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50 Extra Stamps With **LOTION 6 Oz. 98c** Noxzema Skin

People Make A Super Market, Says President Of Harris-Teeter

Ed. Note: The following feature article by John S. DeMott appeared in a recent edition of the Charlotte Observer. W. T. Harris, owns a chain of super markets, including Kings Mountain's Harris-Teeter.

A supermarket, says, Charlotte's W. T. Harris, is one of the loneliest places on earth at night. It is dimly lighted, and the only sounds are those of refrigeration equipment clicking on and off.

It is a quiet world of row upon row of the food products of the most advanced agricultural and industrial society in history.

Beans and potato salad; oranges and spaghetti; pork chops and turkey stuffing; salami and sesame seeds; breads, biscuits, parsnips, frozen frog legs, succotash.

There are thousands of them, crinkling and fresh in multicolored uniforms of polyethylene, polypropylene and cellophane.

Collectively they make up a phalanx of food awaiting dawn, invasion and destruction.

A thousand hands rip into their ranks, for it is morning and people are shopping.

The refrigeration equipment still is clicking, but it can't be heard above the din of chattering shoppers with squeaking shopping carts.

The supermarket has come alive; it is a symphony of jingling cash registers, whirring trading-stamp machines, humming meat slicers.

William Thomas Harris, president of Harris-Teeter Super Markets, Inc., has been living with most of these sounds of selling for nearly 30 years.

"People make a supermarket", he says, "Without people, we are nothing. We are dead. We come alive when they walk in those doors."

The same holds for all businesses, of course, but Harris doesn't take the generality lightly.

For most of what Harris-Teeter sells goes into people's stomachs, and few businesses deal in more personal a product.

Harris has been selling food for many of his 54 years. From a single store on Central Avenue in 1935, H-T has grown into a complex of 27 supermarkets and 4 drug stores in North Carolina and South Carolina.

During its most recent fiscal year, which ended Aug. 31, the company sold more than \$30.7

million worth of food and food products. This was an increase of \$1.7 million over 1962.

Profit was \$339,397, compared with \$272,195 last year.

H-T is the largest locally owned food-store chain in the Carolinas. It is small compared with the behemoths of A & P and Kroger, but it is the 97th largest in the United States, and Harris is proud of that. That puts it ahead of 3,900 others.

Harris was a Georgia farm boy, and he's proud of that, too. He was one of 12 children, and by the time he was a high-school sophomore, he was working 14 hours a day.

The school-farm work pressure was too much, so he quit the former in the 10th grade and devoted full time to farming.

After a stint of that, he took a job with a construction company in Birmingham, Ala., and after that, he went to Rock Hill, S. C., to work in and 5- and 10-cent store.

Six months later, he was working for Rock Hill Printing and Finishing Co. Six months after that, he moved to Charlotte to join A & P.

Thus began Harris' career in food distributing.

In 1935, Harris, Paul MacIntosh and Fred Metler borrowed \$1,500 and went into the food business in a store at 1504 Central Ave.

They did this when self-service supermarkets were in infancy; the corner grocery dominated the domestic food distributing system.

The work was strenuous, but Harris, after years of 14-hour days, was used to it. The store was open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday and until 10 p.m. on Friday and 11 p.m. on Saturday.

"We'd get in before 6 o'clock and get produce on the shelves before opening," Harris says. "Or at least we tried to. If customers came in, we'd drop everything to serve them."

By 1943, MacIntosh and Metler had sold their interest in the company to Harris, and J. R. Earnhardt, former manager of the Central Avenue A & P store, and C. S. Harris, a brother of Harris', were brought into the business.

Expansion was curtailed by World War II, and the company had its greatest period of mushrooming from 1949 on.

In 1953, the company opened its present offices and warehouse

at 2201 Hawkins St.

The following year, the company made a move that added six stores — all outside Charlotte — to the complex. It merged with Teeter Super Markets of Mooresville, and W. L. Teeter, president of that company, became executive vice-president of a new corporation, Harris-Teeter Super Markets Inc.

In 1960, the new company offered its stock to the public to raise capital for expansion. It now has 500 shareholders, and, as of Aug. 31, retained earnings of \$1.3 million and capital in excess of par value of \$242,796.

H-T's success has brought the customary requirement of success — the requirement that the success be continued.

Within the understanding that all other supermarkets and super-market chains, some of them much bigger than Harris-Teeter, are also trying to continue their success, H-T is placed in the frenzied position that Harris describes thusly:

"We have to grow or die."

The problem is one faced by most businesses, and many of them solve it by increasing production and selling a little harder.

But "increasing production" and "selling harder" to Harris-Teeter means physical expansion on a vast scale. As soon as it opens one store, it must begin searching for locations for others. One or two stores in three years' time is not enough, because other chains are expanding at a faster rate.

