

THE HAPPY DAYS OF MILLARD TAWES

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By RALPH REPERT

QUIETLY, after inauguration ceremonies in January installed Spiro T. Agnew as the new Governor of Maryland, J. Millard Tawes handed aside his high silk hat, slipped out of his long-tailed Prince Albert, and shrugged into a sports coat, still wearing the formal morning trousers.

In this ensemble, now topped by a soft, informal hat, he moved away from Annapolis, the State House, the Mansion and the limelight in which he had lived as the State's first citizen for eight years.

Just as quietly he and Mrs. Tawes slipped back into the gentle stream of life in Crisfield, the little fishing town of 3,000 down at the bottom of the Eastern Shore where both were born and reared.

Today an old "loose-leaf" wooden barrel on a weedy parking lot off Main street in Crisfield stands as a casually descriptive monument to a man relaxed and contented in his retirement.

The former Governor made arrangements for a private parking space near his Main street office. A friend marked the space for him with a sign affixed temporarily to an old seafood barrel in the final stages of collapse. It was the handiest thing.

Townsppeople looked at the barrel and grinned. Here was a famous local son, tended by butler, chauffeur and footman for eight years, parking his own station

wagon in a space marked by a ramshackle old barrel.

"That old barrel," one native said, "it's plain, it's loose, it's easy, it's relaxed, and it does its job. It reminds me of Millard hisself."

Now the Governor, as many of his friends still address him, grins every time he parks.

Governor and Mrs. Tawes came back to Crisfield with a dream that took shape during his second administration.

"Tell you what, Lulu," he would say, using the affectionate term by which both he and the grandchildren know Mrs. Tawes, "we'll go back to Crisfield one day, and you can pack a picnic basket, and we'll get in the boat and head 'er for where the fish are biting, and we'll go fishing every day we want to.

"We'll drop anchor and fish and listen to the gulls and talk."

IT seemed the perfect retreat from the better part of a busy decade spent as the State's top administrator—eight long sessions of the Legislature with a thousand bills to sign or veto at each, special sessions, public functions that filled the days from early morning well into the night.

Mr. Tawes was able to relax the minute he stepped out of office.

"I felt it," he says, "on my first day as a former Governor. It is relaxing to make a decision which is not going to affect 3½ million people."

After three quarters of a year, life

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Relaxation, Contentment
Mark the Life of the Two-Term
Governor, Back—but Not
Idle—in His Home Town, Crisfield

Photos by A. AUBREY BODINE

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in Crisfield has not yet evolved into the idyllic fishing trip every other day, but it is moving in that direction.

Governor and Mrs. Tawes live in a white clapboard Cape Cod house, called Miramar, at 117 Hall highway on a wide promontory lapped by waters of the Little Annemessex River. They learned to love the site long ago, when they built a summer home there. Seventeen years ago they built their present home adjoining that. When their son was mustered out of the Air Force he brought his family to live in the summer home until he could find or build a permanent place. This family, too, fell in love with the site, added a few rooms to the house, and settled down.

The three Tawes grandchildren and a

black cocker spaniel named Butch keep both houses and the wide, sloping lawns pretty lively through the day. But a hush—the soft, deep hush that happens only on the water—falls at dusk. It is the Governor's and Mrs. Tawes' favorite time of day. As the sun sets on the water, it lights up a rippling path of red-gold that seems to reach right into the room.

In comparisons by which most men are measured, Governor Tawes, though retired and 73, is still a busy man. He gets up at 6 o'clock, a habit acquired as a young man, when he was production manager of one of his family's packing companies. Mrs. Tawes sleeps a little later.

He may take a turn around the neigh-

borhood with Butch to get the feel of the day and the smell of the weather. Shortly afterward he drives downtown, parks at the barrel, chats with old friends on the street, and enters the office in a suite which he shares with his brother, who is in insurance and real estate.

The Governor's small and simple, plywood-paneled office is a hodgepodge which reflects his political and civic interests. The walls are covered with photographs of the politically great and near-great dating back to Jim Farley and original editorial cartoons drawn by Yardley and Jack Lambert. As far as he knows, he is the only remaining charter member (1922) of the Crisfield Rotary Club, and a prominent place on the wall is given to the Rotary 4-Way Test:

Is it the truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build good will and better fellowship? Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

THE Governor now needs only a part-time secretary, Mrs. Jean Ward, who has added her own bit to the confusion on the walls, a motto which reads: **THE BOSS MAY NOT ALWAYS BE RIGHT—BUT HE IS ALWAYS THE BOSS.**

There is plenty of work to fill out Mrs. Ward's short schedule. Governor Tawes is still director of a Crisfield bank, director of the McCready Memorial Hospital in Crisfield, director of the Peninsula General Hospital in Salisbury, chairman of the executive committee of the

Delmarva General Council, honorary president of the Constitutional Convention.

