Perquimans People

The year in review

Another year has become history for Perquimans County. And, like all seasons, 1979 was filled with both good news and bad.

Winter

The Perquimans County Courthouse, built in 1825, was honored eary in 1979 with an inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Drucilla Haley was commissioned by the County and the town of Hertford to make an in-depth inventory of historical structures in the area, a project that took some ten months to complete.

U.S. Highway 17 began to receive some attention as local leaders representing key locations along the route organized in an effort to get the highway four-laned from the Virginia border to the South Carolina line.

Spring

Early spring of '79 saw the retirement of Richard Bryant from his post as Perquimans County's Agricultural Extensin Chairman. The post remained empty for serveral months before the county was able to secure funds for a replacement.

The Perquimans County Jaycees raised an unprecedented $5,000 for Cystic Fibrosis with a Bike-A-Thon in early April.

May inked the contract for renovation on the new Hertford-Perquimans County Senior Center.

The newly-designed Hertford Volunteer Fire Department enjoyed a May dedication ceremony.

Volunteer Day was celebrated in Perquimans County to honor all the people who unselfishly gave themselves through service to the community.

Summer

Gashol was available in Perquimans County at the BP Service Station in Winfall for a mere 82.9 cents per gallon in early June. The amount soon reached almost a dollar as August emptied our pockets for 98.9 cents per gallon. Perquimans County residents began to wonder if long gas lines were again in store.

The Hertford Police Department and town citizens created "Crime Watch" in a cooperative effort to reduce burglaries.

In an attempt to attract industry to the area, the town of Hertford applied for the Community of Excellence Award, an honor designed to index locations eager and willing to accept new industry.

Late summer caught us still without a county extension chariman and resisting state efforts "suggesting" we share a chairman with a neighboring county.

Fall

Early September honored the town of Hertford with the "Community of Excellence Award. Industrial hopefuls predicted it to be just a matter of time before an industry decides on Perquimans County.

The King Street Project, designed to eliminate some of the substandard housing in the area, was underway but moving at a slower-than-anticipated pace. Difficulty arose in relocating some of the residents to affordable homes.

Hurricane David whipped up the southeastern coast, and although wind damage was slight here, rains and minor flooding took their toll on county crops.

Perquimans County's beloved son, Jim "Catfish" Hunter retired as pitcher for the New York Yankees to come home to family, farming, and sport.

The Northeastern Rural Health Development Association suffered one of a series of set backs as the Eastern Carolina Health Systems Agency refused second-year funding and the creation of a NRHDA clinic in Perquimans County looked doubtful.

With the beginning of a new school year, two youth organizations were at odds. The Perquimans County Marching Unit and the Perquimans County High School Band were told that they could not exist separately, and a merger seemed doubtful in light of the different interests involved.

The municipal elections in the town of Hertford saw incumbent Mayor Bill Cox challenged by Herbert Nixon, an active civic leader. Cox's eight-year edge seemed to pay off, as an easy victory was the outcome.

The town council race was not quite that simple as incumbent Mattie "Pete" Broughton was just barely eased out by Jesse Harris. Incumbent Billy Winslow had no trouble getting re-elected, and Dennis Hare and A.L. West Jr. chalked that one up as experience.

Crop loss loans were approved for local farmers hard hit by the unseasonable June temperatures, dry July, and stormy September.

The newly renovated Hertford-Perquimans Senior Center was completed and dedicated by a host of local officials in November.

The Perquimans County Recreation Department received an early Christmas present in the form of some 14 acres located in Winfall for a new Perquimans County Athletic Park. The field is to feature two lighted softball parks with portable fences for easy conversion to football and soccer fields.

The county finally hired a long awaited extension chairman, Bill Jester.

Winter

Vepco retained its unpopular position in the pocketbooks of most northeastern North Carolinians for its nearly 30 percent rate increase over state utilities. Operation Overcharge, created in an effort to oust Vepco from the area, again began circulation of a petition to show just how unhappy Vepco's customers are.

NRHDA suffered another budget refusal from ECHSA and the controversy raged on between those who said there was no need or interest for a medical clinic in Perquimans County, and those who said that there was definite need and substantial interest.

Hertford's Volunteer Fire Chief, Charlie Skinner, was chosen as 1979 Fireman of the Year.

The Band Boosters sponsored what was probably the biggest variety show ever to hit Perquimans County in an attempt to procure uniform money. The show was a success with over $1,000 raised on behalf of the uniform drive.

The year ended on a promising note as a merger was finally agreed upon between members of the Perquimans County Marching Unit and the Perquimans County Band.