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General Urges Decoration for Col. T. B. Spratt.

Praising unstintingly the "exceptionally meritorious and conspicuous service in the World war" of Col. T. B. Spratt of Fort Mill, former lieutenant colonel of the 118th regiment, 30th division, Brig. Gen. Lawrence D. Tyson, 59th brigade, 30th division, recommends in a recent letter to the war department that Col. Spratt be awarded the distinguished service medal. Much of the credit for the gallant record of the 118th regiment is attributed by Gen. Tyson to the work of Col. Spratt, who "was the mainstay of his immediate commanding officer in the preliminary battles of the Hindenburg line" and on September 29, 1918, when the 30th division plowed its way with shot and shell through that series of German forts, hitherto considered impregnable.

"During these battles," says Gen. Tyson, in his letter recommending the decoration for Col. Spratt, "the 118th regiment fought as gallantly, I believe, as any regiment fought at any time in France and this regiment bears the distinction of having won five of the 78 medals of honor won by the whole American army during the World war."

It is a source of great pride to Fort Mill people that two of the five congressional medals of honor won by the 118th regiment were awarded members of the Fort Mill company, Lieut. James C. Dozier and Sergt. Thomas L. Hall, who lost his life in action a few hours after performing the heroic act for which the medal was posthumously awarded him.

Tuesday the following copy of the letter of Gen. Tyson to the war department was received by The Times. Accompanying the copy of the letter is a note in which Gen. Tyson says, "I wish the people of South Carolina to understand what my opinion of the 118th infantry and Col. T. B. Spratt is." The letter in full follows.

"I recommend that Lieut. Col. Thos. B. Spratt, 118th infantry, A. E. F., be awarded the distinguished service medal for exceptionally meritorious and conspicuous service in the World war. Col. Spratt was second in command of the 118th infantry from its formation at Camp Sevier in October, 1917, until December, 1918, at which time he was ordered to the United States for promotion in recognition of his conspicuous services. Col. Spratt aided greatly in the training of the 118th infantry, both in the United States and in France.

"The 118th infantry did glorious and distinguished service in the Ypres-Canal sector from July to September, 1918, and later in the great offensive in the Somme from September to November, 1918.

"Col. Spratt was the mainstay of his immediate commanding officer in the preliminary battles of the Hindenburg line in front of Bellecourt and Nauroy, September 24-27, when his regiment took over the sector assigned to the 30th division, and did conspicuous service in straightening the line before the great battle of the Hindenburg line on September 29, 1918. He also distinguished himself on the 8th, 9th and 10th of October, when he materially aided, by his advice and counsel and soldierly conduct, in the capture of the towns of Montbrehan, Brancourt and Vaux-Andigny, where his regiment greatly distinguished itself and where the Germans were driven back and routed, great numbers of them being captured and killed, but at the expense of a great many of our own men being killed and wounded.

"Later Col. Spratt distinguished himself on the 17th, 18th and 19th of October, when the Germans were driven across the La Selle river, great numbers of them being killed and captured.

"Col. Spratt deserves especial commendation and reward for his services because much of the initiative and success of his regiment was due to him. Col. Wolfe, at that time in command of the regiment, being sick or indisposed on several occasions during these hard-fought battles and

COURT REMOVES OBSTACLE.

Way Clear for Building York-Mecklenburg Bridge.

A decision of the North Carolina supreme court upholding the validity of the bonds issued some time ago by the board of commissioners of Mecklenburg county, N. C., to finance Mecklenburg's part of the bridge to be built jointly by that county and York County across the Catawba river, at the "Buster" Boyd site, about 12 miles up the river from Fort Mill, apparently removes the last of the many obstacles which for several years have stood in the way of the construction of the bridge. Actual work is expected to be begun on the bridge before the end of the present summer. A meeting of the commissioners of the two counties is to be held within a few days and at this meeting it is thought that final details looking to the early erection of the structure will be agreed upon.

The cost of the bridge, which will be a modern steel structure, was originally estimated at \$120,000, the agreement between the two counties being that York will bear one-third of the expense and Mecklenburg two-thirds. York has had her share of the cost of the bridge, \$40,000, available for some time. The movement to build the bridge was begun four years ago, but the plans were held up by a series of obstacles. First there was a difference of opinion between the commissioners of the counties as to the proportion of the cost to be borne by each; next there were divergent views as to the location of the structure, and finally, after the other differences had been settled, there was the attack on the legality of the Mecklenburg bonds.

