

The Franklin Times

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LOCAL EDITORIAL COMMENT

Shades Of Dodge City

They rode into town early that morning. Some say they rode green horses, some say blue and still others contend they rode in on white wagons. They were suspicious looking strangers. You could tell by the way they eyed the bank.

Two of them hung out down the street ways. The third walked slowly toward the grocery store. Just on the other side was the bank, loaded with the payroll.

The loner looked around. Saw the streets were clear and quickly entered the bank. A short time later he came out. Looked up and down the street; nodded to his partners. Counted five one dollar bills.

Evidently, the coast was clear. He headed back to the bank.

Meanwhile, inside the bank waited the law. They were armed to the teeth. "They're a comin'," said one. "Now don't you be afraid, miss," said the other. "I'll be right behind you."

The knob on the door turned slowly. The lawmen wiped the sweat from beneath their ten-gallon hats. "This is it," muttered one. "Yeah," said the other.

The bad guy came in. Looked around. The lawman at the last window got busy talking to the manager. The other one hid behind the counter. "Fill it up," said the robber, handing the pretty miss behind the counter a big paper bag. She filled it.

Slowly, the lawman at the teller's window moved into position. The gunman turned and stuck the gun in the lawman's stomach. The lawman stopped. The gunman opened the door and ran.

Bang. Bang. That's how the gun sounded as the two big city detectives gave chase. Bang. Bang. "Dang, Hank, you missed him."

Clop. Clop. That's the way the feet sounded as they paddled through the open field down by the old corral. Slush. Slush. That's how they sounded when the lawmen hit the creek.

"You let him get away, Slim," said the short one. "Sorry about that," said the tall one.

"Call the Sheriff. Let's roundup a posse," said another big city detective who had watched from outside.

The Sheriff came riding up on his white steed. You could tell he was the good guy. He wore a white hat. And his pants were tight.

"I'll get him," the Sheriff said. "I know these parts. He can't hide for long," he added as he rode away, thinking deeply.

The posse looked. It was getting nigh on to sundown. The rain had washed away all the tracks. It looked hopeless...until...

From away over the horizon, the deputy yelled, "Over here, Sheriff." The Sheriff galloped over there. "That's our man," he said, never batting an eyelash. "Haul him in," he commanded as he shifted his gun more comfortably on his hip.

"I reckon you showed them city slickers, Sheriff," said the old codger as he spit out his chunk of tobacco.

"Shucks, t'weren't nothin'" said the Sheriff as he bent over and kissed his horse and rode off into the light of the moon.



ALL AIN'T HEAVEN WHERE PAPPA SITS

JOHN J. SYNON

There is a bustle over my head and while my curiosity about the activities of this household, generally, is confined to what's-for-supper, I understand this particular ado. I know without asking what is going on and I don't like it. It has an ominous sound, like hammering on a scaffold: I know.

The fuss is being caused by the grande belle of this menage, by that lady and by my remaining chick, the only sibling still in residence, full time. They mean me no good, those two, with their dressmaker's talk of picture hats and bodices ("It can't be that low, Mother, the nuns won't let you") and all the other hoopla that goes with high-school graduation.

There is a conspiracy afoot, in other words, to rob me of my child, to strip me; there is a soft-spoken cabal at work that means to leave me sitting.

I went through this thing, last year, so I know every thorn-strewn step of the way. In a matter of days, now, I will be requested to put on my good pants, my tie, and my coat, and go watch my little girl disappear. And my baby, as one of a string, like pearls, will go down a shade-spangled lane, into the sunlight, slow stepping, step-step-step - out of my life.

Through it all, I shall be speared on every side: "Aren't you proud!" Not as a question, you understand, but as a challenge. They would dare me to say I am not proud.

"Isn't she pretty!" And I will bristle at their impertinence: Who are such johnny-come-latelys, to query me so? There is not a one of them who knows how I sank to my knees when this one came into the world, sank abjectly and told the lady, so God would hear, I loved her so, and always would, and would try my inept best. None of them knows how my heart sang as the diapered toddler came running to her Daddy, pot-bellied in front, and surprisingly billowed behind. Nor of the bouncing ponytail who danced her way to kindergarten. Nor the shock I felt that night the doorbell rang and there - the first of a long, subsequent line - stood an ape, beady-eyed, malign, smelling of strong soap, asking was my baby at home.

And now the two of them, mother and child, a-bustle overhead, with never a thought for what sits beneath. ("It can't touch the ground, Mother, we will be on the lawn, you know!")

the most radiant of all God's beings - diploma in hand, cool, poised, for the world to see. And from the audience will come a long, reverberating honk, like a distressed goose down by the head. Poor, confused Old Man.

