

# WATAUGA DEMOCRAT

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"The basis of our government being the opinion of the people, the very first objective should be to keep that right, and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government with out newspapers, or newspapers without government, I should not hesitate a moment to choose the latter. But I should mean that every man should receive these papers and be capable of reading them."—Thomas Jefferson.

BOONE, NORTH CAROLINA, THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 1959

## Rev. Dr. McLarty

The Reverend Doctor Emmett K. McLarty, Sr., retired Methodist minister of the Western North Carolina Conference, who had occupied the top pulpits in the Methodist Church in this area, succumbed Sunday in Asheville.

The Boone Methodist Church was privileged to have Dr. McLarty for his last pastorate after the compelling and multiplying duties of the large churches had perhaps become too trying for his diminished strength.

A scholarly gentleman, and a sermonizer of exceptional talents, Dr. McLarty was popular at the local church and among the members of other denominations, as for that matter. It seemed that the experiences of a long lifetime and his exceptionally fine academic training blended and mellowed in his maturer years into a ministry of marked power and of compelling authority.

Dr. McLarty radiated kindness, understanding and love for his neighbor as he occupied the pulpit, as he visited in the homes of the neighborhood and as he talked briefly with us at streetside as he hurried here and there, always with a mission—of helpfulness, of love and human kindness.

Whether he was bringing consolation to the bereaved or walking all the way through town to share some goodies with a baby girl he loved, and whose smile of approval he cherished, he was always the courtly gentleman, always the scholar and the devout believer in our Blessed Lord and all His wonders.

We are glad we knew Dr. McLarty as a friend, and by being a fairly unworthy parishioner of his. He lived a life of devotion to his fellowman and of service to the Omnipotent, which within itself provides his benediction.

## Dangers Of Grass Fires

The rapid ascent of the flames up Howard's Knob the other day, fed rather adequately by grass and other ground growth, demonstrated rather grimly the dangers of these fires, which travel remarkably fast.

Reports of other grass fires over the county are heard and we had the unhappy experience of battling a grass and broom sage flame as it raced up our hill.

Surprisingly it takes little to feed one of these grass fires as tinder dry as the earth's surface has been most of the time recently. And the flames multiply and spread like mad in areas where it seems there's not much of anything to burn.

All of which means that we should all exercise the greatest precaution with outside fires. As a matter of fact, we believe one is supposed to apply to the county forester for a burning permit

when it becomes necessary to kindle a blaze in open country. At any rate the torch shouldn't be applied to brush, or weed stalks from the vegetable garden until the country is visited by a rain. Outdoor fires are comparatively safe on a day when the terrain is wet.

On the theory that a stitch in time saves nine, let's be doubly careful about our trash burning in these first days of spring, when the urge to get the premises in tip-top condition is strong, and when the refuse of the winter time is plentiful and unsightly.

Grass fires can easily destroy homes and other buildings to say nothing of the havoc which is wrought annually by fires in woodland areas.

Your forest fire wardens are doing a good job. We owe them our full cooperation in trying to contain the ravages of fire.

## Easter Customs

The annual White House egg roll is a tame variation of an Easter custom that used to sweep the ancients off their feet.

Nowadays the custom involves hordes of youngsters who converge on the Executive Mansion to send their egg bowling down the grassy slopes of the White House lawn.

But in the days when England was as hardy as it was merry, people used to roll themselves down a hill!

Research experts with The World Book Encyclopedia reveal that the English—joyful over the return of spring and the Resurrection of Christ—tumbled down Greenwich Hill at Easter.

Eventually they tired of the sport—or its accompanying bruises—and substituted eggs.

One reason why the egg comes in for such a beating is that traditionally it is a

symbol of life from death—the message of Easter. Just as the dead winter gives way to spring, the lifeless-looking egg produces the chick.

The wearing of one's best garments on Easter Day, or actually the acquisition of a new wardrobe for the special event, to say nothing of the traditional Easter bonnet, perhaps dates to the ancient heathen Roman celebration of the Vernal Equinox, or the arrival of spring.

Where the custom of tying the bunny rabbits into the Easter celebration came from isn't clear.

The average family is said to pay the doctor \$150 a year. That'll be real news to the doctor.

Either we're getting older or the commercials are getting shorter. We can't make it from the set to the refrigerator and back to the set in time.—Billy Arthur.

## Crown Tax Would Be A Blow

(Kinston Daily Free Press)

A proposed one-cent crown tax for bottled soft drinks, which is pending in the North Carolina General Assembly, would be grossly unfair to bottlers. Some of the smaller firms certainly would be hard pressed to stay in business. Many might actually be forced out of business.

A reduction in the volume of sales would reduce returns from other taxes now imposed on the industry. It would actually kill the goose that is laying a golden revenue egg for the State at present.

