

News Highlights of 1959 from Local Viewpoint

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Larkins Poised for February Statement on Political Hopes

National Democratic Committeeman John Larkins of Trenton as the year got underway was poised most optimistically for a statement on February 10th about his political plans for 1960.

For more than a year now the Trenton lawyer has been constantly classified as a candidate for governor in the May Primary, and nothing has developed as '59 closes to change this classification.

One blunt watcher of the political pot reasons, "Larkins would not be calling a news conference for February 10th to announce that he is NOT going to be a candidate, so the fact that he has called this news conference seems to be an absolute assurance that his name will be one of those on the ballot when voting times rolls around in May."

Larkins and Fayetteville lawyer Terry Sanford are the two most frequently mentioned candidates. Wilmington's Addison Hewlett shot up a trial balloon but it appears to have been caught in unfavorable political winds and blown far off course.

State Treasurer Edwin Gill returned to Raleigh recently after a cordial supper with Winston-Salem bankers filled with gubernatorial aspirations, and a page-full of platitudes hinting very strongly that he would toss his tam in the governor race. One succinct comment on Gill's optimism after his visit to the "mountain" in Winston-Salem was, "How could the bankers be anything but nice to Gill; after all he's the state treasurer and decides where state money will be deposited."

At year's end it seems certain that Larkins' fraternity brother from Wake Forest College, Dr. Beverly Lake, will not be a candidate for governor.

Others around whom some small political fires have been kindled include Arthur Kirkman of Guilford County, who is classified as "too far west" and not well enough known statewide for a serious candidate at this time.

Larkins feels that the real race will be between him and Sanford and he begins the New Year supremely confident that he has an excellent chance of beating Sanford at the polls.

One Drunk, One Still

Sheriff Brown Yates reports one arrest and one destroyed still during the Christmas season. The drunk charge was lodged against Willie Franks of Pollocksville, who was also accused of violating the liquor laws by having about a half jar of stump-hole whisky. The whisky must have been "real mean" because Franks was also booked for beating his wife—and all this on Christmas morning. The small "family size" still was located north of Pollocksville just off US 17 in a wooded area. It was not in operation when it was torn up.

Land Transfers

Real estate transfers during the past week recorded in the office of Jones County Register of Deeds Mrs. D. W. Koonce included the following:

F. A. Murphy to J. O. Murphy 37 acres in Pollocksville Township.

J. O. Murphy to C. H. Murphy 37 acres in Pollocksville Township.

J. Lee Holloman to Ira L. McDowell 10 acres in Pollocksville Township.

Allen Sutton Badly Hurt When Thrown From Motor Scooter

Allen Sutton of Pink Hill route one suffered a critical head injury at about 3 Sunday afternoon when he was thrown from a motor scooter just north of Ellis Davis' mill on Deep Run route one.

Sutton was transferred Wednesday morning from Parrott Memorial Hospital to the University Hospital at Chapel Hill for specialized treatment of the head injuries which had left him still unconscious nearly 72 hours after that accident.

Dr. Dexter Witherington said Sutton's condition was slightly better at the time of his transfer but he was still classified as in "extremely critical condition".

WEDNESDAY WRECK

Camp Lejeune Marine Ross Sadlemire and Bobby Lee Brown of 805 North Queen were drivers of cars in a wreck at North and Independent streets in Kinston last Wednesday at 8:45 p. m. Brown's mother, Mrs. Zackie Brown, was treated for superficial injuries and released from a local hospital. The Marine was charged with failing to yield the right of way.

Lenoir's 20th Highway Fatality Christmas Eve

Edward Milton Dixon of Grifton route two became Lenoir County's 20th highway fatality of 1959 on Christmas Eve when he died of injuries he got in a wreck between his car and an Atlantic Coast Line freight train seven miles north of Kinston.

Dixon, driving eastwardly on the first rural road north of the Du Pont Dacron plant, either did not see the approaching train at misjudged its speed as he plowed into the front end of the locomotive.

Dixon was thrown from the car about 200 feet from the crossing but his car was dragged another 1000 feet before the train finally came to a stop. The accident happened at 1:05 p. m.

Dixon had several jars of stump-hole whisky in his car, all but two were broken in the crash. He lived about five hours in a Kinston hospital before succumbing to massive head and chest injuries.

