

Leader of the "War Hawks" in 1812 Was the "Great Pacificator" of 1821

Such Was the Paradox of Henry Clay, the "Man Whose Influence and Power More Than Any Other Produced the Second War with England" and Whose Portrait as the "Cock of Kentucky" and "Spokesman of the New West" Is Painted in the First Volume of a New Biography.

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By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

YOU remember from your school days that Henry Clay was called the "Great Pacificator." Your history book told you why—because, during the bitter slavery dispute that was driving the North and the South apart, he brought about, in 1821 and again in 1850, the compromises which postponed for a few years the war between the states.

Remembering him thus in the role of peacemaker, it may be difficult for you to think of him as an ardent advocate of war, even a "jingo," and as the "man whose influence and power more than any other produced the second war with England." Yet that was the verdict of Josiah Quincy, one of his contemporaries, and it is confirmed by Bernard Mayo, author of "Henry Clay, Spokesman of the New West," published recently by the Houghton Mifflin company.

This book, the first of three projected volumes, deals only with the first phase of Clay's career, that period when he was the "Cock of Kentucky." It was the vitriolic tongue of John Randolph of Roanoke who called him that, and it was an apt nickname. For if ever a young American had reason to be "cocky" in those days, Henry Clay was that young man.

His career up to the outbreak of the War of 1812 had been truly remarkable. He had left his native state of Virginia when he was barely twenty and had gone to the new state of Kentucky. At twenty-nine he was a member of the state senate. He had proved himself the most successful lawyer and the most popular politician in the new commonwealth. He had made a fortune, built a fine house, married into the Kentucky aristocracy, gained the friendship of all the best people and won the confidence of all others.

By the time he was thirty he was already thinking of the Presidency. (That was to be his consuming ambition but one he was never to realize). Before he was thirty-five he was in the United States senate but gave up his place in that dignified assemblage to become a member of the lower house where the opportunities for action—and personal power—were greater. Chosen speaker of the house, he made that office for the first time in its history second in influence only to the influence and power of the President and he proved it by making a war which everyone recognized as "Mr. Clay's war."

Examine Henry Clay's backgrounds, as Mr. Mayo does, and this meteoric rise is easily understood. He was born on April



Statue of Henry Clay in Caracas, Venezuela

even thrust their swords into the fresh grave of John Clay, thinking it held treasure. It was only then that the appeals of the widow caused Tarleton to order off his British marauders. Clinging to his mother, Henry Clay, a boy of four, witnessed these scenes with eyes that never forgot." (Who knows but that may have been one reason for his eagerness to fight Old England 30 years later!)

Mrs. John Clay did not remain a widow for long. Within a year after Tarleton's raid she married Henry Watkins, a planter and militia captain. Ten years after the close of the Revolution she and her new husband decided to seek their fortunes in the new country beyond the Alleghenies. Fourteen-year-old Henry Clay was left behind in Richmond to become a clerk in a mercantile establishment and a little later in the office of the clerk of the high court of chancery.

There the tall raw-boned lad attracted the attention of Chancellor George Wythe, who em-

vanced his social standing by marrying Lucretia Hart, the daughter of a prominent citizen.

Four years later he was elected to the Kentucky legislature and this proved to be only the first step in his swift ascent which came to a triumphant climax on November 4, 1811, when he was chosen speaker of the house. At that time the United States was on the verge of war with Great Britain. England's impressment of our seamen, the influence of her traders and some of her officers in stirring up the Indians in the West and her Orders in Council, declaring a blockade of nearly the whole coast of Europe, thus was ruining our trade—all these were factors in the complex situation which was leading inevitably to war. President James Madison vacillated between strength and weakness in dealing with the situation.

The "War Hawks."

But there was no vacillation in the policy of the speaker of the house. He was the leader of the "war hawks"—John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, Felix Grundy of Tennessee, Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky, William Lowndes and Langdon Cheves of South Carolina and others from the South and West.

Through his position as speaker Clay arranged the important committees in the house so as to keep them under control of the war party. He himself made more than one stirring speech in favor of preparedness for the war which he foresaw so clearly, in favor of placing a large army at the disposal of the President and finally in favor of declaring war against Great Britain unless she took a less arrogant stand in her attitude toward America. But England, either misunderstanding the real temper of America or discounting her power, refused to adopt a more conciliatory attitude, thus playing into the hands of the "war hawks."