When a penny was added to soft drink prices in 1957 it was a matter of economic necessity. The five-cent figure had prevailed for over half a century, despite the steadily rising trend of everything connected with the industry. The smaller companies were being forced out of business and the larger ones had to invest more and more capital in rolling equipment, higher wages and overhead. As a matter of fact the number of bottlers in North Carolina dropped from 202 in 1946 to a new low of 139 in January of 1959. That is a loss of 63 firms in 11 years, which must be charged primarily to the high cost of doing business with a "fixed" income product.

The proposed crown tax would be collectible in advance and would greatly increase the cost of operations. Bottlers would have to add tens of thousands of dollars per shipment of crowns to their present heavy capital invest-

ments. This would tend to freeze out the small operators, who are in the majority in the soft drink business throughout the State. Local bottlers estimate the hike would boost the cost of a carload of crowns by some \$72,000 to \$75,000.

Where this tax has been imposed in other states the increase in price has cut down volume as much as 25 to 30 per cent. Such a cut would materially reduce present income taxes from bottlers. It would leave the State with a lower net return from income, franchise and Class B taxes. The latter tax (class B) is imposed on machinery. Local plants pay up to \$1,800 per annum in this levy alone.

But the strongest argument against a crown tax is that it would be discriminatory. It would single out an industry which is already reaching the point of diminishing returns on its thin profit margin and make it an even easier target for competition. Other food items in the range of five and six cents each, including chewing gum, candy bars and the like, may reduce the size of the package and hold the price line. Soft drink bottlers cannot do this.

Sponsors of this legislation include Rep. Ed Kemp of Guilford County and Rep. Frank Saupp of Mecklenburg. They and other legislators should be reminded that the tax is unfair and discriminatory and should be killed.

## Easter: Message Of Rebirth



**"LEGISLATURES . . . ARE ALWAYS THE SAME"**

## Assembly Is Always Jolted By Press

By BILLY ARTHUR

Over the years sessions of the General Assembly have been joked and jolted in the state press.

"Raleigh has a new gas works," the Wilson Advance reported in 1884. "We had thought this expenditure might have been dispensed with until after adjournment of the legislature."

In 1897 the Raleigh Chronicle quoted Gov. Daniel L. Russell as saying:

"'Tis said there's nothing at all in a name; but Legislatures, you've noticed, are always the same. There's no Legislature, however stupid or green, that's not the ablest the State's ever seen. Given a herd of wild asses, all dullness and shoddy, call them 'Legislature,' and behold, a great body!"

In 1892 the Statesville Record reported that in the assembly "about six out of every ten men you meet are office seekers. Those who are a little more advanced in mathematical problems, such as fractions, are seeking Federal appointments. And there are others who are a little advanced in education and can sway the hand to and fro in their denunciation of the other fellow. They're running for governor. Others who have been through Webster's blue-back and York's grammar are for Congress. Those who can speak the loudest and make the most noise are for the U. S. Senate, and those

who can lead the people astray by their smooth sayings are candidates for president and vice president."

Secrecy became a problem in 1903 when Col. Fred Olds of the Charlotte Observer was barred from the secretary of state's office "because important business is going on in there." It was later learned the secretary was hiring a cook.

Which reminds me of what Rep. Jim Speight of Bertie told the House appropriations committee during a secrecy discussion in 1933:

"Several years ago I was riding over to the store at the crossroads near home. A pretty little city girl was visiting in the neighborhood. When I passed my neighbor's avenue leading to his house, she was standing by his mail box waiting for the mail. She was wearing a little strip of cloth about three or four inches wide across here, and about six inches around the middle there wasn't much secrecy.

"Well, that horse of mine just naturally got slower and slower until he almost stopped. Just as I got even with the girl, she jumped, slapped her leg and said, 'Darn that fly!'

"I went on to the store. The next day about mail time I got to thinking about needing some plow points, so I saddled up my

horse and started out again. When I got to my neighbor's mail box, she was there but this time she was dressed in a boy's shirt, buttoned up to the neck. And overalls that reached to the toes. I took one look at her and said, 'Darn those flies.'

"There was entirely too much secrecy there; so I went on to the store. Secrecy though was not so bad, for the next time I didn't need to go to the store. I stayed home and got my work done."

The '59 session is wrestling with taxes, but no newspaper yet has wailed as did the Raleigh Minerva in 1816:

"Most honored sirs, I've read with wonder your list of taxes, blood and thunder! From head to foot, most worthy masters, your eggs stick like mustard plasters. Egad! I never knew before the advantages of being poor!

"Of watches, thank the Lord, I have none; so I hope you have not taxed the sun. I have no horses, but I have a mare too weak by half a tax to bear. I've no costly fine affairs as sideboards, tables, sofas and such like toys of wealthy fools. But, pray, have you laid a tax on stools?"