Kinston's 'Whammy' Goes to 'Whamming'

Last Wednesday the new electrical timing device recently approved for use by the Kinston Police Department went into operation, and in a favorite spot for speeders, it would seem.

Located on North Queen Street about a half-mile inside the city limits the "whammy" caught six persons for speeding at 50 miles per hour or more in a 35 mile per hour zone.

The minimum fine of \$22.90 (which includes court costs) was imposed on these first six, which included William Henry Thomas of New York City, Bobby C. Grady of Wilson, Paul D. Acree of Philadelphia, Carrie H. Boyette of 601 Warlyn Drive and Lillie Franklin Wilkins of 910 Cameron Drive.

Jones County is not the kind of county in which big news stories are generally generated. In 1959 only one exception came to that rule, and this was certainly the biggest news story of the year for Jones County and its element of mystery caused it to catch the eye of editors across the state back in September.

This "Story of the Year" in Jones County was the September 10th slaying of Rodolph Howard and Russell Mills, well known residents of the Tuckahoe Township section of Western Jones County.

Mills died within hours after having been wounded and Howard lived for nearly 10 days, but in a coma for practically all of the time after he was mowed down in a hail of .22 caliber rifle fire at his filling station between Comfort and Hargett Crossroad.

Intensive investigation by Sheriff Brown Yates and Agents of the State Bureau of Investigation, principally E. B. Pearce, led to a solution of the double slaying when 22 year-old negro tenant farmer Robert Earl Hall confessed some two weeks after the shooting that he was the guilty party.

Hall is scheduled to face double charges of first degree murder in the January 11th term of Craven County Superior Court, where his cases were transferred for trial.

More Violent Death

Violence and accidental death of less mysterious and brutal kind made up a number of the other news highlights of the year in Jones County.

Two highway deaths: On May 20th of Walter Daniel Meadows of the Black Swamp Road east of Maysville suffered injuries when knocked from his tractor which claimed his life several days later.

On July 26th Mrs. Magdalene Puckett Howell of Seven Springs was killed when a pick-up truck in which she was riding overturned between Trenton and Pollocksville.

Jealousy Murder

On June 27th Trenton Native Preston Bender Mercer was instantly killed in the court yard of a Richmond, Va. filling station by a jealous former employer, Belvey M. Langley of New Bern, who blamed Mercer for the loss of his wife. Mercer died instantly from a single .25 caliber pistol wound in the head. Langley drew a 3 to 5 year prison term for the shooting and a \$50,000 damage suit brought by Mrs. Mercer in behalf of her minor children was settled out of court.

Frightened Killer

On October 9th Enoch Harris Jr., a negro tenant on the Julian Waller farm between Trenton and Maysville, died from rifle wounds admittedly inflicted by Jeffrey Lewis Williams, another negro tenant on the Manley Foscoe farm in the same section. Williams drew a 20-to-25 year prison term in this shooting after his only excuse, "I was scared of him", fell through.

On December 13th 16 year-old Chester "Rooster" Lewis, Beaver Creek Township negro, bled to death from a severed jugular vein enroute to a Kinston hospital. Evans Miller of Kinston is charged with murder in this violent death.

Drowning Deaths

Two Jones Countians were claimed in drowning accidents: On June 18th Eugene Moore of the Elm Grove section was drowned while on a fishing trip near the Earl Bell farm in Pollocksville Township.

On September 15th 15 year-old Martha Louise Riggs, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edward N. Riggs, became panicky in a farm pond and was drowned.

Tragic Loss

Another accidental death of a most tragic variety claimed the life of eight year-old John Lee

Murphy, son of Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Murphy of Pollocksville route one. The little fellow was "exploring" an old house that was being torn down, when a gust of wind caused the framework of the house to fall suddenly, crushing him to death.

Better Kind of News

Away from the violent kind of news Jones Countians may also recall that in 1959:

The Branch Banking & Trust Company opened a beautiful new office in Trenton.

John Larkins was given the biggest birthday party in the history of the county on June 6th, in the fairgrounds at Trenton, where more than 2,000 friends and neighbors wished him well on his 50th birthday anniversary.

