Toast of the Town - Proctor Electric and the Native American Artifact Dig

In the late 1950s, the Proctor Electric Company built an ultra-modern, $1,500,000 manufacturing plant which became the largest factory in the country devoted exclusively to the manufacturing of electrical automatic toasters. In 1959, a mere two years after opening, the plant had produced its 1,000,000th toaster. Close to 50 different models of toasters were made, many under the brand names of Universal, Sears and Montgomery Ward. Mount Airy soon became known as the “Toaster Capital of the World.”

Proctor Electric Company merged with Silex Corporation in 1960 and then with Hamilton Beach in 1990. In 1998, Hamilton Beach/Proctor Silex closed their plant in Mount Airy.

In the early 1950s during the initial grading and excavation of the land to prepare for building the toaster factory, a large Native American burial ground was uncovered. Newspaper accounts noted skeletons, pottery, projectile points, beads and pipes were being unearthed and treasure seekers and souvenir hunters from all around were coming to collect these items. An open invitation was issued for the public to come and “hunt for relics.” Sadly and unlike today, during this time period there were no NAGRPA regulations (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation) or guidance for protecting Native American grave sites or properties.

This site, a part of the “Geocaching for History” program, was researched and placed on the Emily B. Taylor Greenway by the Mount Airy Museum of Regional History in partnership with Kids in Parks-Track Trails System – Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, Blue Cross Blue Shield North Carolina Foundation and the North Carolina Humanities Council. The goal of this program is to encourage physical activity and exploration of the history of our community.

Here are a few Mt. Airy Newspaper articles:

Proctor Electric Company Building Nation's Largest Toaster Plant

Youth Charged With Stealing Gas From Plane

William Otis Ramey, 20, of route 6, Mount Airy, has admitted to police as the person who was seen taking gas from a plane at the Mount Airy Airport Sunday night.

The youth has been charged with trespassing and larceny of gas by L. P. Wrenn, Jr., owner and operator of the airport. Ramey was arrested Monday night and placed under $400 bond.

Three of Ramey's companions were arrested but it is understood they will not be prosecuted as Ramey has confessed to the act and has cleared his friends of any part of the act.

Mr. Wrenn told The NEWS gas has been missing from the planes for some time. He stated that one plane, here from Galax, Va., was left overnight and thieves took some gas from it and failed to replace the cap. It rained later in the night and when the plane took off last Sunday afternoon it had just left the airstrip when the engine failed and the pilot just made it back to the landing strip where mechanics found water in the tank.

For several days employees of the airport have been staying up and watching for the thieves.

Mr. Wrenn said a car drove up Sunday night about 1:30 o'clock and was taking gas from one of the planes with a water hose. When approached by an airport employee the driver jumped in the car and fled. However, the employee got the license number and recognized the driver.

Mr. Wrenn has issued a plea for young men to leave the planes alone at all times as some prank may result in the death of a pilot.

Mrs. Turnmyre's

PROCTOR PRESIDENT

Walter M. Schwartz, Jr., president of Proctor Electric Company, which is building an ultra-modern toaster factory in Mount Airy. Mr. Schwartz reveals the new factory will be the largest and most modern in America devoted exclusively to the manufacturing of electrical automatic toasters. Other Proctor Products are produced at plants located in Arbutus, Md., and Puerto Rico. Executive offices are in Philadelphia, Pa.

Proctor Electric Company, one of America's foremost housewares manufacturers, is coming to Mount Airy.

Official announcement that Proctor is constructing a plant here on the former Isabel Smith Keary property, was made today by Walter M. Schwartz, Jr., president of the company.

Mr. Schwartz revealed that the ultra-modern plant being constructed here will be devoted exclusively to the manufacturing of electric automatic toasters. Proctor is a pioneer of the industry in this field and the new factory will provide facilities for a considerable increase in production.

In addition to toasters, the company manufacturers Mary Proctor Hi-Lo Backsaver Ironing Tables, Zedalon Ironing Covers and Pads, both steam and dry irons, Cordminders and Utility Carts.

At the present time, toasters are made in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which is also the location of Proctor's executive offices. Irons are produced at a Puerto Rico plant, all other products are manufactured in Baltimore, Maryland. When the Mount Airy plant is completed, the entire toaster operation will be moved here from Philadelphia. However, the executive offices will remain in that city.

