

EDITORIALS & COMMENT

IS THE HATCH ACT OUTDATED?

When millions of Americans now on government payrolls, it would seem that the current provisions of the Hatch Act is far outdated and possibly may not even be needed.

It will be recalled that such Act was put into law during the days of the Roosevelt Administration by the Republicans to cut down on the political activity of many of government workers. It would appear that thoughts prevailed that most campaign activity would be geared to Democratic progress and as such, the Hatch Act could cut down on the activity.

However, interesting arguments are being proposed now to either liberalize the Act and perhaps, cut it out entirely. During the Democratic convention recently, one of the delegates was informed that she no longer held her job since she was in Miami, carrying out her so delegated responsibilities. In fact, she received a telegram informing her that she had been fired from her job.

This right of American citizens

to participate more fully in the election process ought not be denied them. Ways must be found to give them wider leeway in seeking offices or supporting their choices. If such cannot be achieved, then we handicap rather than improve the quality of our representative form of government. We need all sorts of diversity among the electorate.

We find that other major western governments have found ways to limit the restrictions on their Civil Service employees who desire to support candidates or even seek office themselves. We also recognize that safeguards must be assured that higher-ups in the government do not take unfair advantage of their employees. Such safeguards must be assured and perhaps they are now available.

Certainly it would appear that the millions of Americans now on governmental payrolls ought not have to give up their basic Constitutional rights in order to work for their governments.

WHO ARE THEY?

This interesting little question may be heard over and over again whenever anything does not go right. This becomes especially true when things that we can't pin down are given this nebulous entity. For "they" are likely to get the blame.

Presently "they" befall the environment. Consumers say "they" build faulty appliances or sell us faulty cars. At the moment the tax increases become "they" as well as the utility companies seeking increases.

As the typical executive of a power company looks out of his window, perhaps he is thinking of power failures and other awesome expenses of the city. He wonders whether or not the millions of service requirements which his company must meet during these un-

seasonably hot periods if the energy will hold up. Further, in his mind, he must plan and show the population that somehow abundant energy is the basis of a wholesome environment as well as convince the public of the need for rate increases.

There are a lot of "theys" like this typical executive, both large and small. All are faced with the same problems that are the outgrowth of expanding services, urban renewal and crowded city areas, educational facilities and many others.

But, then "they" are also among the doers and achievers who get the blame whenever anything goes wrong. However, the task still must be completed and "they" will move ahead despite critics.

APPOINTMENTS MAKE HISTORY

The involvement of women, blacks and other minorities in the Democratic National Convention appears to have culminated in history making appointments this week.

A woman, Mrs. Jean Westwood of Utah, was chosen to become the party's national chairman, and a Black, Basil A. Patterson, was selected as its vice chairman.

The lessons in political expediency shows that despite the many bruised feelings and what not on the part of many who were so involved at the convention, the political future at hand was to choose a Black and a woman to serve in those capacities.

We are proud that the political expediency makers so followed this route. With all the talk about the "new elements which controlled

the Democratic convention as being "ungrateful" toward the party stalwarts who had worked faithfully for many years and deserved recognition, it was a wise choice.

The element of change is in the wind and has been for some time. Further, critics forget that women and many minorities have been the unrecognized people in the party (in fact, in all parties). So in order to be felt within any organization, there must be some displacement of the old.

We see that the Democratic National Committee has further carried the party's reforms to its logical conclusion. It is now up to many State and other local organizations to try to further the reforms as well, both in fact and by deed.

Things You Should Know



William Wells
BROWN

BORN IN LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY, IN 1816, OF A SLAVE MOTHER AND A SLAVE-OWNER FATHER, HE BECAME AN ACTIVE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD WORKER! HE LECTURED FAR AND WIDE FOR THE AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY FROM 1843 TO 1849, THEN TOURED ENGLAND AND FRANCE! HE WON INTERNATIONAL FAME ALSO AS A WRITER AND AS ONE OF THE EARLIEST AND GREATEST HISTORIANS OF THE NEGRO.

CONTINENTAL FEATURES

The Choice Is Yours For A Cleaner Community ...



STUDY SHOWS THAT JOKES ABOUT ELDERLY USUALLY PORTRAY NEGATIVE ATTITUDE

by Vance Whitfield

Conjure up an image of an old person and what do you get?

Chances are the picture will characterize the senior citizen as feeble, senile, unattractive or someone to be avoided.

Dr. Erdman Palmore, a professor of Medical Sociology at Duke University Medical Center who has done extensive research in the field of gerontology, proposed to document society's general outlook about elderly people by taking a close look at humor about them.

Proceeding on Plato's theory that "humor reflects basic attitudes" and a classical theory of humor by the Greek philosopher, Jamblichus, that "comedy emphasizes the ugly in order to demand a chance for something preferable," Palmore studied hundreds of jokes about old people.

He concentrated on 264 and analyzed the point of their humor.

