Flashback Friday: EPA overwhelmed, fish frozen and chem plant sued

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Jan 23, 2020
“And there is plenty more where that came from,” The News reported. “In fact, one EPA official said there’s ‘a whole soup of toxic waste’ at the Ross Road plant. (Randy) Jackson, an on-scene coordinator for the (EPA), who is overseeing the removal of toxic chemicals from the LCP site, has photographs that show a silver sheen — signs of more mercury.

“Mercury, lead and PCBs are just three of the known toxins at the LCP site. Jackson said EPA officials have found spoil sites and piles that contain an unknown number of chemicals.
“But we’ve found enough to know we need to get busy,’ he said Thursday at a special meeting to familiarize the community with the extent of the problem at LCP.”

In sports, the college football national signing day passed, and among notable commitments was offensive lineman Matt Stinchcomb, of Lilburn, to Georgia. Among coaching moves, Nebraska announced the resignation of linebackers coach Kevin Steele, Vanderbilt named Woody Widenhofer as defensive coordinator, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers named Mike Mularkey tight ends coach and the Carolina Panthers named Dom Capers head coach.

Also, the CFL’s Calgary Stampeders agreed to a five-year contract with quarterback Doug Flutie.

50 Years

(Jan. 19, 1970)

The cold weather provided a buffet for birds along the coast as thousands of dead fish washed up on local beaches.

Dozens of people, bewildered by the phenomenon, phoned the county police and the state Game and Fish Department to find an explanation for the mass of six-to-eight pound bass and drum left behind by the tide.

“David H.G. Gould, superintendent of coastal fisheries, said the fish probably had perished because of recent intense and extended cold weather,” The News reported. “He ruled out contamination or pollution of the sea.

“They freeze to death like anything else,’ Gould said.
“A team of three biologists went to Jekyll today to bring back specimens. Many fish, spaced at about 12 feet intervals, were observed Saturday along the beach outside the King and Prince Hotel on St. Simons. Gould said that the marine laboratory on Sapelo Island had been notified also of many dead shrimp and had taken specimens to determine cause of death.”

Gould advised clearing beaches of the fish as it looked bad and wouldn’t smell good, either.

75 Years

(Jan. 19-20, 1945)

Fernandina Beach shrimpers shut down and their union went on strike over the federal Office of Price Administration's ceiling on shrimp prices.

“The strike affected 12 to 15 producers, including two canneries operated there,” The News reported. “Non-union shrimp fishermen have reported that they have been threatened with violence if they took their boats out.”
Over in college sports, sports information directors — through the 439-member American College Publicity Association — declared a campaign against gambling on college athletics.

According to the AP columnist Hugh Fullerton Jr., “The first move, reports Hank Johnson, sports vice-president, will be an attempt to remove from mailing lists ‘those persons who are not definitely known to use the information for constructive purposes.’ ...

"We can think of a lot of non-gamblers who come under that head — especially if a ‘constructive purpose’ means digging up a good tackle where he’s needed.”

100 Years

(Jan. 20, 1920)

J.D. Baldwin, a local undertaker and county coroner, sued the Butterworth-Judson Corporation for breach of contract regarding the interment of more than two dozen deceased Puerto Rican chemical workers.

As an aside, The News also used the outdated spelling of “Puerto” as “Porto,” which was common at the time. The anglicized name went into effect as the United States took control of the island following the Spanish-American War, but the name reverted back to “Puerto Rico” after passage of a congressional resolution in 1931.

“The suit, which is an attachment proceeding, involves the interment of 25 Porto Ricans, who were employed by the defendant corporation, and who died of pneumonia while engaged at work (at the) picric acid plant about a year ago,” The News reported.
“Mr. Baldwin had a contract with the corporation for the burial of all employees who died while engaged by them, and when the bill was presented for the interment and embalming of the Porto Ricans, the defendants declined payment on the grounds that the bodies were improperly buried and that they had not been embalmed.

“A large number of the bodies were exhumed after several months for the purpose of verifying this fact. A large number of witnesses have been summoned by both sides and the case is being strongly contested.”

Wes Wolfe