Some companies, which could coast quite comfortably for decades on little expansion, expand to grow into new or bigger markets; Harris, like most super-market chains, is doing it for survival.

Net profits in the supermarket business have traditionally been low, and money is earned by selling in volume. Harris-Teeter realizes this and has geared its expansion program for it. A & P, the world's largest seller of food, actually discourages above-average profits in individual stores; it profits are too high, something is wrong with that store's selling tactics.

H-T is shopping-center conscious and many of its stores are established in them. Supermarkets, department stores and drug stores are parts of almost every shopping center, and H-T intends to fill two of those requirements where applicable and practical. That's why, in 1953, it got into the drug business. "We'll

Bolin Is Abroad Beale Destroyer

USS BEALE (FHTNC)—Thomas F. Bolin, radioman, USN, son of Mr. and Mrs. James H. Bolin of Grover, N. C., is serving aboard the destroyer USS Beale.

Beale is currently undergoing a four month tour of duty with the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean.

As a member of Destroyer 282, Beale will participate in various exercises designed to keep the Sixth Fleet an ever-ready deterrent against aggression.

Beale is homeported in Norfolk, Va.

fill two-thirds of a shopping center," Harris says with a smile.

The company has two super-markets in South Carolina — Rock Hill and Lancaster (opened last week) — and it intends to open several more there.

With the "grow or die" aspect of chain-store food selling, where does Harris-Teeter intend to go? "I would say that during the next decade we should bring our business to about \$100 million annually," Harris says. "Actually, there's no limit."

"But however far or fast we grow, we have to keep growing." The phalanx of food daily awaiting the dawn when the supermarket comes alive.

But Harris-Teeter Super Markets, as Harris says, can wait for nothing.

Highway Signs Being Constructed

New signs are being installed throughout North Carolina as winter weather and icy roads continue to plague highway motorists. The diamond-shaped black on yellow signs are being posted by the North Carolina State Highway Commission in areas where freezing and dangerous conditions are cited.

Two signs have been designed which read: ICE ON ROAD and ICE ON BRIDGE. A convertible flap allows maintenance crews to display the sign when hazardous road conditions exist, and to cover it when weather permits. Several of the specially designed warning signs have been posted in the western part of North Carolina, and will be posted throughout the state in the following months.

The design and installation of all highway signs is the responsibility of the Traffic Department of the North Carolina State Highway Commission.

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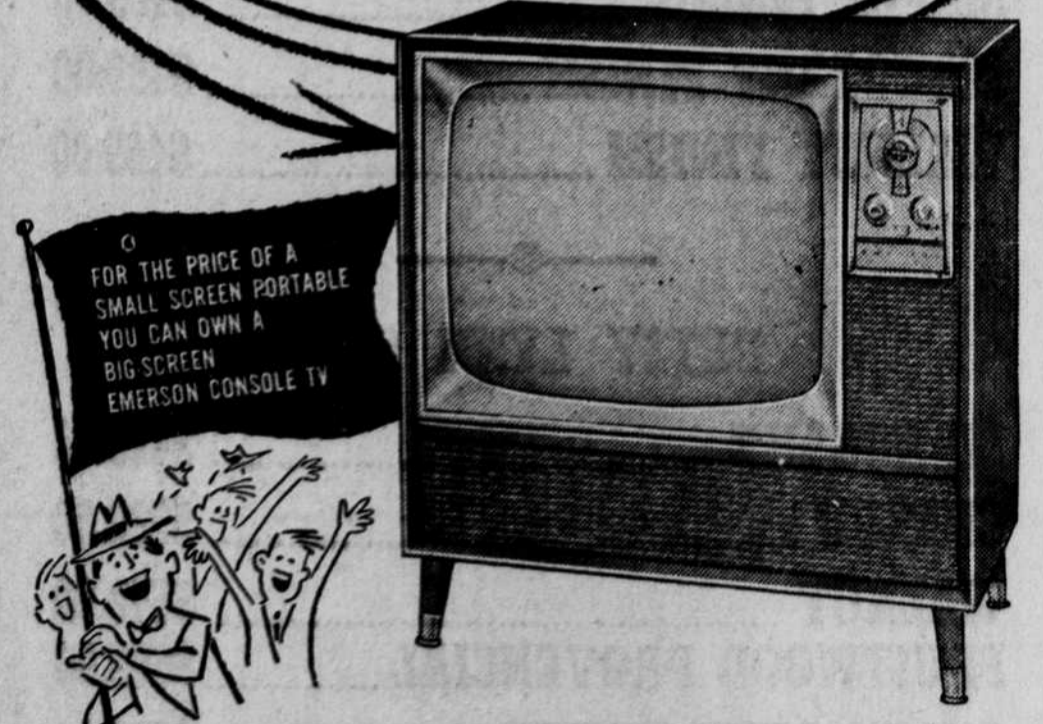
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