

The Way We Were In March 1959

As the winter holidays begin to wind down and a new year is about to dawn, we will soon be turning our hearts and minds to warm days filled with daffodils, gardening and all those other wonderful activities that come with spring. Recently, a March 1959 issue of the *Evening Herald* surfaced from a pile of papers and documents making their way across the desk at the Museum of Western York County. Perusing through the pages, I found it interesting how we were occupying our time in the last spring of the golden fifties and the dawning of a more complex age. Perhaps excerpts from that newspaper will take the December chill from our cheeks as we take a few minutes to review yesteryear events and remember those who were taking part in developing history.

It seems that everyone that spring were preoccupied with the proposal of a one-cent increase in sales tax then being argued in Columbia. Both the Senate and the House had looked at several options and suggested a number of packages, but the public knew how it was going to go since representatives found it easy to increase taxes rather than consider budget cuts. In a letter to the editor James T. Howe of Rock Hill knew how it was going to go. He wrote, "Perhaps South Carolina lawmakers would not like taking candy from a baby, but it looks as if about fifty percent of them are now planning to tax the baby's candy bar, which already sells for a dime." He even wondered why the lawmakers, who happen to be home that weekend "sounding out public opinion," bothered since no more than ten percent of the population would favor a tax increase. Howe was convinced the state needed lawmakers to maintain a reasonable budget and reduce spending; but Howe, just like us 2007, knew how that was going to run.

Governor Hollings proposed a package tax on items like beer, cigarettes, pinball machines and soft drinks, but the Senate shot that down. The public was convinced the House and Senate was not content with such a meager increase and, were having their ear bent by lobbyists and special interest groups. As we all are well aware, an across the board sales tax increase affects everyone, even on life-necessity items. In 1959 it was figured if a housewife purchased a quart of milk in the morning, a tube of toothpaste in the afternoon, let her son buy two bags of peanuts and the daughter to get a bar of candy and pick up a loaf of bread that afternoon, the total purchase would be one dollar or less, (Did you get that folks?) and the total sales tax would be seven cents. We just did not know how well off we were back then.

By 1959 television sets were in nearly every household and to get away from the worries of price increases and taxes we could settle down for an enjoyable evening of watching our favorite shows. At six o'clock we might chose from Our Miss Brooks, Roy Rogers or Amos and Andy. Westerns filled the evening programming including, Death Valley, Sheriff of Cochise, U. S. Marshall, Buckskin, Rifleman, The Texan, Restless Gun and Wells Fargo. Most of us wanted to watch Father Knows Best or the Donna Reed Show and not a few enjoyed playing along with Name That Tune. Highbrows were not excluded; they could watch the Voice of Firestone, Hall of Fame, and the Desilu Playhouse.

Speaking of television. The Associated Press writer from Hollywood informed us that Dennis Weaver--you remember, Chester on "Gunsmoke,"--that he really did not have a limp, but had two strong, healthy legs and had been a track star at the University of Oklahoma. Nor was that

western twang real; in fact he had been a Broadway actor with perfect diction. Weaver's character became a Gunsmoke favorite and had just signed a contract for another two years. In a 1959 interview he was asked if he was concerned about being typecast and he replied he was not the least bit worried. Yet, after starring on one of the longest playing westerns, it became a major concern. It's hard to believe that anyone other than Jim Arness could portray Sheriff Matt Dillon, but in the beginning, Weaver thought he was going to get the starring role.

With Easter approaching, Efird's in Rock Hill was tempting the ladies with a fashionable spring suite for \$8.99, and to highlight her figure she could drop by the lingerie department and pick up the Dualift bra by Loveable for a mere \$1.50. The Family Bootery on Caldwell Street was offering a pair of high heels with pointed toes for a hard to come by \$12.95. Never mind that my lady might be running short on her budget, just down the street she might obtain a loan from the Home Credit Company in just twenty minutes. Never mind about worrying hubby, management did not require co-signer. Should she not wish to disturb the peace in her home, the versatile housewife might get a few yards of gingham that was selling for thirty-nine cents a yard and cotton satin for only \$1.59 a yard. Better yet, take last year's outfit by Hollis Cleaners on White Street or Rock's on West Main and make it good-as-new for Easter--maybe Miss So-and-So wouldn't notice.

Of course, Easter is the perfect reason for the ladies to get a new do. At the Ideal Beauty Shop Evelyn Jones, Mary Aiken or Joyce Faris was delighted to give a Breck Beautiful Wave, an Enduring Wave or the Serene Wave ranging from \$12.50 to \$8.50. No respectable woman in 1959 would go to church on Easter without a new hat and gloves. The open, ventilated look in spring gloves signaled an easy, casual elegance; just what a gingham frock needed. The housewife with expertise in cuisine could have her hat and eat it too. A popular theme for Easter dinner cakes was in the shape of a lady's hat, all frosted and decked out in butter crême flowers.

