

Aycock campaigned for public education



Two famous Tar Heels died during this week in history.

Charles Brantley Aycock was one of the state's most famous governors, serving from 1901-05. Known as the "education governor," he died on April 4, 1912, in Birmingham, Ala., where he had gone to deliver a speech at the annual meeting of the Alabama Educational Association. At the time he was a candidate for U. S. Senate.

Aycock, a Democrat, campaigned for governor on a platform of improving public education. He spent much of his term (before the days of instantaneous state-wide news coverage) traveling through North Carolina, making speeches and forming committees, etc., to sell his program to a citizenry that was far from united in its desire to spend more money on education.

Aycock was successful, however, in encouraging both local reforms and in prying greater appropriations from a parsimonious legislature. During his term teachers'



ED SMITH

salaries were doubled, school terms expanded, nearly 13,500 new schools were built and three teachers colleges established (Appalachian State, Western Carolina, and East Carolina shortly after he left office).

Thomas Dixon, Jr., was probably the most versatile, famous and controversial individual ever produced by this state. Yet he

died on April 3, 1946, in Raleigh an almost forgotten man, described as the "spokesman for an era that has long since passed." He was 81.

The son of a Cleveland County Baptist minister, Dixon was talented, restless and driven by ambition. (The same holds true for two brothers and two sisters; all five of the Dixon children were listed in Who's Who, an incredible feat never again accomplished by any other American family.)

After early spectacular successes as both lawyer and minister, Tom Dixon, Jr., turned to writing, acting and lecturing. Millions of Americans paid to hear him perform and read his books. Dixon made and lost several fortunes and died nearly penniless.

His most famous work was "The Clansman," now regarded a highly controversial defense of the KKK in the Reconstruction Period. After its huge success as both a novel and a play, Dixon, considered making it into a movie, although neither feature-length

film or films with a plot had ever been attempted. He interested a director and cameraman, D. W. Griffith, and in 1914 the trail-blazing movie "The Birth of a Nation" was produced. Dixon had an immense effect upon the history of motion pictures (the only major art form developed in the past 100 years) yet today he is described in contradictory terms as "a genius of unparalleled brilliance" and "a racist whose work should never have been produced."

On April 3, 1865, 1100 Union troops under Col. Isaac M. Kirby entered the state from Tennessee for an attack on Asheville.

On April 6 they were defeated in the Battle of Asheville by local Confederate militia under Col. G. W. Clayton. The battle occurred on ground now occupied by Asheville-Biltmore College. Earthworks used by the defenders are still in existence.

During the same period Union General Stoneman came in from the West and destroyed war supplies and military installations from Salisbury to Asheville, which he occupied three weeks after Kirby's defeat.

The great human comedy

The Mirror-Herald secretary, Elaine Hill, tells this story about her spouse.

The Hills recently moved to their new home on W. Gold St. While they were moving

furniture in and putting the place shipshape, Scott would take a break and disappear.

Through the window Elaine spotted her husband next door. He was talking to a parrot standing on a perch on the back porch of the next door neighbor.

This went on for several nights, according to Elaine.

"I wondered about that bird and the people who owned it," Elaine said. "I thought surely something was wrong. Why would those people leave an expensive parrot out all the time?"

Scott told Elaine that the parrot couldn't fly away. "There's a small chain tied around one leg," Scott said.

To satisfy her curiosity Elaine and Scott wandered over one day before dark to get a real good look at the parrot.

You guessed it. The parrot was merely a plastic decoration.

"I wondered why the parrot wouldn't talk back to me," Scott said.

To take the monkey off Scott's back I'll recite to you the embarrassing moments surrounding my first long distance phone call.

But a zit-faced youth at the time, I was spending a year in Greenbrier Military School in Lewisburg, West Virginia.

It was the rules that all students must write at least one letter home each week and if the letter wasn't written, then you had to phone to report that all was going (a) well, (b) lousy or (c) come get me because I've been kicked out.

I dialed home and waited. The operator's voice came on the line. "Your call has not been completed. Please hang up and dial again."

"I'm sorry," I apologized. "You see this is the first time I've ever made a long . . ."

" . . . Your call has not been completed. Please hang up and dial again. . ."

"I heard you the first time. Again, I'm sorry. But I've never made a long distance call before," I said.



TOM MCINTYRE

" . . . This is a recording . . ."

My zits lit up and I looked around to make sure no one had overheard this, then I hung up and walked out into the compound.

"Did you make your call?" my roommate asked.

"Sure. There was nothing to it." With my chest out I swaggered back to the room and banged my head against the desk until I was sure I was smarter.

At least neither Scott's nor my moments were as bad as the one a very close friend of mine experienced.

He had just stepped out of the shower and started doing a dance with his towel. His wife said, "Don't parade around the house like that."

