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How Poor Are We?

HOW poor is this southwestern section of North Carolina? Several months ago The Raleigh News and Observer made this comment about the area:

"While other wealthier sections of the state prospered, five western counties—Clay, Cherokee, Graham, Macon, and Swain—have grown poorer and poorer. Between 1940 and 1950, the population of the five-county area dropped approximately 5 per cent and its income dropped to a per capita average of \$50.

The News and Observer comment followed speeches in which Mr. Hodges, who hails from Asheville, had cited these and other figures to show what a terrible plight this area is in, and to urge industrialization as the solution.

The 1950 census figures no doubt are correct in showing a slight drop in population, though two of the five counties—Macon and Graham—showed increases in the past decade.

But either the figure on per capita income is wrong or a lot of other figures are.

Each of the five counties, for example, showed a substantial increase in tax valuation, per capita, according to figures compiled by We The People, Raleigh publication of the N. C. Citizens association.

The average property tax valuation for every man, woman, and child in Graham county was 6.3 per cent greater in 1950 than in 1940; that in Swain 23.5 per cent greater; that in Cherokee 45.5; that in Clay 95.1.

And Macon, with an increase of 120.8 per cent, stood fifth in North Carolina. The only counties showing greater per capita property valuation increase were Dare, Person, Randolph, and Transylvania.

And the Nantahala Power and Light company has compiled some significant figures for the slightly different area that concern serves. The Nantahala Company serves these five counties in the extreme southwest, plus Jackson.

Here are some of the Nantahala data:

In the 20 years between 1930 and 1950, the total tax valuation in these six counties jumped from \$38,796 to \$56,181,037, a gain of approximately \$55 million dollars.

It is true that a part of that gain is attributable to the power company's hydro-electric developments—but not all. The Nantahala properties rose in valuation from \$5,676,868 to \$12,885,506, an increase of about 7 million dollars. That leaves an increase of nearly 5 million dollars.

This \$5,000,000 increase, chiefly in small businesses, farms, and homes, represents a tax valuation increase of more than 12 per cent.

Bank deposits in these six counties grew during the 20-year period from \$2,177,926 to \$10,901,830, an increase of about 500 per cent. The power company's investment in bank deposits were obtained from published reports of the various banks in the area.

In 20 years the number of electric consumers the power company serves has shot up from 431 to 8,855. Presently the present total is an average of one electric service connection for every two families. That raises the question: How could a man with a \$50-a-year income pay for electricity?

Challenging the idea that this area is becoming "poorer and poorer" are the facts, recited in the Nantahala company brochure, that "there have been numerous bond issues voted for the construction of schools and roads, and the dozens of new houses that have been built in the past several years."

Information gained in discussions with the various county agents in the area, it continues, "indicates that from an agricultural standpoint, all of the counties are doing well." In Macon, for instance, the number of Grade A dairies is 20 times what it was in 1936.

The 20 years since 1930, the Nantahala company research reveals, only 35 industrial plants of various sizes have been located in the six-county

area. (Meanwhile, of course, others that were here 20 years ago have closed or moved away.)

That is industrialization on a small scale indeed, and of those 35 plants, Macon probably has received less than her share, on a basis of population and area.

Yet Macon, with little industrialization, has shown a slight gain in population, and its taxable wealth, per person, has increased faster than that of any county in the state, save four!

We here in Western North Carolina need a proper economic balance—agriculture, tourists, lumbering, mining, industry. And it is possible that we are somewhat under-industrialized.

But these figures—and plenty more could be cited—rather emphatically contradict the widespread idea that industry is a panacea for all economic ills—that a community has but one choice:

That it either must attract an ever-growing number of factories, or become "poorer and poorer".

Macon County has done neither.

A Great Opportunity

Next month a new superintendent will take over the administration of Macon County's schools.

In the sense that he is a stranger, Mr. Holland McSwain will "start even" in this county; most of us have no personal knowledge about him, either good or bad. We can, and should, therefore, judge him solely upon the record he makes.

Undoubtedly he will make mistakes. But the people of this county are remarkably tolerant of mistakes, so long as those mistakes are overbalanced by constructive achievement; and they will judge him on how well he does the over-all job.

He has a remarkable opportunity, and a heavy responsibility. For he comes to a county that is school-conscious; a community that wants the very best for its children; one whose people have proved, time and again, that they are willing and ready to work and to sacrifice for good schools. All the evidence is that Macon County is ready for a tremendous educational advance.

But if Mr. McSwain faces opportunity and responsibility, what about the rest of us? After all, they are our schools and our children. It is we whose stake is greatest. The success of the schools is even more important to us than to him; because what happens to the schools during the next few years will affect not only the future of this county, but the future of every one of 4,000 school children.

The situation presents a wonderful opportunity and a great responsibility to all of us. Because how fast the schools advance will depend very largely upon how well we all work together toward the common goal—a better opportunity for all of our children; upon the cooperation and support the new superintendent receives from all of us—principals, teachers, and, most important, the average man and woman.

What Is It?

One of the pleasantest things about being editor of The Press is the letters to the editor—occasionally for publication, but more often not—that come from all over.

The paper goes to former Macon County people in nearly all the states and to several foreign countries, and often these Macon natives send letters along with subscription renewals. Frequently it is a brief word of commendation of The Press, or of community progress as reflected in the columns of the paper. And last week we received one that contained about the nicest compliment of all.

It was from Mrs. Albert E. Skaggs (the former Miss Edith Corbin of this county), who for many years has made her home in Portland, Oregon. Mrs. Skaggs remarked that her hobby is making scrapbooks, and she added that she has four scrapbooks filled exclusively with clippings from The Press:

We are flattered. Pleased as we are, though, we realize that the chief compliment is not to the paper but to the community in which it is published. And that raises again a question that constantly recurs:

What is it about Macon County that binds its one-time sons and daughters to it with a loyalty that, no matter how long they are away, never lessens?

