.

They and their generation formed the "people-scape" in which my young life was set.

They were nothing special—just everything and everywhere.

Now, I keep thinking, they are mostly gone—and if they are alive, they are as old as the Civil War veterans were back then.

Do you think that I have been caught up in a circle of time - confused and without a real point for this column?

If you have any sense of history, maybe the point is that we are at the moment of the very last chance with veterans of World War I.

If you know, or can find, one of them, take a young person or a child to see him and talk to him. Give that child a memory to connect that veteran all the way to the end of the next century. You will have done something worthwhile.

All this gets me thinking about the Second World War,

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New policy grossly unfair to Tarheel students

BY GREGORY MALHOIT

North Carolina's State Board of Education seems determined to adopt a "quick fix" education policy that could hold back thousands of students who fail state-administered multiple choice tests.

The policy is grade retention - an approach that has been experimented with in many school systems and studied by educational researchers. And after decades of research on non-

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Guest

EDITORIAL

promotion policies, many researchers have concluded that, despite good intentions, grade retention does far more harm than good.

For example, researchers have found that retention increases discipline problems and dropout rates while actually hurting long-term student achievement. Finding like these have recently led highly respected educators to conclude that adopting and implementing a policy that could hold back thousands of students would be equivalent to committing educational malpractice.

Grade retention ignores

what we know about the development of human intelligence: namely that children learn at different rates, just as they grow in spurts. Children do not always progress nicely along a "developmental assembly line."

They are human beings with unique skills and abilities, most of which cannot be measured by one multiple-choice test. We also know that some students don't test well, and that tests are not a perfect measure of what students know. Nevertheless, the proposed grade promotion policy places total reliance on a test score.

Such a policy spawns a number of negative consequences, including discounting students' classroom work, and encouraging teachers to teach to the test - a practice opposed by most parents, and

one which penalizes imagination and critical thinking. Grade retention may also violate the civil rights of minority, special education, and non-English speaking students.

The state board knows that at-risk children are not currently passing the tests, and that these students will be most dramatically impacted by the proposed policy. Yet the state board doesn't have a realistic plan to guarantee at-risk students an equal opportunity to be promoted. It is foolish to believe that we can have higher standards for students without an investment of new dollars.

Our lowest-performing students won't stand much of a chance of meeting the new standards if we do not have

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