

WEIMAR JONES

Editorial Page Editor

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THURSDAY, SEPT 17, 1959

LET'S DO IT RIGHT!

Remodeling Courthouse

It has long been the hope of this newspaper that it would prove practicable to remodel the present courthouse.

Aside from the important matter of cost, the building seemed too sturdy and its historic value too great for it to be discarded without careful investigation of its possibilities.

That hope, though, has been qualified from the first by an if. Remodeling should be the choice only if and when there was conclusive evidence that the result would be a structure that would be adequate, convenient, and beautiful—a courthouse we could be proud of.

The way to find out, it has always seemed to us, was to consult an architect—and no money could be better spent than for a really good architect—and get his suggestions as to exactly what could be done, and how, and at what cost.

Previous public meetings on the courthouse problem have proved rather fruitless, for lack of exact facts and specific proposals based on facts.

Now the county commissioners have voted to remodel. Obviously, they would not have reached a decision without having something definite and specific to base it on. We take it for granted they have consulted an architect, and so will be in position, at the public meeting they have called for September 30, to tell the public just what they have in mind.

Meanwhile, we suspect most Maconians agree with what this newspaper urged two months ago:

That a mere patching-up job would be a waste of money; that "if we're going to remodel . . . then it should be a thoroughgoing job—a complete remodeling, modernizing, and beautifying."

Cause Of Confusion

A major cause of much of the confusion in today's world, it seems to us, is the tendency to assume that the end justifies the means—a tendency that appears to be growing among those in high place.

If the end is good enough, many persons are frank to say they favor using whatever means may be necessary to attain that end; whether those means are good or bad, wise or foolish, based on principle or on temporary expediency.

Aside from the moral issues involved, the result is that we create half a dozen new problems every time we solve one old one.

That tendency is illustrated by some of the 13 recommendations in last week's report of a badly divided Civil Rights Commission. A notable example is the commission's proposal that the Constitution of the United States be amended to outlaw literacy tests as a qualification for voting.

Now the commission seeks a good end—abolition of discrimination against Negroes when they seek to vote. Furthermore, it is probable that the literacy tests have sometimes been misused to disfranchise Negroes.

But the literacy test, in principle, is right; the U. S. Supreme Court has upheld it. And its wider, not narrower, use would seem desirable; for surely what we need is not a greater quantity of votes but more intelligence and honesty among voters. And surely the man who cannot read and write today either is too stupid or too indifferent to be safely trusted with the ballot.

It would make equally good sense to outlaw all swimming because occasionally a swimmer is drowned. In that area, though, we take the more sensible course—we teach swimming and safety measures.

LETTERS

Protests Power Deal

Dear Mr. Jones:

Your editorial on the Nantahala-Duke power situation is excellent. It paints a very clear picture of just what is going on. During the past few days I have talked with a number of people about this situation. Without exception, no one

"There's Always Somebody Faster, Slim!"



Civil Rights Report: Too Many Snakes

(GREENSBORO DAILY NEWS)

No wonder the Civil Rights Commission is badly split on its sweeping new recommendations designed to combat racial discrimination.

Even moderate Southerners on the commission opposed certain proposed constitutional amendments, and federal laws which would upset the traditional balance between state and federal government.

Key recommendation of the six-man commission—but opposed by one member, former Gov. John S. Battle of Virginia—calls for federal intervention if nine or more persons complain of having been denied the right to vote on a discriminatory basis.

seems to understand what is happening and what it might lead to in the future by way of power costs in Macon County.

I have tried to explain the situation as you have done in your editorial. I hope your editorial is read by all readers of The Press. I feel sure that many will get a different idea as to what could happen.

Today I sent a letter to the North Carolina Utilities Commission. I am not hopeful that my feeble protest will carry any weight, but if enough letters of protest are written the weight of public opinion may have some effect on the commission.

A copy of my letter is enclosed herewith for your information.

Franklin.

North Carolina Utilities Commission,
Raleigh, North Carolina

Dear Sirs:

This letter is written in protest of the proposed sale of PART of the physical assets and all of the good will of Nantahala Power and Light Company to Duke Power Company.

There is no apparent justification of this sale other than to satisfy the selfish interest of Aluminum Company of America. None of the communities served by Nantahala, none of its many customers who have played a large part in its growth, and none of its loyal employees will benefit to the slightest degree if this sale is approved by your commission. On the other hand, many hardships will be experienced and much loss of money will result from operation under the Duke Power rates.