A yachting, hunting and fishing enthusiast from his youth, he has long been a mainstay of the Chesapeake Fishing Fair Association, and for years he was one of the owners of the Fox Island Rod and Gun Club. Other lifetime activities include top administrative positions in the Immanuel Methodist Church, where he still teaches a men's Bible class, and volunteer firefighting organizations all over the State.

Socially, he has been a joiner and doer—Elks, Masons, Rotary, Knights of Pythias, Junior Order, United American Mechanics, Hibernian Society of Balti-

more, Maryland Society of Pennsylvania, and numerous other groups.

Mrs. Tawes has a similar, though slightly shorter, list of busy contacts. She is active in library, hospital, church and Rotary work, and belongs to a small (one-table) bridge club in which "all of us have been playing since we were brides." She also does much of the cooking, and leaves the rest of the housework up to "Doc," the household's only permanent help. "Doc," who is Winter Hall, a Crisfield native, was the Governor's butler in Annapolis.

The Taweses find time to do things together. Mrs. Tawes, a former voice, piano and organ student at Peabody in

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Baltimore, still plays the organ. The Governor, as a young man, played sax and trumpet with the Crisfield Volunteer Fire Department Band. He still enjoys music, but hasn't the lip for trumpet any more. "I gave that old horn to my son, and he turned into a first class musician with it."

The two get out now and then on the Lulu, the cruiser presented to the Governor by friends at a testimonial party not long ago.

THE Taweses' most recent joint project was the addition, last fall, of a clubroom which has taken on the look of a trophy room. The cherry paneling hangs and the shelves fairly sag with the hundreds of mementos Millard accumulated in eight years as Governor. There are honorary doctorates from educational institutions. ("I like to think of my administration as one which moved education along in Maryland.") There are plaques, awards, statuary.

One of his proudest plaques is an award of recognition from Wesley College, his alma mater. Other favorites include several from volunteer fire companies. ("I'm still a small town fireman at heart.")

A tremendous marlin the Governor caught dominates one wall, a prize dolphin another. The walnut desk and leather-bound chair in the room were those he used in the Mansion at Annapolis. Atop the desk is a gold telephone, the one he used as Governor, presented to him by the telephone company. There's a cane-bottom rocker presented by the governor of North Carolina, a comfortable leatherbound chair made of a Bourbon whisky barrel, a gift from the governor of Kentucky.

The State's Great Seal from the Maryland Pavilion at the World's Fair decorates a wall. A bronze plaque from the Maryland Pavilion has been fitted with

white oak frame and legs to form a coffee table. Another eyecatcher in the room is a beautifully bound book, given to the Governor by Bennett Cerf, entitled "What I Know about Politics," by J. Millard Tawes. Everybody who enters the room picks up the book and leafs through it—and discovers that every page is blank.

The Governor and Mrs. Tawes enjoy the room and spend a lot of time in it. He seldom misses a major sports event on TV. He is a former athlete himself—high school basketball, semi-pro baseball (first base, pitcher) with a now long-gone Salisbury team. He has arranged his Bible class schedule at the church so it allows him to be in his familiar seat at the Stadium—first row mezzanine, 50-yard line—when the Colts play at home.

In between such activities he enjoys himself a hundred times a day in chance meetings with old friends. Crisfield is more of a family than a town.

THE Tawes family, one of the oldest in the section, has been active in businesses ranging from baking, shipbuilding, banking, printing and lumber to sea-food packing, real estate, basketmaking and ice production. It would be difficult to name any facet of the local economy in which the Governor is not informed and interested.

Like his townspeople, he has never lost the power of wonder. The tricks of the weather, the price of oysters, where the fish are biting, the trim lines of somebody's new boat—all lend themselves to relaxed, casual, small-town talk. Because he enjoys such contacts, the Governor prefers to walk over to the drugstore for his own cigars, to stroll to the post office for his own mail.

"I'm home," he says, "and enjoying every day of it.

"Sometimes I get the feeling that I never really left Crisfield."

Mr. Tawes with his part-time secretary, Mrs. Jean Ward, in the little plywood-paneled office where the walls reflect both his political and his civic interests.