Completion of the bridge and the opening of the road to it through Bethel township will shorten the distance between York and Charlotte 15 miles. The distance over the circuitous route between the two towns is now 46 miles, whereas the distance over the new bridge road will be only 30 miles.

While it is generally understood that the bridge will open up territory from which Charlotte expects to draw a big volume of business, Fort Mill also is expected to derive considerable benefit in the way of trade from the building of the bridge, as the town will then be much more accessible to the people of Bethel township than it now is.

Militia to Attend Reunion.

The Fort Mill militia company, the Tom Hall Guards, has accepted the invitation of Meech Stewart post, American Legion, of York to attend the first annual reunion of York county veterans of the World war at York on July 4. Many of the members of the company are ex-service men and these especially are looking forward with much pleasure to the reunion. It is planned to take the company through the country in automobiles and motor trucks and as July 4 is a holiday the officers anticipate that few members of the company will be left behind. Many York business houses are joining with Meech Stewart post to provide entertainment for the former soldiers and other visitors and a joint invitation is extended "every soldier and every relative of a soldier and every friend of a soldier" to spend the day in York on July 4.

William H. Grier, who was a student at Clemson college during the last session, is at his home in Fort Mill for the summer vacation.

Col. Spratt then being charged with the command of the regiment.

"During these battles the 118th infantry fought as gallantly, I believe, as any regiment fought at any time in France, and this regiment bears the distinction of having won five of the 78 medals of honor won by the whole American Army during the world war.

"I have always felt that the 118th infantry would never have attained its great success had it not been for the initiative, devotion to duty and invaluable aid of Col. Thomas B. Spratt.

"Lawrence D. Tyson, "Brigadier General."

NEWS OF YORK COUNTY.

Current Items of Interest Found in the Yorkville Enquirer.

Maj. Lindsay McFadden of Rock Hill is a candidate for election to the position of lieutenant colonel of the First regiment, S. C. N. G., it was announced in Rock Hill Saturday. Maj. McFadden has had many years experience as a National Guard officer as well as in the late World war. He received his discharge months after the signing of the armistice, having served many months overseas as a major of the 118th infantry, 30th division.

At a recent meeting of the town council it was decided to turn all license privileges of the town over to the Meech Stewart post of the American Legion for July 4 for the sum of \$10. Council also gave the post permission to bring in a number of shows for the week of July 4, if they saw fit, in connection with the reunion of the service men. A committee from the post appeared before council requesting the action which was taken.

It was stated in Rock Hill Saturday that former Capt. Murray F. Mack of Fort Mill is a candidate for major of the Third battalion of the First regiment, which includes the companies at Rock Hill, Fort Mill, Camden and Hartsville. So far as has been learned there is no opposition to the election of Capt. Mack, who saw service in the World war in the intelligence section of the 30th division. Election of National Guard officers, it is understood, is to be held on June 14.

Judging from the reports of growers and others who sell the seed, more peanuts are being planted throughout York county than ever before. Inquiries develop the information that hundreds of bushels have been sold, and that sales continue, but so far as can be learned the planting generally is in small patches. Peanuts are great feed for hogs and cattle, and then also it follows as a matter of course that with the production of peanuts in sufficient quantity there will also develop the manufacture of peanut oil and other byproducts.

Alleging slander in that the defendant called him names and accused him of stealing tools from his automobile, Charles H. Ratterree, automobile garage man of Clover, has brought suit in the sum of \$25,000 against H. P. Jackson, wealthy merchant of that town. The suit is the result of a terrific fight between the two men which took place in Ratterree's garage at Clover several months ago. It is alleged that at the time Jackson accused Ratterree of stealing tools from his automobile while the machine was at the garage for repair.

Rather than pay a fine of \$10 imposed on him by Mayor E. A. Hall following his conviction in mayor's court Saturday morning on a charge of using profane language on the streets, Dr. M. W. White, well known dentist of Yorkville, was committed to jail Saturday afternoon, to begin service of a ten day sentence imposed in lieu of the fine. The dentist remained in jail a little more than an hour, when he was released from custody on order of Mayor Hall, who stated that the fine had been paid. Dr. White protested vigorously at his release telling Sheriff Fred Quinn that he had gone to jail for principle and that he did not want any of his friends or others interested to pay the fine. When the sheriff informed him that he had no alternative after the mayor had ordered his release, the dentist quietly left the jail. There was a lively scene in the mayor's court Saturday morning in connection with the trial of White for alleged use of profane language and the case against James McDowell and George Ferguson, young boys, charged with aggravating and annoying the dentist by calling him "Buttermilk."