Proctor electrical appliances and housewares have long enjoyed successful acceptance with consumers. They are sold in all leading stores from coast-to-coast and advertised extensively on television and in newspapers throughout major market areas.

All Proctor products are officially endorsed and used exclusively by "Mrs. America". The annual "Mrs. America" contest is taking place this week in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

The company has several outstanding "firsts" in the appliance

The first Proctor toaster made in the new plant here came off the assembly line Thursday morning. Shown with the first toaster are, left to right, Jack Instone, plant manager, Joe Drvack, general superintendent of the final assembly, and Henry Hill, vice president in charge of manufacturing, here from Philadelphia to help organize the Mount Airy plant. The young lady in the rear holds the second toaster.

Surry's Newest Plant Produces First Toaster

Proctor Electric Company's new $1,500,000 electric toaster plant produced its first toaster Thursday.

The toaster came off the assembly line at 9:15 a.m., marking the first production in the big new Mount Airy plant.

What happened then?

Joe Fowler, Jr., said the toaster got the standard treatment for all toasters produced by his company:

Somebody popped two slices of bread into it, turned the gadget on and .... waited.

All of a sudden;

"Pop ... Pop."

And there were the two first slices of bread toasted in a toaster made in Mount Airy.

They were toasted very nicely, Mr. Fowler reported.

That particular toaster is going to be given to Walter Schwartz of Philadelphia. He is the president of the company.

Mr. Fowler didn't know what happened to those first slices of toast.

By the day's end, however, he said the plant had produced approximately 300 toasters.

Also a lot of toast.

Each one got that toasting test, and they bought 200 loaves of bread to test with.

Mr. Fowler said, "We tell people that if their toasters come with crumbs in them, it doesn't mean they've been used. It means they have passed practical test."

Surry Welfare In September Costs $19,260

The Surry County Welfare Department paid out $19,260.13 in September.

Disbursements to the aged amounted to $27,545.12. Of this amount, $23,909.88 was paid by the state, and only $3,635.24 by the county.

Aid to dependent children amounted to $15,977.01. The state paid $14,469.27 of this amount, Surry County $1,507.74

Archaeologist Joins Indian Grav

Hundreds of "grave diggers," including Dr. Joffre L. Coe, head of the archaeology department at the University of North Carolina, searched in the newly found Indian burial grounds here.

No provisions have been made to halt the diggings as people from all parts of North Carolina rambled over the ruins.

Shovels, picks, mallets and even sticks were used to excavate the graveyard. A small boy with a pointed stick gouged himself out a hole that covered him. He was looking for an Indian tomahawk.

Billy Ausburne of Mount Airy unearthed a skeleton with the skull, hip and leg bones still intact. The teeth of the relic were in good condition. Many bones, knives, a few tomahawks, jars and other relics have been excavated.

Dr. Coe took an archaeological interest in the ruins. He examined the burial grounds and stated he would return to make a more detailed study.

The graveyard was first discovered Tuesday when a construction company began clearing the area for a building site. The bulldozer uncovered signs that led to the discovery of the Indian burial grounds.

Donald Rector, president of the First National Bank of Mount Airy, after making a quick examination of the cemetery, estimated it to be between 300 and 500 years old.

There has been no effort as yet to stop either the grading of the site by the construction company for the proposed building or the individuals who hunt relics.

At 5 p.m. Saturday there were some 50 cars parked around the newly found graveyard in spite of a downpour of rain.

INCOME TAX FACTS

Personal Deduc

Your Ta

(This is one of a series of ar filing. These articles are based the American Institute of Accou lina Association of Certified Pu tion with the Internal Revenue

When you use the "short form" in take the standard deduction on the "lo tion of about 10 percent to cover su state and local taxes, contributions

If you are sure that your personal deductions are less than 10 percent standard deduction, there is no need to itemize them. But it is worth the effort of calculating your tax on both forms. Here are some deductions you should be careful not to overlook:

Interest on Loans

The interest you pay on loans is deductible. This includes mortgages, automobile, appliance, home im-

Native American artifacts found at the "Proctor-Silex Dig"