Those natural resources which Nantahala (ALCOA) proposes to continue to use were given them by and through the people in the area. The use of these resources, together with the loyal support and confidence of the communities, has made Nantahala what it is today. How can the public interest be served by taking from them, the low cost power developed from their resources?

Nantahala has served the area well. It represents an industry of which the public is justly proud. Is it in the public interest to change all of this to satisfy the selfish interest of Alcoa? Is it in the public interest to transmit high cost power into the area by Duke and send low cost power out of the area into an adjoining state for the sole benefit of Alcoa?

Does Alcoa have no concern for the thousands of customers who have purchased and installed current consuming devices

The complainants would submit affidavits to the President who would relay them to the Civil Rights Commission for investigation. If the commission found the complaints to be valid, the President then would appoint any local federal official in the affected county or district to step in as registrar.

The federal official—he could be a postmaster—would handle these duties until the President saw fit to return registration to local control. Persons certified to vote would then be able to vote only for federal officers.

This recommendation stems from the commission's investigation of voting discrimination

in the Southern states, particularly Alabama and Louisiana, where large groups of Negro citizens are denied the ballot. The commission found little or no co-operation on the part of some white officials in recognizing voting rights.

This is an issue basic to representative government. If a Negro is a citizen, he should be treated as any other citizen in his right of franchise. What can be done when the race which controls the political machinery at the local level will not recognize basic rights?

Every intelligent American citizen recognizes the need for remedial action here, but all will not agree that control of election processes should be removed from local hands and enforced by Washington.

The answer, in the Daily News' opinion, is not more federal regimentation, which already has produced a continuing furor in the public schools.

The answer lies in education, appeal to the good conscience of the white South and assistance for Southerners anxious to correct abuses but unwilling to upset built-in balances to accomplish even worthy ends.

Obstinate, prejudiced men and women—both North and South—will vanish or mellow in their passions as time passes. But destructive changes in the division of powers between local and federal governments cannot be easily corrected once they are made.

The Daily News has been a longtime champion of basic rights of citizenship in a democracy. Every qualified citizen ought to be allowed to vote.

But the Civil Rights Commission is simply stirring up more snakes than it can kill by suggesting that the answer to a passing phase of racial discrimination is destruction of necessary balances between state and federal government.

Water And Watersheds

(Waynesville Mountaineer)

We have been interested in the research program carried on by The Franklin Press to determine the value of a watershed as against pumping water out of a creek.

The Press decided to start at the top and wrote the City of New York asking what they thought was the best way to get water. New York uses one billion gallons a day and has a half dozen sources from which to obtain this volume.

The head of the water department gave two reasons why he preferred watersheds: 1. Because water from watersheds is "inherently good." 2. Because the water can be delivered by gravity, "thereby eliminating the pumping costs."

We were interested in these two reasons because both of them fit perfectly into the Waynesville program.

While our water has to come a few short miles, the New York water has to flow many, many miles to get to the consumer.

So we can say again that according to the best engineers in the field, Waynesville has what they term the "ideal" water situation.

Strictly Personal

BY WEIMAR JONES

A great lady died last week. Few here knew her personally. Yet there is no one in Macon—or any other North Carolina county—who is not deeply in her debt; for her beneficent influence made itself felt, over a period of decades, in nearly every area of the state's life.

Now she is gone. And to her friends, North Carolina will never be quite the same again. Happily, though, for all of us, even those yet unborn, North Carolina will always be a better state because she lived in it.

How was it that the publisher of a small-town newspaper could so affect a whole state? Well, as is true in the case of every great man or woman, the explanation lies in character and personality.

Miss Beatrice Cobb loved people; and so she was loved. Her keen, but always kindly, sense of humor never forsook her; and so she was always sane. Perhaps most remarkable of all, though, was the com-

binion in her nature, in almost perfect proportions, of tolerance with conviction, of a sense of proportion with courage, and of hard, practical sense with deep-seated idealism.

Just short of three years ago, her Morganton News-Herald, which for years was a weekly, and then for another span of years a semi-weekly, became a daily. At that time, I wrote a little piece in this column about how the non-daily folks would miss her from their ranks, especially at press meetings.

The next time I saw her, someone had just called that little piece to her attention, and she thanked me for it. Then she added: "I think, Weimar, I'd like that for my obituary."

