

Saunders Leaving Town Of Robbins Causes First Change Of Mayors

(From The Charlotte Observer) Robbins, Nov. 18—For the first time since it was incorporated, Robbins has changed its mayor. At that, the former mayor resigned, and he was replaced by one of his strongest supporters.

Because he is moving from Robbins to Southern Pines, William P. Saunders tendered his resignation, which was accepted. E. Marvin Ritter, who has been a town commissioner all these years, was elected to succeed Saunders. Much of the progress and most of the modern history of the northern Moore town have the names Saunders and Ritter written into them.

The new mayor is a native of the Robbins community. He has operated a hardware store there for 30 years. A good, honest, and straight-forward citizen. Marvin Ritter is respected by the entire community. Along with the town, he has come a long way, but there is no change in Ritter, the man. He is as approachable today as he was 30 years ago.

The life of William P. Saunders is almost comparable to a Horatio Alger success story. A native Tar Heel, he was born in Dallas, N. C. He was educated at the University of North Carolina, and entered the textile industry 25 years ago. He worked in Kings Mountain and Burlington at tex-

tile plants. When new interests acquired a mill in Hemp, N. C., 20 years ago, W. P. Saunders was named superintendent.

The mill grew; the town grew and the name Saunders grew. In 1935 the town was incorporated. At that time the name was still Hemp. A new waterworks and sewage system was installed. The streets were paved. The little stop-in-the-road took on a grown-up appearance.

Being reminded of all this by a reporter, Saunders protested, "But I didn't do that, I just happened to be there when it happened. Had someone else been there, it would have been the same thing. The support of the people was wonderful. Marvin Ritter and others always gave 100 per cent co-operation in any endeavor to better the community."

Perhaps it would have happened had someone else been there. There is no doubt that the people did back him up, but the story goes thus:

Back in those hectic days of the 30's, when the country was bogged down in a depression, (Remember 9-cent fatback?) the Federal government was giving and lending money to worthwhile projects in order to keep things going. The town of Hemp wanted \$216,000 from Uncle Sam;

\$116,000 as a grant, \$100,000 as a loan. At that time the total property valuation in Hemp was less than this huge amount of money. As a lawyer looked over the figures he called this to Saunders' attention and said, "Bill this thing doesn't have a chance. We are only wasting our time by making out the application." Saunders' reply was characteristic, "Don't you worry about that. Just make out the necessary papers, and then we will see about the chance."

The papers were filed for the money, and Washington officials began getting telegrams from Saunders. He wired everyone: Harold Iskes, Harry Hopkins, and even President Roosevelt. In a phone call to Walter Lambeth who was Eighth District congressman at that time, Saunders argued for the money and was told it was practically impossible to obtain it. However, he made the congressman agree to try with all his effort, and went back to sending wires.

Finally, late one night, the mayor received a call from Lambeth. "Bill," said the congressman, "the impossible has happened. Your town is to receive the money." It was a major victory for the community.

All the money has been paid back. Not only that, but it did not cost the town a cent. Robbins Mills took care of the indebtedness. It was for this and other kind acts by Carl Robbins that the name of Hemp was changed to that of Robbins in the early forties.

The mill in Robbins is seven or eight times as large as it was when Saunders went there, and now has 900 employees. The company also opened mills in Red Springs, N. C. in 1937, in Clarksville, Va., 1945, Aberdeen, N. C., 1948, and early this year, secured one in Raeford that is to be one of the largest anywhere.

As the mills grew, so did Saunders' responsibilities. He was named general manager, executive vice president and general manager, and he is now president of Robbins Mills (N. C.) (Inc.), and Robbins Mills (Va.) (Inc.), and is executive vice-president and a director of the parent company, Robbins Mills of New York.

Because of its more central location, Aberdeen was made the home office of the mills about a year ago and Saunders' office was there. Since then he has been commuting to and fro. However, the day finally arrived when he was forced to move his home closer to his office. The move is not an easy one for him or his family.

He said "It breaks my heart to leave Robbins. We have many ties there, and my wife is as torn up over it as I." Although the house in Weymouth Heights, Southern Pines is ready for them, the Saun-

ders are going to wait until about December 1 to move. Their daughter, Dorothy, will be home from her studies at Queens college for the Thanksgiving holidays, and they want to spend that last time together in their Robbins home.

The Saunders have another daughter, Betty, who is married to Ralph Barnhardt. They make their home in Aberdeen, and have one daughter, Elizabeth. Of his granddaughter, Saunders was quoted as saying, "She is the prettiest baby in the world." Young Elizabeth bears a name that is popular in her family. That is her mother's name, her grandmother's, and two great-grandmothers'.

Mrs. Saunders is the former Elizabeth Plonk and was born in Kings Mountain, N. C. She was always behind her husband in his efforts, and is considered a civic leader in her own right.