"Don't tell me what to do woman," he said. "You mess with me and I'll streak around the house in the nude."

"You will not!"

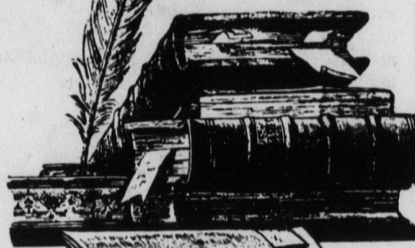
"Just watch me!"

My friend grinned from ear to ear and made a dash toward the front door. He never intended to follow through. When he got close to the door he put on the brakes.

He failed to take into account the small throw rug lying in front of the door. When his feet hit the rug he slid right into the screendoor, knocked it open and skidded onto the porch.

My friend's wife said she rolled in the floor laughing at him trying to get back into the house before anyone saw him.

The Poet's Corner



IN THE SPRINGTIME OF HIS LIFE

Jesus carried His cross to Calvary
In the distance the hill loomed up,
The sorrow of bitter gall was waiting
To overflow from the redeeming cup.
The pillars of the earth were shaken
God the Father was glorified,
The truth dawned brightly for many
When God's Son was crucified.

The Lily of the Valley was crushed
That man may have eternal life,
He wore a shameful crown of thorns
Bestowed by a world of strife.
Behold the stone is rolled away
Each heart should sing with delight,
"Halleluiah He has risen!"
Death passed away with the night.

VIVIAN STEWART BILTCLIFFE

"TEAR DROPS"

It's raining tear-drops from heaven
When each tear-drop falls.
It's raining tear-drops from heaven after all.
Tear-drops are falling, friends and love one's calling
It's raining tear-drops from heaven after all.
When each rain-drop falls.
There's Dad and Mother, Sister and brother.
Oh, How we hear them call.
Teardrops are falling, friends and love one's calling
It's raining teardrops from heaven,
When each raindrop falls.
It's raining teardrops from heaven after all.

Everette H. Pearson

Dear Editor,

The dogwoods are in blossom . . . and many young couples will be placing rings on each other fingers, when two shall become as one in Holy Vows.

Yes, spring is the most beautiful season of the year. So get out and enjoy God's great beauty. Visit those friends and love ones of which winter has held back due to the cold chilly wintery days.

Fix, paint up and shape up. And let's make Kings Mountain come alive again.

Working together, planning together to make our City a place in which will be the envy of adjoining cities.

Let's clean up the back lots, side lots, and the in-lots as to where every one will be proud of our city.

Let's do a little back bending, and knee

bending, and even a little lending as to where one neighbor may not have tools to do such, therefore we can all work together.

Is that asking too much to have a beautiful and a clean city?

E. H. PEARSON
Kings Mountain, N. C.

I know that he is

To the editor,

When I listen, I hear the Voice of God — for when I hear, I hear the word. And when I see, I see the light, and when I walk, I walk with Him, and what I know, I know that I know. HE IS.

ARTHUR BILTCLIFFE
Kings Mountain

Lieutenant Governor is against consecutive terms

The General Assembly has been asked to support legislation calling for a referendum to amend our Constitution to enable the Governor and Lieutenant Governor to succeed themselves in office, and to be permitted to serve two consecutive four-year terms.

I have made what I believe is an intelligent choice. I shall oppose the proposal because to do otherwise would violate my long-standing beliefs.

I cannot recall the exact times the General Assembly has considered this matter, but during my years of serving in the General Assembly I have always voiced opposition to gubernatorial succession. This legislation has usually been considered in committee and not before the entire membership.

During my campaign for Lieutenant Governor I did not change that position in any way — and even though I traveled thousands of miles and saw thousands of people — I cannot recall a single person asking for the succession referendum.

Our forefathers did well in writing our Constitution — and — recently a blue ribbon commission went over every part — and the voters readopted that same constitution with minor changes on November 3, 1970.

The Constitution is bigger than any single issue — changing the Constitution is one of the most serious steps that a people can take.

There is no need for this change — our present system has served the needs of the State of North Carolina and has preserved a good system of balance of power.

We have taken pride in a bicameral legislature that has included in its membership many of the finest men and women this State has yet produced — one hundred seventy who come from the mountains to the

sea — and — this amendment would materially shift the power structure away from them to the Executive Branch of government with the possibility of one person serving eight consecutive years as Chief Executive of our State.

Our leaders have publicized our differences to our sister States — we have said time and again — "Good government is a Habit in North Carolina."

We have pointed out that under our system our political power is reserved to the people and no one person or position has sufficient power to dominate government in North Carolina.

I have a fundamental trust in the decision that has been made by the citizens of North Carolina regarding gubernatorial succession in the past and I hope the law will remain as it is today.