And so, though it is far from adequate as that, here it is:

In little newspaper offices and back shops, from one end of North Carolina to the other, there is sadness.

For the non-daily newspaper group has lost its most distinguished member.

Not by death—Miss Beatrice Cobb is very much alive; but by growth. The almost inevitable has happened—Miss Cobb's twice-a-week Morganton News-Herald has grown up into a daily.

The non-daily folks are happy, of course, that Miss Cobb's field has so grown as to demand a daily; they are proud (though not surprised) that Miss Cobb and her associates were ready, when the time came, to expand; and they are glad for Miss Cobb, and the state, that her newspaper's usefulness is to be expanded.

But, somehow, it won't seem quite right, when non-daily folks get together at press meetings, for Miss Cobb to be at the other end of the corridor, with the publishers of dailies.

Her example, though—not in going daily, but during all the years she was in the weekly, and then the semi-weekly, field—surely will be accepted by us on the little newspapers as a challenge.

Because Miss Cobb has proved a lot of things for us. She has proved that there need be no "a" in the term "weekly" newspaper. She has proved that the size of the paper or of the town has no relation to the bigness of the person on the little paper and in the little town; for she is known in almost every corner of the world, and wherever she is known she is respected—and if she's known well enough, is loved. Finally, they'll remember, as they sigh in regret, then go back to their beats and their typewriters, that Miss Cobb never has, and will not now, confuse mere quantity with quality.

And so, as "Miss Bea" moves into her new and expanded field, we on North Carolina's little newspapers say heartily, albeit a little sadly, a word that means a lot more than just good-bye—fare well.

WATCH OUT FOR THESE!

Watch out for these:

They are the 27 wild flowers and seven shrubs on the North Carolina conservation list. They have been put on the list because they either are rare or they require special conditions and treatment.

Thus, for one reason or the other, they may become extinct unless conserved and given a chance.

Wild flowers:

Aaron's rod, bird foot violet, bloodroot, brook saxifrage, blue dogbane, columbine, Dutchman's breeches, gentians (all species), ginseng, hepatica, jack-in-the-pulpit, lady's slipper (all species), lily (all), lobelia, lupines (all), maiden hair fern, mertensia virginica (blue bells), monk's hood, shortia, orchids (all), pitcher plant, shooting star, Solomon's seal, trailing arbutus, trailing ground evergreens, trillium, and Venus fly trap.

Shrubs:
American holly, dogwood, mountain laurel, redbud, wild azalea, rhododendron, and grandisre graybeard.

JUST LOOK WHO'S TALKING!

Government statisticians show concern over the fact that 25 per cent of American families live beyond their incomes. Look who's talking! — Marshalltown (In.) Times.

THE OPTIMIST GOES TO CHURCH

An optimist is a person who drops a quarter in the collection plate and expects a five dollar sermon.—Banking.

CAN THINK ANYWHERE

Mysteriously Illogical Adults

SOUTHERN PINES PILOT

We were visiting at a home where a four-year-old, almost five, had broken one of the rules of the establishment and was told to go to her room "and think about it."

It was a beautiful day, the first after days and days of rain. The child was outdoors (her offense was that she had walked too close to a small stream that ran through the woods behind the house, after being specially warned not to walk there) and the prospect of going indoors was intolerable to her.

So the conversation ran like this:

"Now go to your room and think about it. You know you went where you said you wouldn't go."

"No."

"Yes. Go along now."

"I'm not going, but I will think about it."

"Go in and think about it. In your room."

"I'll think about it right here."

"No, in your room."

"Why? I can think here, too. I'm thinking right now."

"Come on, now" (Mother starting to tug at arm of feet-planted little girl.)

"Stop. Leave me alone and let me think. You said you wanted me to think about it. Now you won't let me."

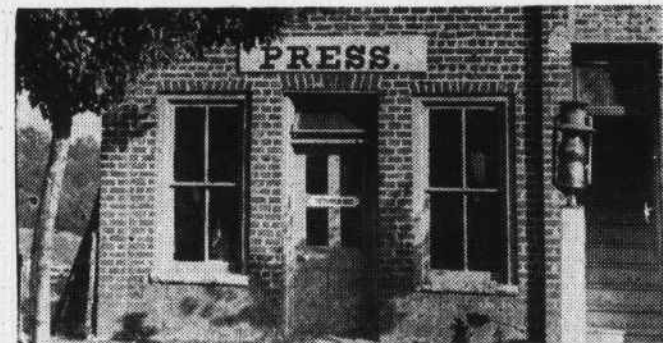
Well, of course, no parent could give in. Matter of fact. And the four-year-old did finally go with a heartbreaking reluctance. Her beautifully clear logic—that you can think as well in one place as another—had been rejected by what no doubt appeared to her as a mysteriously illogical adult.