And it will be over. And who will come home with me? Mamma? Yes, always. But my little baby? Not likely. My baby will be gone. There will be in my baby's bubbly place the poised lady who metamorphosed before my eyes, her thoughts aimed elsewhere.

It happened just so, last year. So, I know. It wasn't so bad, then, for I had another string to my bow; this one. But now it is the end; both my babies gone.

We, Mother and me, through force of circumstance - it's them apes - have already begun to practise eating alone. And it takes some doing, some getting used to. When there are but two, Mother says grace, and that distracts me: Why should Mother be saying grace? The children always say grace. And there are no children, no children at all.

No, sir, I don't like it. I'm going to tell you right now, I don't like it. I want this world to stop right where it is, right here, right now. This thing has gone far enough.

I say that because I know what comes next. Truth is, "next" is here already. The apes are getting thicker, and thicker, and thicker, and one day, one of those grinning, long-toothed baboons, still smelling of strong soap, is going to ask politely - oh, sure, politely - if he may have a word.

-O-

He will get his word all right. Every last one I know, every word I have been saving, practising, since the horrible possibility first crossed my mind. And he will have asked for it - that is some solace.

And the child's mother? I don't know whose side she is on, not really; measuring, talking through pins, sewing, snipping, and every now and then, her rich laughter. And me down here bleeding to death.

And just like the rest, she will smile and squeeze my arm and say, "Isn't it all so beautiful?"

Beautiful? It is terrifying. I feel like a sainted martyr tied to the stake, up to my ears in oil-soaked diplomas, and baboons gibbering all around - grinning, yowling, cawing apes - faggots afire, ready to touch me off.

I tell you, my honk will reverberate. They will hear me from here to Kingdom Come. Graduation, my foot.

You give me back my babies, Reverend Mother, and you can have your old diplomas.

No Need To Leave Home

There is no need to go away looking excitement. If you have the time to wait, sooner or later, almost everything happens in Franklin County.

From hurricanes to bank robbery; from the school band to the Glenn Miller orchestra; from forest fires to baseball tournaments, folks living in these parts, live the full life.

Such was the case last Friday. Right out of a James Bond novel or a western movie, suddenly and without public warning, Bunn became the center of as much drama and excitement as New York or Paris ever gets. A week earlier, it had been the Alert community where the body of a missing man was found.

Not too long ago, it was Franklinton with its school meetings and before that it was Youngsville with industry and robberies. Pearce's too came in

with a massive gun robbery. Centerville had a spectacular four-car automobile crash. And so it goes.

Such excitement draws crowds of onlookers. Bunn, last Friday, was no exception. However, most of those spectators join in the efforts. This too, was the case at Bunn. The irony of it all, accentuating the drama, is that it took a mother of four, living near Louisburg, to bring the story to its rightful conclusion.

Maybe this is as it should be. Endings should never be anticipated. Surprises are always good for the story. They make everyone anxious for the next happening.

As we've said before, it's good to live in Franklin County...Where the action is.

Letters To The Editor

To The Editor:

I want to thank you for your editorial support of the East Carolina University bill. Your stand, I believe, more accurately reflected the views of a majority of the citizens of this state than the stand taken by the metropolitan papers.

We believe that our cause is just and that no apologies are needed for our efforts. Being ambitious for providing extended opportunities is in keeping with the highest traditions of our great State. In fact, some of our critics should have been offering us their leadership, guidance, and encouragement. It is difficult to ascertain who is the victor now that we have met with temporary defeat.

Your voice in support of progress will strengthen the will of the people. It will help them unite in an effort to improve their lives and the lives of their children. All of us working together can achieve for the East and, indeed, for all of North Carolina realistic goals that will be of lasting benefit to our people.

Very cordially yours,

Leo W. Jenkins,
President.

Westmoreland

Vice President Humphrey has defended General Westmoreland against senatorial charges that the commanding general is being used to muzzle Vietnam war critics. He said the general had made an excellent assessment of the war situation.

Vietnam Losses

Senator Richard Russell, chairman of the Armed Services Committee has charged that there has been "great derelictions" in the guarding of U. S. airfields and ammunition dumps in Vietnam.

Air Pollution Gains

The Health, Education and Welfare Department has announced significant breakthroughs towards the control of air pollution. The Secretary said while there was apparent success in the New York-New Jersey area.

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Subject

(Continued from Page 1)

area. Will be coming in in a few minutes." Somewhat dejectedly, Sheriff William Dement returned to the Bunn bank office where FBI and SBI agents waited, unaware that a suspect had been sighted.