My concept is rather simple: The governmental product in North Carolina has been excellent. Weighed against any other State in the Union, ours is the best — I am proud of the differences.

I would like to say to the members of the General Assembly, and especially to the members of the Senate, that I will not attempt to pressure anyone into agreeing with my position, and I will not be contacting members regarding their vote, but my office will always be open to any member who wishes to discuss the subject.

As you are aware I have been asked to express my views — and — I do so because I think our present system is better — yes — I think our present system is better and I think our present system reserves more power to the individual citizens of North Carolina.

JAMES C. GREEN
N. C. Lt. Gov.

Train exhibit at museum

The locomotive slowed as it rolled under the bridge and pulled into the yard, with the loaded freight cars passing ever more slowly in review. The brakeman stepped out with his lantern swinging, and the smoke from the stack wafted away from the trainyard.

It's all imagination. All the action is imagination in the minds of viewers at the new exhibit at the N. C. Museum of History entitled "Half a Century of Toy Trains." An active imagination can give life to the exhibit of a part of America which is fast disappearing.

Part of the collection of an avid model train collector, the train exhibit depicts all kinds of equipment from locomotives to passenger and freight cars, standard gauge to smaller sizes, as well as bridges, city stations and power stations. Prominently displayed are the very rare blue No. 710 Pullman cars, the Lionel 700 locomotive and tender and the Lionel Hiawatha locomotive and tender.

The rare pieces on exhibit range in value from the 1940 power station, valued at about \$40 upward to the reproduction live steam Beggs locomotive and tender (ca. 1883-84) valued at many hundred of dollars.

These trains are very much like the ones your father or grandfather received for Christmas, and afterward, for many years were seen chugging around the base of the Christmas tree, John Ellington, museum administrator, said. They have been put away in attics until a general cleaning brings them out. This is when they reach a collector's hand, or sometimes the Museum's of History.

The museum restores and preserves these items for present and future North Carolinians to enjoy, Ellington pointed out. The History Museum's present collection

includes a few commercial toy trains and also many scale models. Sometimes, Ellington explained, terms for "toy" trains and "scale model" trains are interchangeable, but often not.

Dr. Leon Jordan, one of the many Raleigh collectors, labels train collecting a "fascinating hobby."

More than 175 years of America are wrapped up in trains," he pointed out. For instance, the first passenger service was initiated in the late 1820s or early 1830s and the first person to be fatally injured in a passenger train accident was a North Carolinian. James C. Stedman a Raleigh jeweler, was killed on Nov. 11, 1833, in an accident at Hightown, N. J.

Also, Dr. Jordan continued, the historic Raleigh and Gaston Railroad roundhouse was located behind the Seaboard Building (now being moved with the advancement of state government construction in Raleigh). Excavation for the parking lot in 1969 uncovered a rust-encrusted wheel which is generally attributed to a part of the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad, dating from the 1870s.

The 30-inch wheel, along with a railroad connecting link and pin, an original railroad tie, and lead seals used for doors of freight cars, all from Frankinton, have been donated to the Museum of History.

The Raleigh and Gaston Railroad had a brief but bright existence. It was R&G lines which saw the first locomotive puff into Raleigh in March 1840. The engine was the biggest of its kind, named "Tornado" for its "fiery speed."

By coincidence, the present Capitol was completed that year and a joint three-day celebration was held, beginning on June 10, 1840. The festivities attracted people from as far away as Virginia.

Unfortunately, following such an auspicious welcome, the Raleigh and Gaston fell into financial difficulties and passed into state control in the 1870s with the rolling stock going to the Seaboard and Roanoke Railroad.

Dr. Jordan, a collector since childhood, insists the toys are "everything in miniature." He explained that before World War II an "electric train" was one of the biggest toys a child could get for Christmas. The craftsmen took great pride in their work.

During hundreds of hours of collecting, Dr. Jordan has talked to builders of the trains who, he said, "made toys with the same sincerity of purpose as those (people) building rockets to the moon."

He went on to explain that three major United States toy makers turned out trains during the first half of this century, including Lionel, American Flyer and Ives. The pre-World War II trains are the most valuable to most collectors now, Dr. Jordan explained, since, after the war, metal parts were replaced by less durable plastic, and craftsmanship declined steadily through the 1960s.

Some of the trains in the current exhibit are scale models, complete with miniature couplers like those used on full-size equipment. Others are "toys" — scale models, but with lighter weight . . . "toy" couplers. Some are restored, others are reproductions, and still others are in original condition.

Dr. Jordan expects his collection, too, to eventually wind up in the museum. He hopes, too, that others will be encouraged to give their no longer needed toy trains to the museum so that mountless North Carolinians to come may enjoy the fascinating hobby of railroading and history combined.

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