He found that more than half the jokes reflected a negative view of aging and that those dealing with physical ability, appearance, age concealment, old maids, mental

ability, retirement and death were also mostly negative.

Palmore found that the most frequent joke subject was longevity followed by physical ability, sexual ability and age concealment. Nearly all of the age concealment jokes dealt with women and reflected negative views. The jokes about older women tended to be more negative than jokes about older men.

For example, the term old maid has a negative connotation, but there is no corresponding term for men such as "old bachelor."

The one liner, "my wife hasn't had a birthday in six years," is illustrative of the types of comments about age concealment.

An old maid was referred to in some of the jokes as an evaporated peach, a lemon that had never been squeezed. "Unmarried elderly women," said Palmore, "are thought of as lonely and frustrated as indicated by the humor about them."

One joke about old maids speaks eloquently of how the older unmarried woman is regarded. The 80-year-old spinster, the joke goes, complained

to a neighbor that she had trouble during the night because a man kept banging on her door. "Why not open it?" the neighbor inquired. "What, and let him out?" she replied.

Retirement jokes were equally divided between positive and negative attitudes. One with negative connotations is about the mother who told the elderly teacher that her son was unhappy because he had to remain in school until he was 15. "That's nothing," snapped the teacher, "I have to stay here until I'm 65."

A definition of age also reflected society's general attitude toward old people. Age: "That period of life in which we compound the vices that we still cherish by reviling those we no longer have the enterprise to commit."

Other jokes Palmore cited as reflecting societal attitudes were:

Sexual ability: A 90-year-old man was married to a 20-year-old girl and four days later he died, but it took the undertaker a week to get the smile off his face.

Longevity: You are as old as you feel but seldom as important.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PUBLISHES JULY ISSUE OF QUARTERLY JOURNAL

A tribute to Frederick Douglass, an essay about author Owen Wister, an article on measuring mountains and rivers, and a summary of the recent acquisitions of the Rare Book Division are found in the July 1972 issue of the *Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress*.

On January 17, 1972 when the papers of Frederick Douglass were transferred from the National Park Service to the Library of Congress, Benjamin Quarles, Professor of History at Morgan State College in Baltimore and Honorary Consultant in American History to the Library of Congress, delivered a tribute to the famed abolitionist, orator, and journalist. The speech, "Frederick Douglass, Black Impresario," reprinted in the *Quarterly Journal*, discusses Douglass' career and his contributions as a social critic and an activist. Douglass, Mr. Quarles says, was "a man of no mean stature, (who) cast a long shadow because of this sense of humanity and his willingness to battle for his convictions."

Julian Mason, Professor of English at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and former Specialist in American Cultural History in the Library's Manuscript Division, explores the background of a turn-of-the-century author in the article, "Owen Wister, Champion of Old Charleston." A popular writer of fiction about the American West, most notably *The Virginian* Wister captured his audience with the publication in 1906 of *Lady Baltimore*, a nostalgic novel about Charleston, South Carolina, state bulwark of the gracious old South. Mr. Mason

traces Wister's frequent trips to the city and his visits with elderly aristocratic family friends who inspired his book. Wister years later wrote of his novel, "In *Lady Baltimore*, my portrait of Charleston, the emphasis is laid upon the passing elders more than upon the coming youth, for the sake of a precious thing that was never to return." Mr. Mason's article which also discusses Wister's friendship with President Theodore Roosevelt and Henry James and their visits with him in Charleston, is documented with excerpts from correspondence, much of which is contained in the Owen Wister Papers in the Library's Manuscript Division, and is illustrated with photographs of vintage Charleston.

In the third article, "The Heights of Mountains and Lengths of Rivers," John A. Wolter, Assistant Chief of the Geography and Map Division, traces the historical development of the profiling convention—the use of profiles to depict the earth's surface or underwater features, particularly to compare heights and depths. The technique originated in Egypt, was revived in the late Renaissance, and has passed with modification, particularly in accuracy of measurement, into our own time. Mr. Wolter's article concentrates on the development of the illustrative and scientific profiles drawn during the 19th century which evolved, among them the center peak style with mountains clustered in the middle and rivers shown on either side, and the double hemisphere style in which the two hemispheres are shown with com-

parative heights arranged below and rivers above. The article is accompanied with reproductions of atlas plates, notes, and two diagrams showing the chronology of the profile technique and the evolution of style of comparative atlas plates.

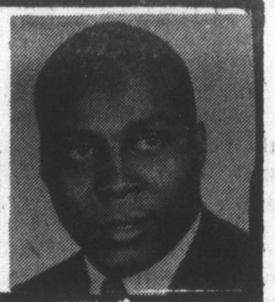
In the final article, "Recent Acquisitions of the Rare Book Division," Frederick Goff, who retired as Division Chief June 30, describes the past year's additions to the rare book collections. The wide variety of items include sermons and novels, chronicles and poems, proclamations and missals, and range in subject matter from a poem commemorating the death of a pet parrot to an attack on medical quacks, from the Republican platform of 1860 to an act of Parliament changing the calendar, and from the moon as it appeared to 17th-century astronomers to the view it presented to the Apollo-Saturn V astronauts three centuries later. The additions noted were made to the Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, the Alfred Whitall Stern Collection of Lincolniana, and to the Library's holdings related to the American Revolution.