One of the remarkable things about Robbins is the co-operation in the town on a bi-partisan basis. Much of Upper Moore is Republican. Saunders is one of the Democratic leaders of the county and state. He was the late Senator Bailey's county manager and he was W. B. Umstead's county manager. Marvin Ritter is a strong Republican. Another member of the town board, Dr. W. N. McDuffie, is also a Republican. Commissioners A. F. Lowdermilk, T. R. Monroe and Frank H. Upchurch are Democrats. Ritters replacement on the board, young Dan Grier McCrimm, is a Democrat.

Mayor Ritter says that there is never any feeling between the two parties when it comes to local affairs. Ex-Mayor Saunders backs him up. They work together hand-in-glove for the good of the town. When general election time rolls around, the gloves

may be a boxing glove, but only temporarily.

Ritter is stepping into a big pair of shoes, but Robbins folks are confident he can fill them. He is married to the former Myrtle Purvis of Upper Moore. They have two children; Thelma (Mrs. Stacy Brewer, Jr.) and Marvin, Jr. Ritter's son and son-in-law are both associated with him in his business.

Ritter is also secretary-treasurer of the Robbins Building and Loan, from which Saunders has just resigned as president.

October SENCBA Fishing Rodeo Prizes Announced

Completing a most successful season. South Eastern North Carolina Beach Association announces October prize winners in the fifth annual fishing rodeo classic. Outstanding catches for the best fishing month in the area proved conclusively that October is the best all round fishing month of the year. Notable entries were Mrs. Alma Moody of Wilmington,

with her 15 pound 7 ounce King Mackerel caught of the "JoanJu" and Red Drum entries of Mrs. Charles Wiggins of Richland, weighing 41 pounds caught at Bear Inlet, and Bill Gullede's close second of 40 pounds caught at Topsail Beach does not shadow the Pampano entry of 5 pounds 8 ounces landed by A. P. Faulkner of Wilmington, and other notable catches of Rockfish by David Blackman of Carolina Beach weighing 17 pounds 2 ounces and a rodeo record breaker by Earl A. Smith of Fayetteville, with his Sheepshead weighing 11 pounds 4 ounces and a Flounder of Howard Shaw of Bear Creek, swinging the scales at 9 pounds 13 ozs.

The best awards, consisting of engraved plaques, and the grand prizes will be presented in person to the entries at the annual rodeo banquet to be held at the Famous Club on Tuesday November 28, 1950. The festivities will start at 7:30 p. m. with a delightful dinner, notable speakers and entertainment provided by the Belcher School of Dancing. All contestants winning best fish awards and grand prizes are expected to be present to receive their awards in person.

Stop Gap Tax Plan Proposed

A businessmen's tax program for defense, issued this week, calls for \$7,000,000,000 boost in 1951 without an excess profits levy. The Committee for Economic Development (CED), a research and planning organization of business leaders, proposed this stop-gap, one year program to balance an estimated \$6,000,000,000 budget outlay.

A \$30,000,000,000 jump in individual income taxes, starting January 1.

Another \$30,000,000,000 through higher corporation rates, effective January 1.

Perhaps \$1,000,000,000 or as much as is needed, from revised excise taxes effective next July 1.

The CED statement assumed there would not be all-out war but that actual spending would total \$35,000,000,000 for military purposes and \$27,000,000,000 for non-military government costs. To meet such a demand, CED proposed that the corporation rate raised in September to 45 per cent—be restored to the original 38 per cent postwar rate; and that

a new 15 per cent "defense profits tax" be added on. This would lift the total 1951 corporate tax to 53 per cent.

CED struck hard against any excess profits levy.

Gray Gets Praise From President

President Truman described as "monumental" today the foreign policies report made by Gordon Gray, former Secretary of the Army. The report, made public Sunday, recommended a multi-billion dollar program of economic aid to Europe after the end of the Marshall plan in 1952.

Mr. Truman's praise of it was in a letter accepting Gray's resignation as a special assistant to the President. The White House made the letter public.

"The time has come—unfortunately for the government—when I must acquiesce to your desire to be relieved of the responsibility of public office," the President wrote.

"In peace, not less than in war, you have given a generous portion of the best years of your life."

The President told Gray the report is "your crowning work". The White House also made public Gray's letter of resignation, dated November 10. Gray said he wanted to be relieved of the assignment because "I am attempting to sever any continuing outside connection" and devote full time to the Presidency of the University of North Carolina.

The fifth annual belt-wide cotton defoliation conference will be held in Memphis, January 11-12. Only those persons actively engaged in some phase of defoliation work are being invited.

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PRESENTS

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT NORTH CAROLINA



STATE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

The State School for the Blind, at Raleigh, consists of a dozen buildings on a tract of 100 acres. It was through the efforts of Gov. Morehead that the general assembly voted money for a school for the blind and the deaf. The school provides wonderful training for both boys and girls.

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