"I never deal in silver matters, but earthen bowls and pewter platters. If these you tax, I'll throw 'em away and eat upon a wooden tray. And if you tax my (Continued on page six)

## From Early Democrat Files

Sixty Years Ago

March 30, 1899

Rev. L. C. Wilson of Hattie was in town Monday.

Mrs. I. S. Rambo of Mountain City is visiting her parents in Boone.

Dr. Parlier says that the health of the people is now unusually good.

Mrs. Rachel McBride, one of Watauga's oldest and most highly respected ladies, died on Cove Creek some days ago.

Mrs. Cora Council has gone to Asheville where she has accepted the position of housekeeper at the Hotel Berkeley.

Mrs. Eola Rivers, relict of the late Dr. J. J. Rivers, of Watauga, was married in Taylorsville on Monday of last week to Mr. E. C. Sloan of that place.

John S. Culler, standard keeper for Watauga county, asks us to say that all the weights and measures that have not been sealed within the last two years, must be sealed at once.

Mrs. Kizzie Gentry died at her home on the 20th inst. of fever, after an illness of several weeks. She leaves four little orphan children, her husband having died last spring from injuries received from a threshing machine. Her brother, Mr. A. C. Grubb, has charge of the little ones.

Now comes fun. The new school law is to be tested in the courts. The county school officers are not willing to give up their positions. Some of them have already written to Raleigh saying they will not surrender when the new law goes into effect. The new law goes into effect in April, does away with the county board of education and as these officers are elected for three years those now in office have held only two years. They

contend that the act is unconstitutional and that they cannot be put out.

The W. C. T. U. Meeting at Blowing Rock last Friday was quite a success. Several new names were added to the list.

Thirty-Nine Years Ago

March 25, 1920

Mr. George M. Suddreth, who was appointed Clerk of the Superior Court of Watauga County to succeed Mr. O. L. Coffey, resigned some time ago, refused to qualify and upon the recommendation of the local bar the appointment went to Mr. A. W. Smith of Mabel.

It is good to see the automobiles spinning around again after their long isolation on account of mud. Mr. Carl Beach, who has been in the service of the United States Army on the Mexican border for nearly three years, was given a discharge on the 15th inst. and is now with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Beach in Boone. He has not yet decided what he will do.

Mr. J. S. Culler of Zionville, who two years ago was stricken with paralysis, losing the use of one of his arms, is now suffering with dropsy or some kindred disease. Attorney W. R. Lovill returned from Statesville Tuesday where he had been visiting his son, James, at the Long Sanitarium, and reports him slowly improving but still very weak. His operation for appendicitis was a very serious one.

Mrs. Thomas Cannon of the Blowing Rock section, died almost suddenly at her home last Saturday, heart trouble being the cause of her death.

Mr. John H. Simmons, son of James N. Simmons of Elk township, is added to last week's published list of Watauga losses in

the World War. The young man died at Camp Lewis Washington. On last Monday loving hands placed in his memory a beautiful young tree, the first to be set in the plot of ground provided by the Training School.

Mr. Dalton Watson, of Stony Fork, a respected citizen, died at his home last Saturday at the age of 50 years. He leaves a wife and four sons, one of whom is a soldier stationed in Pennsylvania.

Fifteen Years Ago

March 23, 1944

Roby T. Greer, Boone; Donley Hagaman, Reece, Democrats, and Russell D. Hodges of Boone, Republican, again constitute the Watauga County Board of Elections, having been named Saturday by the State Board of Elections.

For the first time in many years the Republicans of the ninth Congressional district face a primary fight to determine the man who will oppose Congressman Robert L. Doughton in the general election next November. . . . Monroe Adams of Statesville and Emery C. McCall of Lenoir, have filed their candidacies.

Watt H. Gragg of Boone was nominated for Secretary of State by the Republicans assembled in State convention in Charlotte last Thursday at which time the minority party named a full slate of candidates for office and endorsed the candidacy of Governor Thomas E. Dewey of New York for the Presidency.

Dr. Robert E. King, who was to have sailed for Africa today, will remain here until perhaps the middle of April, it was learned Monday.

Joe Williams, seaman second class, Annapolis, Md., is spending the week with relatives here.

## KING STREET

By ROB RIVERS

Circuses . . . Ain't Like They Uster Be

Since Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Shows have quit the tented cities of other days and gone indoors into a glorified sort of Sullivan show, we wish we'd have visited the sawdust rings more often in the dying days of one of America's greatest institutions of mirth and merriment. . . . This is not to say that the indoor version of the circus isn't good—many of those who've seen it are loud in their praise of the production, which as a result of typical circus-man ingenuity has accommodated itself to the changing times, and more especially to the changed labor conditions and capsuled its giant extravaganza of entertainment into a package from which the owners might hope to extract a profit, after all the years of misfortune which had beset the greatest show on earth.