In 15 minutes or so out she came, smiling and forgiven, trying to make a little social conversation by saying suddenly, "It looks as if it might cloud up and rain." (There wasn't a cloud in the sky.)

May the Lord forgive all us adults who laughed then as she spun away to a sandbox to build something not made with treacherous words.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Looking Backward Through the Files of The Press



65 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK (1894)

Following are current market prices for farm products:

Per bushel: Wheat, 75c; oats, 40c; corn, 60c; corn meal, 60c; potatoes (Irish), 25c.

Per pound: Butter, 15c; bacon, 12½c; lard, 12½c; tallow, 5c; honey, 10c; beeswax, 17c; hides (dry), 6c; hides (green), 3c; feathers, 40c; wool (clean), 24c; wool (burry), 15c.

Eggs, per dozen, 10c.

Molasses (sorghum), per gallon, 40c.

35 YEARS AGO (1924)

Messrs. J. Steve Porter, M. L. Dowdle, and J. S. Conley this week bought the stock of goods and general merchandise business of E. K. Cunningham and Son, located in the Hotel Franklin building, and will continue the business under the firm name of J. S. Porter & Co.

Hon. Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy during President Wilson's administration, and for many years editor of the News and Observer, spent a few hours in Franklin last Monday.

15 YEARS AGO (1944)

Mrs. W. B. Swann was elected president of the Franklin Garden Club at a meeting Monday afternoon.

Macon County Sunday schools will again be open this Sunday. They have not been meeting because of the infantile paralysis epidemic throughout the state.

5 YEARS AGO (1954)

Nancy Angel has been elected president of the Franklin school band for the 1954-55 school year.

How Serious Is Radioactive Fallout On Farms?

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is from Agribusiness Outlook, issued at Washington, D. C., as an industry-government report to agriculture.)

Recent disclosures of radioactive fallout in farming areas have raised the explosive question as to how much radioactivity actually gets into the nation's food supply. Fact is, nobody really knows for sure.

So far, the government has not indicated publicly that it has anything like a complete answer to the question. Furthermore, while there are signs some big move to get the answer is in the works, no all-out effort has been made to date—aside from some isolated tests.

While atomic detonations have been set off periodically by this country and Russia for at least the past 10 years,—researchers only now are coming up with some idea of how serious the contamination of farm-produced food raw materials really may be.

The issue, and its possible seriousness, was emphasized the other day when the Food & Drug Ad-

ministration announced the results of what began as a relatively minor and low-budget sampling for radioactivity in farm areas.

The FDA sampling suggests that radio-active fallout on farmland may be in greater concentrations than heretofore publicly disclosed by official government sources.

The sampling was conducted between June 1958 and January 1959 in 19 states across the country. FDA tested alfalfa and ensilage first for total fallout, and then took four samples to determine the level of strontium 90 contamination. All tests showed some total fallout accumulation—primarily due to the fact that atomic explosions had recently been set off.

The four strontium 90 tests are considered the heart of the problem. This is because strontium 90 and one other radioactive element stay where they fall out for about 30 years—the rest decay and lose their radioactive poison much sooner. Furthermore, strontium 90 has an affinity for bones when ingested by human beings, causing bone cancer.

States from which the four samples were taken, and the amount of strontium 90 concentration: Minnesota, 806 units; South Dakota, 797; Maryland, 600; and Nebraska, 138. The samples showed contamination up to 10 times that officially considered "permissible" for human consumption.

But because most hay goes for cow feeding, the problem is not believed as big as the figures indicate. Scientists say cows "filter" out about 90 per cent of the strontium they consume. How much gets into milk, they don't actually know, although concentrations of slightly below the limit have been found.

Tests on wheat, flour, and bread have shown higher concentrations. There's much agitation within the government and from Congress to get the full facts of fallout contamination—with the aim that farmers can be instructed on how to clean it up and keep it out of the food supply. The evidence indicates that the FDA tests have gone a long way toward pushing the government to take some definite and concerted action.