Madison ("mousy Little Jemmy," Clay's adherents called him) was finally maneuvered into a position from which he could not retreat. On June 1, 1812, he sent a message to congress recounting the many causes which would justify hostilities with England. On June 4 a war bill was passed by the lower house and sent to the senate. There its passage was delayed for various reasons so it was not until June 17—the anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill—that it was passed by a vote of 19 to 13. The next day President Madison signed the act declaring that between the United States and Great Britain there existed a state of war. Thus "Mr. Clay's war" began.

played him as secretary, and in 1791 he began to study law with Robert Brooke, attorney general. A year later he obtained a license to practice and decided to follow his parents to Kentucky. He arrived in Lexington at a time when it was rapidly emerging from the rough pioneer stage that had made Kentucky known as the "dark and bloody ground."

First Political Success. Clay's captivating manners and striking eloquence soon won for him the high regard of the other lawyers and also made him a social favorite. Almost immediately he plunged into politics and when a convention was planned to revise the Kentucky constitution, Clay was made a member of it although he was then only twenty-two years old. In the same year he also ad-

"The Cock of Kentucky"—"Harry of the West"—"The Great Pacificator"—"The Father of Internal Improvements"—these were nicknames which Henry Clay bore at one time or another during his life. To it should be added another which has survived through the years—"The Mill Boy of the Slashes." He was called that because he was born in a district known as "The Slashes" but Mayo's book dispels some of the romantic legend that has grown up around that sobriquet. He says:

"His childhood dwelling was a story-and-a-half frame building flanked by two massive stone chimneys, with slave quarters adjoining, situated on a gentle slope rising from Macump's creek. It was typical of his family's middle-class stake in Virginia society. . . . Here in these post-Revolutionary days young Henry did the chores common to country boys. Perhaps he sometimes rode astride a corn-laden farm-horse to the grist mills on the Pamunkey river. But he was neither an indentured miller's apprentice nor in the dire poverty of those possessing only the widow's and orphan's God' later ascribed to him, in poor-boy-to-greatness legends, by political admirers of 'Harry Clay, the Mill Boy of the Slashes!'"

Great Orators.

The legend that he had but little schooling is true, however. But of more significance than this scanty schooling was another factor in his early life—Hanover's tradition of great orators. Outstanding among them was the immortal Patrick Henry and Patrick Henry became the idol of Henry Clay. "Declamation early became a passion with him. He recited, read aloud from political and historical works, and even practiced in the barn before the horses and oxen. . . . it was Hanover's, and America's, great Demosthenes he held constantly before him as a model when he declaimed on the banks of Macump's creek, in silent pine forests and in sun-bathed fields. Throughout his youth his self-directed training continued, encouraging not only a fluency of speech, a passion for words and their magic but an unusual self-confidence."

Years later Clay described to a class of law graduates how ardently and persistently he had devoted himself to the study of oratory in his boyhood home in Virginia and declared: "To it I am indebted for the primary and leading impulses that stimulated my progress and have shaped and moulded my entire destiny."

He was, perhaps, never more effective as a speaker than in the days when he was trying to force a timid administration to take a firm stand against England. Of one of his speeches during that period, Mayo chronicles:



HENRY CLAY

(From a miniature by an unknown artist)

"For two hours he held the floor 'animated' and eloquent' reported a Federalist; making an address upon which said young Hezekiah Niles 'eulogium is useless.' He commanded the undivided attention of the house—no mean achievement at any time, and truly notable in a group of speechmakers already reticent under their own patriotic verbiage, bombast and bickering. . . . His speech was well calculated to rouse the vigorous, to shame the timid. He spoke of THE war: definite, immediate war, to regain peace and prosperity, to resist England's undeclared war, and to end the bastard ignominy of half-war, half-peace. To the question, 'What are we to gain by the war?' he made the ringing reply, 'What are we not to lose by peace?—Commerce, character, a nation's best treasure, honor!'"

As for the effect of his oratory, Mayo says: "The speech of this 'new bantling of the day' of the celebrated Mr. Clay' was widely reprinted, praised, censured, and generally discussed. But the printed words could not revive his peculiar dramatic powers, the deep hush that fell upon the chamber or the eagerness with which those on the floor and in the galleries leaned forward. The audience heard again the heroic strains of America's Revolutionary Seventies and were thrilled as their father had been thrilled by Patrick Henry."

Push Gobbler as National Bird



Los Angeles, Calif.—The American eagle will have to give up his job to the turkey gobbler, if the Northwestern Turkey Growers association gets its way. Senators and congressmen of 14 states were asked to make the turkey the national bird at the next session of congress. It was argued that the turkey, besides being the symbol of Thanksgiving, is native to America. Misses Edith Lawrence (left) and Pat Gergen are pictured above showing how the turkey would look in the eagle's place against the American shield.