It is likely that heretofore we have penned an ode to the smelly domain of the circus lot, and paid our respects to those who skipped the little wagon shows through the ruts and mud of other days to bring the only entertainment of the season to the hill people. . . . And occasionally of course, pop would take the kids and go to Bristol or Johnson City or someplace else and see Ringling Brothers or Barnum and Bailey's Shows, or maybe have a look at John Robinson's Circus, where the ringmaster would always scream with practiced precision, "Mr. John Robinson presents." before every big show act, despite the fact that Mr. John Robinson had long since been gathered to his ancestors.

We can look back to Teat Brothers Shows, James Shelby's New Shows, Cole and Cooper's Enormous Shows, M. L. Clark & Sons Combined Shows, and the Mighty Haag Shows, and to the interminable wait between the appearance of the bill posters, and the arrival of the elephant maybe a month later. . . . At this time of year there was always a fair prospect that Haag's McGuire, or Clark's Clark (cousin to the owner) or some advance agent from another circus would heave into town late some afternoon driving a famished horse to a buggy filled with fancy lithographs, a couple of long-handled paste brushes riding on the running gears, and mix his cold-water paste down at the creek below the Critcher barn, where all the kids in the neighborhood would gather to watch him get ready to plaster the Council blacksmith shop and every barn in the neighborhood with pictures of man-eating tigers, over-size elephants and dazzling women in pink tights performing in the tip-top of a giant tented arena. . . . This advance agent knew what every kid wanted to know. . . . He could tell tales of animal trainers being torn to shreds down the road by an enraged bull elephant, of trapeze artists falling from out of the billowing folds of canvas a hundred feet to the ground, and of the mess they made.

The youngsters would memorize the fliers the press agent gave out, and no amount of parental disbelief would shake our complete confidence in every single word of the circus publicity. . . . And then the great day would dawn. . . . In those days of dirt roads, and no numbers, few signboards, and little travel, men would ride horseback ahead of the show, marking off side roads with streaks of flour to keep the circus wagons going right, and making a white streak across the road with proper indications for a horse. . . . And the lumbering elephants, and the great cages with the beasts and the loads of canvas and of tent poles and of stakes, and the straining horses, scoured to their last ounce of strength, would make their way into town, where folks had gathered for miles around to take in the show, mix with their friends, and hear from the circus people of the wonders beyond the rim of the hills.

We wouldn't go back if we could, although a heap of pleasant things happened on the road back, but an old circus-goer grows nostalgic when springtime comes, and the big show's gone inside and the lumbering wagons, and motor trucks and some old friends we had in the circus business have all grown silent together, and given up the blistering heat and the stormy nights on the muddy trails, and there's a new set of children who wouldn't dig the circus jive no way.

Like the dodo and the surry, the mud pies and the t-model, the circus which was once a part and parcel of community life, has creaked to a halt, the canvas has rotted, and motels and fine homes and churches and schools occupy the old circus lots. . . . But one doesn't have to be much of an old-timer to remember the old shows, and showmen, and the barkers and the hamburgers, the red lemonade, crackerjacks, prize candy boxes, animals, faded spangles, and the bustle and joy and the commanding stink of the whole enterprise which provided a fairyland and an overflowing measure of joy and merriment.

## Uncle Pinkney

HIS PALAVERIN'S

DEAR MISTER EDITOR:

The boys up at the country store Saturday night was talking about the good old days and that brought up an argument about when the good old days left off, and the modern days came along.

Ed Doolittle said the good old days was when calico was five cent a yard, when all the grocery stores sold worm medicine, when diapers was made from raveling flour sacks, corn sold for 30 cent a bushel, work shirts for 50 cent apiece, when folks almost died from taking calomel ever Spring, when the women knitted all the family socks. Them was the days, allowed Ed. when country folks didn't eat nothing but sardines, cheese and crackers when they went to town, when you always put two drops of turpentine in a dose of castor oil for the kids, when nails was used for buttons on your coat, and \$10 was all the doctor charged for a baby and you didn't pay him that until he come to deliver the next one. On the subject of doctors, one feller put in his piece that in the good old days a doctor always bled a man when more'n likely he was needing a transfusion.

And our new feller-citizens in Alaska would be mighty proud of the boys up at the store Saturday night. They say Texans was the biggest liars in the Union till Alaska got in, and put together I reckon they can field the world's championship team.

We got some good prospect fer the team out here. Fer instance, one feller said he was walking through a field of snakes last Fall when a rattlesnake hit at him, missed and hit a small pine tree. In a minute

There was a big difference of

(Continued on page six)