

Where Have All The Tomato Patches Gone?



By BOB HURLEY
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The Greenville Sun
SPRING CREEK, N. C. —
Last year, this valley bloomed
and boomed with tomato
production. The high costs of

fertilizer and other essentials,
plus the spring rains reduced
the number dramatically.
Fall came early to this
fertile Madison County valley.
Summer not only left early,
it was late getting here.

It all makes for some
breathtaking scenery but it's
not exactly what folks here
are used to.
Because lots of Spring Creek
people still toil the soil for a
living and the overall farm

picture was gloomy enough
without the additional antics of
frost and unseasonably cool
weather.

The overall farm picture is
so gloomy in fact that Spring
Creek farmers who have a
notion or two about what
they'll be doing three months
or six months from now are
seemingly out-numbered by
those who are "just waiting to
see what happens."

B. K. Meadows for example.
One of the biggest farmers on
the creek and in all of Madison
County with over 800 acres,
Meadows is feeling the pinch
as severely as perhaps any
farmer anywhere.

The frost found him way
behind scheduled with his hay
and silage harvesting.

Some of his tobacco is yet to
be cut if it's worth cutting
after the frost. Some of his ten
acres was sticking in the patch
when the killer frosts came
last week.

They wiped out the four-
acre tomato patch that he and
his three tenant families spent
most of the summer in.

Overall tomato production
in Madison County, Meadows
says, took a drastic downward
turn this year. He said there
probably weren't a fifth as
many tomatoes grown on
Spring Creek this year as
there were last.

He cited several reasons,
first of which was the
doubling, tripling in some
cases, of the price of fertilizer,
and tomatoes require heavy
fertilization and sidedressing.

The late spring rains not
only hindered transplanting
and made it easy for insects
and disease; they completely
wiped out some tomatoes,
Meadows said.

After transplanting was
finally accomplished,
Meadows and his crew had to
spray the plants every day,
sometimes only to have the
rains come while they were
spraying or just after,
washing away the spray
solution.

The continually rising cost
of insecticides and herbicides
helped to wipe away any
margin of profit that Meadows
might have realized from the
tomatoes.

He says his tenants
probably made a little money
on the big patch but that he'd
probably be in the red if he
counted it up and figured his
labor into it.

The season for packing
tomatoes at the Western North
Carolina markets closed
several weeks ago but
Meadows, whose crop was
several weeks late, was able
to sell large quantities to firms
and individuals who came to
him. The frost ended it all.

Now, instead of vines
hanging full of large green,
pink and red tomatoes, they're
all mostly black and very
ugly.

The tomatoes aren't really
the crux of Meadows' prob-
lem. He's primarily a
cattle farmer until the recent
downward trend in prices

began.
Last year, he was selling
steers and veal calves at three
times what he got last week on
the big market at Asheville.

He viewed his receipts over
and over again, shaking his
head, seemingly in disbelief.
"Something has got to get
better," he said.

Blaming the plight of the
farmers on the Republican
administration, Meadows
makes no bones about what he
feels. He says he's always
made more money on the
farm under Democratic ad-
ministrations.

He said President
Eisenhower catered to big
business, the super rich, and
neglected or completely forgot
the amn on the tractor. "Same
way with Nixon," he said.
"The rich got more and the
farmer ends up getting less for
his marketable commodities
and paying more for the things
we have to have."

What will he do?
"Good question. I wish I
knew. I probably won't ever
go with tomatoes again. The
tobacco is the one thing we're
counting on to bail us out this
year. If it flops, I don't know. I
just don't know."

Asked how long he could
keep five tractors, 800 acres
(most in mountains and
pasture), thousands of dollars
in the latest machinery, and
three tenant families
operating under current
conditions, he said he didn't
know but that he'd know soon
enough if things didn't im-



prove
Farming is all Meadows has
ever done. At 70, he has little
choice but to try to stick it out
with the land.
"I guess I'll just wait and

see I reckon that's what
everybody else is doing —
waiting. I'm not sure what
we're waiting on but I hope
how soon whatever it is gets
here."

Depressed
Tomato Pickers

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Democratic Fund Raising Dinner Is Successful

Two Democratic women
leaders were honored at the
seventh biennial fund raising
dinner, sponsored by the
Madison County Democratic
Women's Club, held at the
Madison High School Satur-
day night.