Our American Civilization

Turning the radio on full blast—then going off and leaving it.

Gaining strength of character in youth by meeting the difficulties usually found in rural areas. Moving to town so our children won't have to meet those difficulties.

Worrying, quite properly, over the 33 Americans being killed every day by Chinese Communist bullets, but being undisturbed over the 99 Americans killed every day by American automobiles.

OUR DEMOCRACY

THE AMERICAN DREAM



THE RIGHT TO DREAM, AND DO—THE RIGHT OF US ALL— IS THE ESSENCE OF OUR DEMOCRACY.



TO DEFEND THAT RIGHT, YOUTH ONCE AGAIN PUTS ITS PEACEFUL DREAMS ASIDE AND PREPARES TO CONFRONT FORCES THAT WOULD TRAMPLE DREAMS INTO DUST.

War In Korea Nears End Of 1st Year; United Nations Prepares 'Chronology'

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Since next Sunday will be the first anniversary of the outbreak of war in Korea, the following article, prepared by a United Nations commission, is particularly timely. Copies of "A Korea Chronology", in two parts, may be obtained free by writing the United Nations, New York City.)

There was little in newspapers of Saturday, June 24, 1950, to prevent readers throughout the world from enjoying a quiet week-end. Aside from local items, the headlines had nothing more disquieting than a cabinet crisis in Western Europe and a minor dispute about delays to barge traffic in Berlin.

Then the news changed. On Sunday, June 25, 50,000 North Korean troops were reported to have fought their way to within 20 miles of Seoul, capital of South Korea.

The consequences of that day are described in "A Korea Chronology", a pamphlet just published by the United Nations in New York. Meeting the same day, the United Nations Security Council voted a resolution calling for immediate cessation of hostilities in Korea and the withdrawal of North Korean troops to the Thirty-Eighth Parallel.

The resolution was passed by a 9-0 vote, with one abstention. The Soviet Union delegate was not present. On June 27, the Security Council met again and recommended that members of the United Nations "furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the area."

Thus the principle of collective security, one of the foundation stones of the United Nations, was put to test in the gravest crisis affecting world peace since the end of World War II. This principle, it has been pointed out by Dr. A. Appadorai, Secretary-General of the Indian Council of World Affairs, in a pamphlet written at the request of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) for use of teachers in secondary schools and adult classes, is based upon the premise that there must be a rule of law among nations as well as among individuals.

Collective security, for nations as well as individuals, represents the road to this goal. It means three things:

- 1. Nations must agree to the principle that in matters affecting other nations besides their own, they will accept the rule of conduct laid down by a common international authority as binding on themselves. 2. They must agree to renounce the right to settle disputes by making war. 3. They must bind themselves to regard any act of war by any state in breach of this primary obligation as an act of war against themselves and come to the assistance of the victim of aggression.

- Happiness is not the end of life; character is.—Henry Ward Beecher. We dread what we do not understand.—Arthur Brisbane. Education is only second to nature.—Herbert Bushnell. Worry is a thought with the mind out of tune.—J. Parkes Cadman. Public opinion is the child of democracy.—Nicholas Murray Butler.

Business Making News

By BOB SLOAN

Folks, there is a great day coming. It has been written before, but most of the time inaccurately by this alleged reporter. But at last Bruce Palmer says that he is going to have an open house celebrating the completion of the new Franklin Feed Mill plant.

By August, it looks as if Macon motorists will have a chance to sample a new brand of gas the way the work is progressing on the new AMCO filling station being constructed by the newly formed Nantahala Oil company, W. C. Burrell's latest venture.

I wonder what the effect would be if every person who goes to Nantahala fishing, picnicking, or just for the trip would on their return sit down and write the officials of the North Carolina State highway department telling them of the need for a paved road from Franklin to Nantahala.

Look for combination Home Demonstration Achievement Day 4-H club Achievement Day to be a forerunner of a county fair here. Believe the event will come this year.

Several filling station men have told me that there appears to be more tourist travel on the road this year than last. Undoubtedly the Cherokee pageant will draw more people this year than last as it becomes better known.

Tip to the merchants-veterans here have started receiving the second round of National Service life insurance benefit checks. However this time it is only those who are still carrying their policies.

Do You Remember?

the files of The Press (Looking backward through)

50 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Municipal affairs are moving on serenely in this town under two administrations. There may come a day when a little cash may be needed to grease the wheels of progress, then it is important to know which is which and what is what.

The Tennis club has been doing some work on the ground selected for their court. The members expect to put it in first class order, and conduct the games strictly according to the prescribed rules, and doubtless will attract a good deal of attention when fully under way.

A crowd of night-caps made a raid Saturday night on a quarter inhabited by a very undesirable class of citizens, of somewhat indeterminate color, about three miles below Franklin, and whipped a number of the denizens, and tore down the house.

25 YEARS AGO

Macon County's educational system made another step toward perfection this week when contracts were let for the erection of a new eight-room school building and the operation of busses to and from the Franklin graded school.

The new furniture for the Hotel Franklin has arrived and will be placed in the rooms this week.

It is suggested that the town board pass no more ordinances for the public to ignore.

Mr. A. D. Rogers is just completing a Delco lighting system, which will provide lights for the business section of town. (Highlands News.)

10 YEARS AGO

A fire which burned late Monday afternoon at the Wayah Supply depot was reported by the Nantahala Forest Service to have done approximately \$3,000 worth of damage.

There will be a street preaching by Rev. E. E. Snow, evangelist, on the Square on Saturday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock.

Camerasmen spent Wednesday in the Nantahala National Forest filming a "Voice of the Globe", MGM Travel Talk.