W. B. Meacham, Sr., J. B. Mills and F. E. Ardrey are in Charleston this week attending the meeting of the business men of the State being held under the auspices of the chamber of commerce of that city.

FLAMES DESTROY CAR.

A. Y. Williamson Loses Machine in Accident Near Anderson.

The Anderson Mail of Monday afternoon tells of the almost miraculous escape from death Sunday evening in an automobile accident on the Belton road near that city of A. Y. Williamson of Fort Mill and Sam Bailes and George Bailes, Anderson citizens who moved from lower Mecklenburg county to that city some years ago and the complete destruction of Mr. Williamson's car, a five-passenger Chevrolet, by fire.

The party, including the wife and child of Sam Bailes, had been out in the country for a ride in Mr. Williamson's car. Something went wrong with the engine and Mrs. Bailes and the child were put in another car and returned to Anderson. Repairs were made on the engine, but the car had not gone far when it ran over an embankment 35 feet high and landed, demolished, in a ditch, there to catch fire and burn up.

According to Mr. Williamson, who returned to Fort Mill Tuesday afternoon, the car, when about the middle of a high fill, developed a tendency to wobble and in an instant had run beyond the edge of the fill and began to tumble to the bottom. In going down the embankment the gasoline tank was smashed and the contents caught fire at once. Soon the car was a mass of wreckage, but none of the occupants was hurt in the accident.

Victory for Aragon.

With three regulars out of the game Saturday afternoon, the best the Fort Mill ball team could do was to score 7 times while Aragon mill of Rock Hill was putting 8 men across. There was no lack of vocal encouragement for the Fort Mill boys, but things did not break well for them and the most intense cheering and choicest assortment of baseball lingo heard on the local grounds this season fell short of the desired end. A feature of the game was a four base hit by Andral Ferguson. Manager Wilburn Ferguson played his usual good game behind the bat, but afterward said that he caught with difficulty, as a finger on his left hand which a coworker some time ago hit with a sledge hammer while striking at a piece of iron annoyed him no little.

Encampment of Militia.

The annual encampment of the First regiment, N. G. S. C., of which the Fort Mill company is a unit, is to be held this year at Mt. Pleasant, near Charleston, and will begin on Saturday, July 9, and last 15 days. Officers of the Fort Mill company already are making plans for their organization to participate in the encampment and recently they have been impressing the men with the necessity of making the best showing possible when the regiment is brought together. Eight of the company's "non-coms" will precede the company to Mt. Pleasant by several days to attend the non-commissioned officers' school.

Oil Stove Explodes.

Explosion of an oil stove in the kitchen at the home of J. H. Bailes, near the graded school building late Wednesday afternoon, gave the town fire company the first run it had had in some time. By the time the company reached the home, however, the fire had been extinguished and practically the only damage resulting from the explosion was the wrecking of the stove.

Judge Favors McNinch.

Judge Harding in the Mecklenburg superior court has refused to set aside the verdict of a Mecklenburg jury giving S. S. McNinch damages of \$20,000 against the American Trust company in litigation affecting the sale of the plant of the Charlotte Brick company in Fort Mill township. Mr. McNinch claimed that the trust company, which had a mortgage on the brick plant, of which he was owner, had disposed of it in circumstances which were unfair and unjust to him and in violation of a pledge made to him. The case will now go to the supreme court on appeal.

APPROVE ROAD BONDS.

Fort Mill Township Electors Vote Issue of \$75,000.

Fifty-six for, 21 against, expressed the attitude of the Fort Mill township citizens who last Thursday voted in the special election proposing a bond issue of \$75,000 for the improvement of the public roads of the township. Much more interest developed in the election than either the friends or opponents of the proposition apparently anticipated and at one time during the day runners were sent out to various parts of the town to urge citizens to come to the polls and vote. There was more or less quiet satisfaction expressed by advocates of the bond issue when the result of the election was announced, with a corresponding amount of disappointment heard from those who considered it unwise for the township to incur such a debt at the present time.

Since the election public interest has turned to the selection of the men to compose the township road commission which will have charge of the expenditure of the money arising from the sale of the bonds. At least one petition, signed by practically every citizen of the lower section of the township, urging the appointment of Col. T. B. Spratt as that section's representative on the commission, will be presented to the legislative delegation for consideration when the time comes a few days hence for the selection of the three members of the commission. The general understanding was that in selecting the commission the delegation would give three different sections of the township representation—one member from the town, another from the Gold Hill community and the third from what is known as "The Fork" section.

