



ROADS TAKE A BEATING

Politicians blooming in St. Clair County

BY BOB HAWKINS
News staff writer

PELL CITY, March 8—Every four years when the sap starts rising, politicians burn up the roads, jamming candidate cards with their pictures on them into every screen door in the countryside.

St. Clair County roads are taking an awful beating by a whole passel running for a job in the courthouse. Inferior Court Judge Buck Rowe already has one, but he wants to move down the hall into the sheriff's office. Sheriff Red Wood is determined to keep Rowe just where he is, and a couple of others want to send both back to the farm.

THAT'S THE WAY it is in 67 counties in the Camellia State, but here in St. Clair where the state's flower won't grow, the politicians are blooming out all over.

Tax Collector Alse Scott breathed a sigh of relief on qualifying deadline day when nary a soul came out against him. This lack of opposition didn't shock anyone, because Scott, a humble gentleman, is a virtual tiger at the polls. Even the

dresser, and kept his hands in Montgomery's hip pocket to build up county farm-to-market roads. Judge Forman had an uncanny knack for getting things done. Not that he didn't have enemies. He did. But he hung in there till his projects were finished.

Though a familiar sight on a big city country club golf course, Judge Forman could spit and whittle with the country store set, too.

Last November droves of voters pulled the elephant's snout and the Republicans made a clean sweep of everything available in the courthouse. French Whitten, not long removed from Cumberland Law School, was elected circuit judge on the GOP ticket in a landslide which left even him speechless. However, lawyers in the district seem satisfied with his conduct on the bench, if not with his distaff politics.

When the lawmaking intelligencia split up the state at the Supreme Court's direction, St. Clair was put in a district with Blount and Marshall Counties. Blount and St. Clair have comparable voting populations, but Marshall could put both down in a showdown. Two from Marshall

News - March 8, 1966

ROADS TAKE A BEATING

Politicians blooming in St. Clair County

BY BOB HAWKINS
News staff writer

PELL CITY, March 8—Every four years when the sap starts rising, politicians burn up the roads, jamming candidate cards with their pictures on them into every screen door in the countryside.

St. Clair County roads are taking an awful beating by a whole passel running for a job in the courthouse. Inferior Court Judge Buck Rowe already has one, but he wants to move down the hall into the sheriff's office. Sheriff Red Wood is determined to keep Rowe just where he is, and a couple of others want to send both back to the farm.

THAT'S THE WAY it is in 67 counties in the Camellia State, but here in St. Clair where the state's flower won't grow, the politicians are blooming out all over.

Tax Collector Aise Scott breathed a sigh of relief on qualifying deadline day when nary a soul came out against him. This lack of opposition didn't shock anyone, because Scott, a humble gentleman, is a virtual tiger at the polls. Even the Republicans have no stomach for tangling with him.

St. Clair is divided in the middle by a mountain ridge that begins in Pennsylvania and plays out at Birmingham. But to the majority on the south side the other half might as well be in Pennsylvania. Ashville and Pell City seldom make eyes at each other, although some shrewd politician in a past generation saw to it that both towns got a courthouse.

Some years ago a candidate with one eye on economics and the other in the clouds ran on the premise that if elected he'd do away with one of the courthouses. He didn't get elected and was lucky to get out of the campaign with his life. There hasn't been anyone in the past two decades to mention such a thing, even in the confines of his own home.

THE POTENTATE of St. Clair politics hung up the gloves awhile back. Venerable Ward Forman of Springville, a buffer zone to the oblique of Pell City and Ashville, retired as probate judge after a quarter century. He was and still is a dapper

dresser, and kept his hands in Montgomery's hip pocket to build up county farm-to-market roads. Judge Forman had an uncanny knack for getting things done. Not that he didn't have enemies. He did. But he hung in there till his projects were finished.

Though a familiar sight on a big city country club golf course, Judge Forman could spit and whittle with the country store set, too.

Last November droves of voters pulled the elephant's snout and the Republicans made a clean sweep of everything available in the courthouse. French Whitten, not long removed from Cumberland Law School, was elected circuit judge on the GOP ticket in a landslide which left even him speechless. However, lawyers in the district seem satisfied with his conduct on the bench, if not with his distaff politics.

When the lawmaking intelligencia split up the state at the Supreme Court's direction, St. Clair was put in a district with Blount and Marshall Counties. Blount and St. Clair have comparable voting populations, but Marshall could put both down in a showdown. Two from Marshall and one each from St. Clair and Blount are in the running for Senate. Since Marshall and St. Clair have tremendous backwater tourist attractions and industry-hawking possibilities, candidates from these two are going all out in a stand against water pollution.

AUBREY CARR of Marshall co-authored the anti-pollution bill, but St. Clair's entry, Roy Coshatt, says he'll go up to Marshall and "out-anti-pollution" Carr. Carr is an undertaker, Coshatt an optometrist.

The job as coroner of St. Clair is hogging the sideshow this trip. Both candidates are considered affluent individuals, but both are running like they didn't have a grain of salt in the house.

Incumbent Jimmy Davis, a cobbler by trade, is a rotund, good-natured individual who said he was surprised that druggist Bob Hall would come out against him. Hall says Davis is needed full-time in the shoe shop.

Each is sympathetic toward the other, and most voters may play "eenie, meenie, minne, mo" before pulling the lever.

Birmingham News - March 8, 1966