The men were not forgotten in the fashion world of 1959. Cynthia Lowry of New York announced from the International Beauty Show that the latest fashion for men was hair-coloring. *Real* color that is, not tints or rinse, but green, crimson, mauve or apricot! He was able to choose a color to match his mood, whether he was ticked pink, green with envy, apricot gay or a bit blue. Personally I don't remember this every storming the York County man-scene, but today you just might see it in a Wal-Mart parking lot.

In 1959 women were emerging from the docile roles to which they had been shackled for years. Some of the younger women were going tired of the women's clubs with their unending rivers of fruit punches, dainty finger sandwiches, do-goody projects and ho-hum speakers. Instead, they began discovering investment clubs and found that their husbands perked up when they came home and said, "I bought so many shares of such-and-such today" it got more attention when they boasted, "We're going to have a bake sale." More and more, women were, and still continue, to invade the business world.

Scouts throughout the county were active in celebrating the birthday of Juliet Low, the founder of the Girl Scouts. In Sharon, Girl Scout Troop 27 and the Brownie Troop 26 attended Sunday Services at the Sharon Methodist Church and later a Juliet Low tea at the Scout Office in Rock Hill. Attending from Sharon were Brownie Scouts Bonnie Ruth Wray and Dianne Maloney. In

Clover, Mrs. Joe L. Jackson, Mrs. Fred Broyhill and Mrs. S. A. Sifford, Jr., were in charge of an investment ceremony of Troop 49 at the Clover High School.

With the advent of spring, several young women were preparing for their wedding. Dorothy Hollis was given a shower at the Rock Hill home of Mrs. Hazel McKeown on Keels Avenue. Dorothy was looking forward to her marriage to Tim Adams. In Smyrna, the ladies of the Smyrna Associate Presbyterian Church feted April bride-elect Suzanne Smith. Twenty-eight guests were served cake, congealed salad, sandwiches and coffee by Mrs. W. M. Faulkner, Jr., Mrs. W. L. Whitesides, Jr., Mrs. John Scoggins, Mrs. Charles Whitesides and Miss Ann White.

Plans for the South Carolina Garden Pilgrimage Tour of Rock Hill and York had been completed and slated for April 8. The Rock Hill Garden Club and the Rosa Alba Club of York began their tour at Winthrop with a coffee served by President Sims' wife and the Dean of Women. From there the tour went to the garden of George Williams on Myrtle Drive and next-door neighbors, the Alton Brown's. The already popular Glencarin Garden was seen for the first time as a city project, and then the tour proceeded to the White house, and the Garrison Garden on the corner of Chestnut and Spruce streets. After leaving the home of Miss Margaret Spencer in Ebenezer and the Ebenezer Church, the party traveled to York where they lunched at the Parrish house and strolled the gardens of Mr. and Mrs. George Smith, Mr. and Mrs. S. K. Lowry, and Mr. and Mrs. E. B. Lowry were opened to the visitors.

The Hill and Dale Garden Club were busy as well. They met at Skeeter's Restaurant in Rock Hill for a luncheon and installation of officers. Past President Mrs. Robert Shepard, installed Mrs. Reid Horton, President. Others installed were, Mrs. Ralph Higgins, Vice President; Mrs. Richard Lewis, Secretary; Mr. J. E. Howarth, Treasurer. On hand were fourteen visitors and two prospective members, Mrs. Nancy Hunter and Mrs. Carroll Eisenhower.

Unless you lived in one of the price-war areas, which were getting fewer all the time, York County resident were worrying about rising gasoline prices. The average price per gallon was 29.51, and refiners were blaming the need for higher octane for high-compression engines in new cars.

The York County Public School system was producing some outstanding students in 1959. Results of the Finley Road School's Science Fair were announced in March by categories. They were: Biology, Barbara Williford; Geology, Nancy Watson; Physics, Mike Griffith; Nutrition, Becky Horton and Bertha Ann Deas; and Astronomy, Mary Anna Watson. The fair's judges were Lee Settlemyre, Joe Gault and Emma Jane McDermott.

A three-act comedy was presented by the eighth grade of the Richmond Drive School. "Just Ducky" was the story of two teenage girls who decided to write a fictitious letter to the editor of a lovelorn column. The cast included: Linda Bobo, Ralph Blakely, Bruce Mayer, Robert Wells, Brenda Lowe, Nancy Baker, Gloria Benfield, June Starnes, Jerry Couch, David Odom and Steve McCrorey. Four outstanding members of the Clover High School Junior Class were selected to represent their school in the annual Girl's State and Boy's State in Columbia. The American Legion Auxiliary chose Carolyn Withers, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Withers and Becky Jackson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Jackson. Legion Post 38 selected Boyce Currence, son

of Mr. And Mrs. S. C. Currence and John Lewis McCarter, son of Mrs. Mae McCarter.

Out of the county, other young men were proving themselves Two area students among the 207 Citadel cadets were cited for their academic achievement during the first semester: John A. Aycock of Rock Hill and John T. Warlick of Clover. Serving in the United States Air Force, A/2C Thomas F. Russell, son of Mr. And Mrs. Edward H. Russell of Rock Hill was the top graduate of a Government Driver's Course while serving in England.

And that was the way it was on Monday, 23 March 1959