Along with the \$75,000 bond issue approved last Thursday, the township commission also will have under its direction the expenditure of \$20,000 which the legislative delegation some time ago agreed to provide as a supplemental fund for the improvement of the public roads of the township. The board of county commissioners also has agreed to expend \$10,000 in the erection of a steel bridge over a branch between Fort Mill and Catawba river should the township commission decide to improve that road. To these various sums will be added at least \$10,000 from the federal government, the understanding being that this sum also was to be used on the river road. The township commission will in all have at its disposal approximately \$100,000.

Under the law providing for road bonds for York county townships the board of township commissioners, composed of three citizens, is appointed by the governor upon recommendation of the legislative delegation. The commission is authorized to select the roads to be improved and is the sole judge of the material to be used in making the improvements. So far as The Times is informed, men will be selected for the commission who will enter upon their duties without any preconceived ideas of the necessity of the improvement of any of the roads of the township without considering their obligation to the whole township.

On Visit to Boyhood Home.

Leslie Powell of Charlotte has been spending several days this week in Fort Mill with relatives and friends. Mr. Powell is an old Fort Mill boy who moved to Charlotte from Fort Mill many years ago with his father, the late B. F. Powell. For 28 years, which ended about 18 months ago, he was a mail carrier in Charlotte. He was then retired by the government on the commutation provided by law for faithful postal employees and is now in business for himself in Charlotte. Mr. Powell says the fact that he is a South Carolinian is a source of great pride to him and that, although he has been out of the State for many years, he still feels that his home is in Fort Mill.

Hundreds are attending the State Sunday school convention in session at Winthrop college.

LURE OF SECRET MINE.

Gold Hunters Fail to Reach Treasure Hidden in Mexican Tunnel.

For 300 years, according to reliable records, the Sierra Madre mountains of Sonora and Chihuahua, Mexico, have held the secret of a gold mine of fabulous richness and a vast treasure of gold, mined and hidden away in an inaccessible tunnel.

The romance of the gold hunters is written in the history of men's efforts through the centuries to reach and bring back to civilization this wealth of the old Tyopa mines. Murder and violence have marked many of these efforts. Mexico city contains records of the old mine and several prospectors have reported seeing the ruins but none ever reached them.

According to the records in the Mexican capital, in the latter part of the 17th century the isolated village of Tyopa was raided by Indians, who destroyed the town and killed all the inhabitants except a priest. After wandering for several weeks the priest arrived at a little town where he was received and cared for. His hardships caused his death, but before he died he gave to the family at whose home he was staying a description and map of the mining camp. He also reported that gold obtained from seven years of mining had been stored in an old tunnel because of the impossibility of shipment to civilization.

The story and map, it is said, have been handed down from family to family for generations. Those who attempted to reach the mine lost their outfits and many did not return. The Indians for years menaced all prospectors, and this condition still exists.

Max Covita, for several years Mexican consul at Naco, Ariz., is said to have been the latest possessor of the priest's map. He declared he twice succeeded in getting as far as Casa Blanca, from which the ruins of old Tyopa are visible, and it was reported he had given up hopes of reaching the place at the time of his death several years ago.

TOLD TRUTH ABOUT AGE.

And North Carolina Girl Failed to Get Marriage License.

Refusal to tell an untruth in York yesterday about her age resulted in the failure of Miss Mary Leagan of Canaan, N. C., and Clyde Jarvis of Farmville, N. C., to secure license to be married in York county. Yesterday morning Miss Leagan and Jarvis arrived in Fort Mill from their North Carolina homes expecting to be married here. Learning that it would be necessary to get a license from the judge of probate of York county they engaged a motor vehicle and were soon driven to York.

Application to Judge Houston for the license brought forth from Miss Leagan the statement that she was only 16 years old, whereas the minimum age the South Carolina law sets for women to whom marriage licenses can be granted without the consent of their parents or guardians is 18 years. They failed to get the license and yesterday afternoon returned to Fort Mill greatly disappointed that they could not be married. Later in the day Miss Leagan and Jarvis left for Chester, expecting there to renew their effort to get a license and were hopeful that the judge of probate of that county would neglect to ask the usual question about the girl's age. Jarvis appeared to be about 20 years old and both he and Miss Leagan were neatly dressed.

Wild Asses of Arizona.

Some 2,000 wild asses, direct descendants of animals that were domesticated in the Holy Land and neighboring regions in the time of Abraham, now roam in the depths of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. Their forebears were brought to this country by the Spaniards, who were first to explore northern Arizona, through which the Grand canyon runs. They took with them asses to carry food and other supplies and the progeny of some of these beasts have remained there ever since in a wild state.