The July issue of the *Quarterly Journal* is available by mail from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, or in person at the Information Counter, Ground Floor of the Main Building of the Library of Congress. The price of this issue is 65 cents. Subscriptions are \$2.50 per year domestic, 75 cents additional for foreign mailing.

To Be Equal

BARRIERS TO BLACK VOTING

By VERNON E. JORDAN, Jr.



This year's election could be one of the most crucial of the century, an election in which decisions will be made that could affect the course of this nation for the next decade or so, but millions of citizens will be robbed of their right to participate in the vital electoral process that affects their lives.

This is because the right to vote has been burdened by complicated and cumbersome registration procedures that, in effect, exclude poor people and minorities from the ballot.

The South has always been pointed to as the region that kept black people from voting. The landmark Voting Rights Act of 1965 helped to change that, although some parts of the South still set up roadblocks. But a new research study by the National Urban League, "Abridging the Right to Vote," shows that many northern and western communities are just as reluctant to encourage full citizen participation in elections today, as the South has been historically.

It is well known that there is a smaller voter turnout for American elections than for other Western countries. The popular explanation for this has always stressed voter apathy, but it is now apparent that the real reason is the external impediments placed in the path of many people.

These barriers are especially significant in the inner-city and in smaller metropolitan areas. Residency requirements are among the most effective means of keeping citizens away from the polling booth. Some 33 states have rules requiring one year's residence in the state before one can vote, and most states have the same one-year rule for residence in the county or the precinct.

It is well known that we are the most mobile country in

Happiness: A 90-year-old man was asked how he felt. "Great," he said, "when you consider the alternative."

Death: As two old men watched a friend getting buried, one observed that they were both 90. "Hardly worth going home, is it?" the other remarked.

The fact is, says Palmore, studies indicate many older people actually look forward to retirement years.

the world, but election officials still cling to residency requirements more suited to the old New England town meeting style of government. It is clear that such unreasonable residency requirements prevent millions from voting and fall disproportionately upon minority groups that have high mobility rates within states or cities.

The registration process itself is a formidable barrier to voting. In many states, registration ends two months or more before the elections—that is, well before the publicity of the campaign stimulates voter interest. In many states, registration ends well before the primaries, cutting even more potential voters from the rolls.

Most year-round registration offices are only open from 9 to 5, thus effectively preventing working people and the poor from registering. Not many people are willing or able to lose a day's pay to register. Many cities open temporary registration offices with evening or weekend hours for a limited period, but these are open for only a few days and there is so little publicity that most people never even know about them.

Since registration offices are located "downtown"—far from the ghetto, distance is an effective barrier as well. Few cities have really attempted to open temporary offices in the ghetto during registration periods, utilize mobile units and neighborhood registrars, or make other efforts to reach potential black voters.

Literacy tests long used against blacks in the South, are now used in some states, including liberal ones like New York, to keep Spanish-speaking citizens and some blacks from registering. And many states bar convicted felons from the ballot, a rule that is said to result in disqualifying over 1.5 million people, many of whose convictions were for relatively trivial offenses.

There are plenty of other administrative regulations and local laws that keep people out of the system when they should be used to include them. It looks like the biggest reason not enough citizens participate in the electoral system is the system itself.

UP FROM SLAVERY

REV. JOSIAH HENSON

1789-1853

WHO WAS RECEIVED BY ENGLAND'S QUEEN VICTORIA IN 1837 WAS BORN A SLAVE IN MARYLAND. FOR 41 YEARS HE LIVED IN SLAVERY. DURING THOSE YEARS HE MARRIED AND PREACHED THE GOSPEL TO HIS FELLOW SLAVES. LATER TO MIXED CONGREGATIONS UNTIL HE WAS FINALLY ACCEPTED AS A PREACHER IN THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH. IN 1828 HE SOUGHT HIS FREEDOM BY PURCHASE BUT AFTER GIVING HIS OWNER MONEY HE REALIZED HE WAS BEING A VICTIM OF FRAUD AND WAS TO BE SOLD. HE ESCAPED IN 1830



TO UPPER CANADA WITH HIS FAMILY. HE BECAME A LEADER AMONG OTHER FUGITIVE SLAVES. IN 1841 HE ORGANIZED A GROUP OF ABOLITIONISTS AND FOUNDED THE FIRST VOCATIONAL SCHOOL IN CANADA-BRITISH-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR FUGITIVE SLAVES NEAR THE TOWN OF DRESDEN, ONT. HARRIET BEECHER STOWE USED HIS LIFE AS A SLAVE IN HER BEST SELLING NOVEL IN 1852—UNCLE TOM'S CABIN.

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