Mrs. Ruth Gardner of Mars
Hill was named Woman of the
Year for 1972-73 and Mrs.
Virginia Anderson was given
the same honor for 1973-74.
Mrs. Gardner has been an
officer of the club for several

years, serving as president for
the past two years. Mrs.
Anderson has served as vice
president, was chairman of the
board of elections, and is a
candidate for county commis-
sioner in November.
U. S. Representative Roy A.

Taylor was the featured
speaker of the evening and
spoke eloquently about the
local candidates along with
telling of his work in
Washington. In introducing
the Congressman,
Representative Ernest

Messer told of Mr. Taylor's
aid to Madison County in
securing funds for the new
consolidated high school. Rep.
Messer substituted for Rep.
Liston B. Ramsey who was
home with a virus and missing
the women's club dinner for
the first time in fourteen
years.

Buckner, Kaye Webb, and
Mark Rector.
Committees included
decorations, Miss Billie Jean
Redmon; ticket sales, Mrs.
Jennie Lee Buckner;
arrangements, Tom Wallin,
McClelland Rice, Roger
Haynie, Mrs. Bobby Black-
well, Mrs. Celola Ramsey;
registration, Mrs. Liston
Ramsey, Mrs. Vernon Run-
ton and Mrs. James Lister.

Candidates present included
E. Y. Ponder for sheriff; I. C.
Crawford, N. C. Senator;
Ernest Messer, N. C.
Representative; Judson
Edwards, clerk of court;
Harold Wallin, tax collector;
Dr. Donald Anderson, Dedrick
Cody, Bobby Ponder, Bill
Roberts, Emery Wallin, board
of education; Ervin Adams,
Virginia Anderson, James
Ledford, county commis-
sioners; and the guest
speaker, Roy A. Taylor for
United States House of
Representatives.



PICTURED ABOVE are some of the 16 children from the Day Care Center listening to Mrs. Emma Jean Pegg tell a story during the Story Hour at the Library here on Wednesday of last week.

Taylor Speaks At Democratic Rally Here

U. S. Rep. Roy A. Taylor
Saturday announced his
opposition to President Ford's
proposed five per cent surtax
on middle income Americans.
Speaking at a Madison
County Democratic rally at
the new consolidated high
school here, Taylor said he felt
that middle income tax-
payers are already bearing a
heavy tax load.
Instead of increasing taxes,

Rep. Taylor said he would
favor "balancing the budget
by reductions in federal ex-
penditures."
The Black Mountain
Congressmen reminded the
Madison County Democrats of
his earlier announced op-
position to any increase in
gasoline taxes and stated that
neither would he support the
removal of price controls on
domestic crude oil.

"The fact that the Arab
countries for political reasons
last fall tripled the price of oil
at the wellhead does not mean
that oil producers in Texas
and other states should have a
free hand to do the same,"
said Taylor. Taylor reported
that he had voted to cut
transition funds for former
President Nixon from the
requested \$850,000 to "less
than one-eighth of that sum."

and reiterated his belief
"pardon should be reserved
until after trail of the ac-
cused."
Taylor said he intended to
continue to try to cooperate
constructively with President
Ford in solving the problems
of unemployment and in-
flation but confessed that "I
already find myself in op-
position to some of his
proposals."

The banquet meal was
prepared by Mrs. Millard
Tipton and Mrs. Flora Bur-
nette, assisted by Mrs.
Christine Lanford, Mrs.
Ralph Tipton, Mrs. Ray
Worley, Mrs. Tommy Boyd,
Mrs. Emma Edmonds, Mrs.
Jimmie Webb, and Mrs. Wade
Rector.
Teen Dem members who
assisted in serving the meal
were Carol Shook, Loretta
Shook, Maria Norville, Lynn
Merill, Johnny Ray, Lix
Loake, Pam Norton, Billy
Zimmerman, Rita Faye
Norton, Joann Penland, Tim
Ramsey, Sherry Hollifield,
Danny Norton, Bobby Zim-
merman, Gene Clark, Penny

Irregularity In Absentee Votes Checked

State Bureau of In-
vestigation agents are
checking into possible ab-
sentee ballot irregularities in
Madison County, election
officials confirmed here
Friday.

Perry G. Willis, Madison
Board of Elections chairman,
said he requested such an
investigation in a Sept. 29
letter to the State Board of
Elections.