The county board of commissioners approved funds and plans for a health department building that will be constructed just east of Trenton on US 58 on a tract of land given to the county by Mrs. Verder Pollock.

Profits from the county's new legal whisky system permitted the board of county commissioners to make a 12 per cent cut in the county tax rate.

Dozens of Jones Countians, after years of patient waiting, finally got telephone service.

Maysville's Tom Foscoe was elected District Governor by his fellow Rotarians.

Pollocksville's Honor Student Neil Bender won the first North Carolina scholarship awarded by the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis.

Big Deals

Two huge timber trades saw 2,855.33 acres of lands in Tuckahoe Township transferred from Hines Brothers Lumber Company of Kinston to the Union-Camp Paper Company and by far the single largest transfer ever recorded in the county caused 11,082.23 acres of timber land to move from Johnson & Wimsatt Company to the Halifax Timber Company. Federal tax stamps attached to the numerous deeds in this latter transaction indicated a sale price of \$2,155,010 for these properties.

Republican Tiff

And Jones County's "Mister Republican", H. Manly Mallard, who is a member of the State Board of Elections, drew some unkind words in November from State Republican Executive Committee Chairman William Cobb of Morganton, who alleged that Mallard was "siding with the Democrats" on the board that bosses North Carolina elections.

Mallard disposed of Cobb's protests by pointing out, "I was appointed to this board to see that elections are honestly conducted, not to be either a Republican or Democrat."

Not So Bad

Jones County tobacco growers suffered some from the record wet weather of July and August but all in all 1959 was far from the "worst" year ever experienced by the county.

Lucky Lost Lambs

Kinston's two James McRae Lambs—senior and junior—got the top rating for "Lucky Little Lambs" last Thursday when they finally emerged from Neuse River's flooded lowgrounds after a chilly night on an island. The Lambs were dumped from their skiff while on a duck hunting expedition Wednesday afternoon but made their way to shore, where their luck began to improve when Senior Lamb's cigarette lighter worked despite its dunking. A roaring fire comforted them during the longest night of the year and Thursday morning they waded out to telephone a very worried wife and mother.

Camels Knocked Pell Mell by Rall Malls

The ruler of the cigarette roost for over 10 years was deposed in 1959 by a king-sized successor.

B. J. Reynolds' "Camel" fell to 2nd place in national sales with American Tobacco's "Pall Mall" climbing to the top.

Sales in 1959 of all brands of cigarettes set a new record of 453 billion, jumping from 436.3 billion last year—a 3.8 per cent increase, which is the biggest rate of annual increase since the lung cancer scare was turned loose in 1954.

Despite losing the king Reynolds did not get hurt badly in the nicotine war, since it clung to the top of the overall tobacco business with the largest gross sales (133.7 billion) from all its brands.

The rank by brand in the cigarette sales for '59 went like this with sales given in billions: Pall Mall 64, Camel 63.5, Lucky Strike 43, Winston 43, Kent 36, Chesterfield 28, Salem 27, L&M 25, Viceroy 21.5, Marlboro 21, Kool 13.7, Herbert Tareyton 11.5, Old Gold 11.2, Philip Morris 11.2, Parliament 10, Raleigh 8, Newport 4.5, Life 1.6, Oasis 1.5, Hit Parade 1.5, Alpine 1.5, Spring 1.2, Duke 1, and all others 2.6.

Biggest jolt in the smoke trade was the sales spurt of menthol flavored cigarettes, with Salem jumping into 7th place and menthols overall accounting for 49.7 billion of the total sales this year compared to 37.5 billion last year.

Regular size and flavor cigarettes lost ground from 142.5 billion in '58 down to 133.9 billion in '59.

King-sized brands zoomed from 85 to 90.1 billion and filter tips continued their assault on the overall smoke trade by moving from 171.5 to 179.3 billion during the past year.

However, the lung-cancer boom of filters seemed to be tapering off, since percentage-wise this was the smallest increase for the filters since '54. The feeling seems now to be that they have grabbed roughly 50 per cent of the business and will not go much higher.

No one has offered an intelligent reason for the unusual menthol sales, since menthols have been kicking around for 40 years in the cigarette trade, and it is only in the past three years that they have grabbed any considerable part of the total sales.