Ye Council Eats Right Well After Ye Slick Barter

Deer Is Thanksgiving Meal and Indian Is Goat.

IF AMERICANS this Thanksgiving are well able to appease both their consciences and their appetites, their moral dexterity is no better than that of their forebears on the town council at Danvers, Mass., in the year 1714. Venison, rather than turkey, made up the piece de resistance on a Thanksgiving feast there, but religious complications arose, as recorded by Rev. Lawrence Conant, of that city:

"After ye blessing was craved by Mr. Garrich of Wrentham, word came that ye buck was shot on ye



Mr. Shepard's conscience was tender, and so was poor Pequot's back.

Lord's day by Pequot, an Indian, who came to Mr. Epes with a lye in his mouth like Ananias of old.

"Ye council therefore refused to eat ye venison, but it was afterward decided that Pequot should receive forty stripes save one, for lying and profaning ye Lord's day, restore Mr. Epes ye cost of ye deer, and con-

sidering this a just and rightful sentence on ye heathen, and that a blessing had been craved on ye meat, ye council all partook of it but Mr. Shepard, whose conscience was tender on ye point of ye venison."

In nearby Boston a few years later the arrival of autumn with its storing of the winter supply of salt



Bear meat is no longer generally available for the Thanksgiving dinner.

pork brought mingled thanksgiving and chagrin to a boy named Benjamin Franklin, who often became restless during the long graces which accompanied Massachusetts meals. So one day after the pork had been dutifully stored away, he suggested that if his father would only "say grace over the whole cask, once for all, it would be a vast saving of time."

In the latter half of the same century, whenever a feast was in order in the back country of Virginia and the Carolinas, young Daniel Boone or some other hunter would go out to find venison or bear meat to mix with pork in the habitual "great stew" of such a celebration. With it were served roast pork or bear or broiled venison.

Bear and venison are no longer generally available for the Thanksgiving dinner, but turkey is still one of the mainstays.

Home Heating Hints

By John Barclay Heating Expert

Rubbish and Garbage Should Not Be Burned in Your Furnace; They Cause Trouble.

I SHOULD like to caution you against burning garbage and rubbish in the heating plant of your home. Many home-owners are given to this practice, knowing it is a quick and easy way to dispose of garbage, but not realizing fully that it is very harmful to the furnace.



Your furnace was built to burn coal, and coal only. Garbage and rubbish, when burned in it, deposit a thick crust of soot on the

burning surfaces, and this soot absorbs much of the heat that should go into your rooms. They also form clinkers which, as you know, cause no end of trouble for you in keeping your fire burning efficiently.

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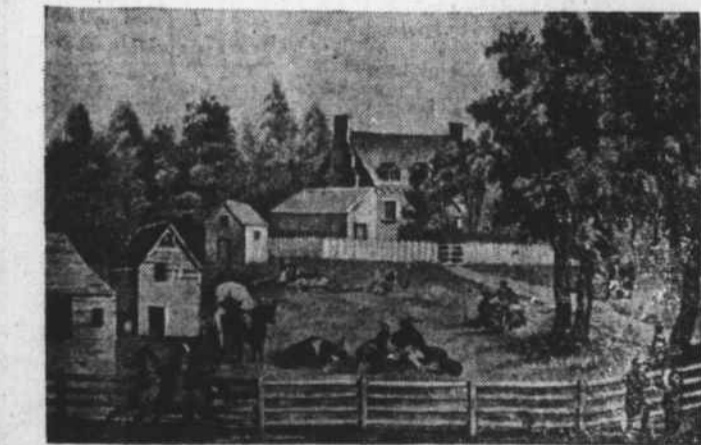
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THE BIRTHPLACE OF HENRY CLAY

12, 1777, the son of "Sir John" Clay of Hanover Court House, Va., "a tobacco planter and Baptist preacher whose activities in the cause of religious freedom reflected the American Revolution as a social movement."

His first impressionable years were filled with memories of stirring events. Late in the Revolution Virginia became a battleground and the British leader, Tarleton, led a raid on Hanover. "Amid this martial hubbub and terror, at Clay's Spring three miles away, a great personal sorrow had settled—John Clay, man of God and defiant crusader for freedom, had died. But even here Tarleton's cavaliers wantonly ransacked the kitchen, broke open chests, and filled the air with the feathers of fat bed-ticks. . . . Roistering dragoons