Willis said the board has
received more than 300
requests already for absentee
ballots for the Nov. 5 general
election. This, he said, is as
large as the total number of
absentee votes cast in
Madison in the presidential
election two years ago, and
the deadline for asking for
absentee ballots is not until
Oct. 31.

The Madison board met
Friday, in fact, and approved
some absentee requests.

Assistance To Voters Explained By Brock

In response to many
inquiries, we list below those
persons authorized to assist
voters, entitled to assistance,
in marking their paper ballots
or in casting their vote on an
approved voting machine.

A. Assistance must come
from one of the following, in
order of listing:

1. A near relative of the
voter's choice whether or not
such near relative is a

Republican Women To Meet Monday

The Republican Woman's
Club will meet Monday
evening, October 28th, at 7:30
p.m. in the Madison County
Courthouse.

VOTE
NOV. 5

registered voter in the voter's
precinct and regardless of the
near relative's age.
2. Any other registered
voter of the precinct, of the
voter's choice, provided such
person has not assisted any
other non-relative voter that
day.
3. The registrar or either
one of the judges of election as
selected by the voter.
The Attorney General ruled
on August 15, 1974 that no
other category of official or
person was legally eligible to
assist a voter except in the
case of a blind voter whose
registration record reflects
such physical impairment.

It is important to point out
that "Assistants", appointed
pursuant to GS 163-42, while
not specifically authorized to
assist voters are nevertheless
entitled to assist near
relations specified in the law
to be husband, wife, brother,
sister, parent, child, grand-
parent or grandchild.
Assistants may assist as many
of the above "near relative"
category as are bona-fide

"Assistants" can, however
explain to a voter the
mechanics of operating a
voting machine and then let
the voter proceed to vote in
private.
Within the limits of the law,
every reasonable effort should
be made to accommodate the
voting public.
FOR THE STATE BOARD
OF ELECTIONS:
- Alex K. Brock
Executive Secretary-
Director

Madison High Open House

Sunday, October 27, 1974 1:30-5:00
VICA (Vocational Industrial Clubs of America),
the Board of Education, the Madison High School
Staff, and Student Body would like to cordially in-
vite the public to attend open house. The students,
staff, and boosters extend a special invitation to
everyone. Refreshments will be prepared and
served by the Home Economics classes and the
F.H.A. club.

Absentee Ballot Investigation Underway Here

Two agents of the State
Bureau of Investigation have
responded to a request by
Perry G. Willis, chairman
Madison County Board of
Elections, concerning the
complaints made to the board
of securing absentee ballots
for the forthcoming election.
"The affidavits obtained
represent what appears to be

a practice of fraudulently
obtaining absentee ballots,"
Willis wrote the State Board
of Elections.

In the letter to a member of
the State Board, Willis
requested an in field in-
vestigation be made.
According to the local board
of elections office, two agents
were in Marshall last Friday
and are continuing their in-
vestigation. Findings of the
investigation were not
disclosed thus far.

Miss Sharon Ray, executive
secretary of the county board
of elections, stated that the
SBI agents informed her that
the investigation is not
necessarily being directed at a
member of the Madison
County Board of Elections or
any of the office's employees.
"Mr. Willis' letter requesting
an investigation follows:

September 25, 1974
Honorable James E.
Vosburgh

Member, North Carolina
Board of Elections
Box 723
Washington, N. C. 27889
Mr. Vosburgh:
I enclose herein two cer-
tified copies of affidavits
obtained as a result of com-
plaints received by the
Madison County Board of
Elections concerning fraud in
securing absentee ballots for
the forthcoming general
election.
These affidavits represent

what appears to be a practice
of fraudulently obtaining
absentee ballots.
I regret that this matter be
presented by you to the State
Board of Elections and that
official action be initiated by
your board causing an in-field
investigation to be made.
Your consideration of this
matter will be appreciated.
Sincerely,
Perry G. Willis
Chairman
Madison County Board
of Elections

Three Men Held In Rape Case

Three men were being held
in Buncombe County jail
Saturday night, one charged
with rape and two charged
with aiding and abetting by
rape of a 19-year-old girl,
according to police.
Officers identified the men
as George Bernard Thomas,
24, of 21 Bellvue St., charges

with rape. Also being held
were Roy Bennett, 24, of 21
Weston Road, Arden, and
Ray Vinton Tappan, 24, of
Marion.
Thomas said a married in-
mate told him that he had
been charged with rape and
was being held in the
jailhouse with the inmates.