It was 10:30 p.m. Twelve hours since a lone bandit had walked into the Bunn Branch of First-Citizens Bank and walked away with a brown bag containing \$8,758.

"Louisburg P. D. to Car One."
"Go ahead, Louisburg. Sheriff is out of car. Can get him if it is important."

"Ten-four, Car One. Car Three advises subject in custody. Picked up two miles west of Franklinton on Creedmoor road."

"Ten-four. Stand by." Sheriff Dement and agents of the SBI and FBI had "read the traffic." They had heard.

"Car One to Louisburg P. D."

"Go ahead, Car One."

"FBI advises return subject to Bunn for identification."

"Ten-four, car one."

"Car four to Louisburg P. D."

"Go ahead, car four."

"Advise car three, will meet him at Dick's Drive Inn in Louisburg and transport subject to Bunn."

"Ten-four, car four."

Then the waiting began. Officers were seen entering and leaving the bank. As though, they too had "read the traffic," citizens began to gather near the bank office. Something was up. Cars sped along the main street. It was getting late. The wait of a strenuous day was beginning to tell. Coffee was being served inside the bank for officers and reporters. Where was that car?

"Car Two to Louisburg P. D."

"Go ahead, Car two."

"Sheriff advises location of Car four over."

"Car four to Louisburg P. D. Tell Sheriff we're at Hall's crossroads, about two miles from Bunn."

"Ten-four, car four."

A few minutes later Car Four, driven by Deputy Sheriff Lloyd Gupton drove up and stopped in front of the bank. Gupton and some special officers who had been riding with him stepped out. With them was a slender, young Negro man. His clothes were ill arranged. His shoes were muddy. He looked as if he had been caught in the rain. He was hustled inside the building. He leaned on the ledge at the number one teller's window. The window where earlier someone had collected over \$8,700 only to lose it in the chase which followed. He was taken to the bank office where the FBI and SBI waited. They closed the door.

Deputy Dave Batten arrived with Mrs. Helen Jones, the cashier who had faced the bandit and the gun. Bank manager Bill Andrews was already on hand. Everybody talked in whispers and everyone waited.

Soon it was midnight. Then 12:15. It had been a long day.

Around 12:30 the news came.

"Car One to Louisburg P. D."

"Go ahead Car One."

"We're bringing suspect in."

The jailer was waiting. The suspect was locked up. The paper read \$25,000 bond. Charges: Armed Robbery.

"Congratulations, Sheriff," we said, "You done good."

"Let's go home," he replied with a smile.

From The Office Of

Congressman Fountain

Will School Boards Benefit From New Federal Plan?

Washington, D. C. - What could be the most important advance of the year to all the people of the Second District is the decision to remove U. S. Education Commissioner Harold Howe from the job of deciding whether local school boards are entitled to Federal education funds.

I say "could" because the net effect will not be known for sometime after June when the change takes place.

From one point of view, Secretary Gardner's reorganization plan should help the entire country because it brings together in one office the authority to determine when desegregation is being carried out on the local level.

Previously, these decisions were made in a number of offices charged primarily with other functions. Too often they spent most of their time telling local authorities whether or not they were guilty of discrimination.

This means that agencies responsible for education programs can-or should-give their attention to education; agencies dealing with health can concern themselves with health programs, and so on.

Although I normally oppose centralization of authority--as do many other Americans--this appears to be a case where it is needed.

If Secretary Gardner's plan works as it should, one office would worry about civil rights and the operating agencies would carry out their specific programs as intended.

What I have said should include a note of caution, however. We simply don't know yet how the new plan will work.

One thing is clear. A change of attitude is needed by those who will be charged with enforcement of the Civil Rights Act. Most North Carolinians, whether they agree with it or not, recognize that the Civil Rights Act is the law and that they are obligated to comply with it. They also recognize that there would be no basis for complaint if the law were carried out properly.

But they resent--with good reason--the fact that the Office of Education has ignored and violated provisions of the Civil Rights Act intended by Congress to insure fair treatment to children of all races and due process of law. Actually, the Office of Education should set the example for others by careful compliance with the law.

Congress was aware of the possibility of bureaucratic abuse when it enacted the law. As a safeguard, it specifically provided that Federal funds could not be withheld unless there was "an express finding, on the record, after opportunity for hearing" of discrimination.

Despite this unmistakable requirement, the Office of Education under Commissioner Howe, denied Federal assistance to students in some schools for as much as two years without a finding of discrimination or any opportunity for a hearing.

Howe contended that administrative "deferral" of funds did not constitute denial. He thus proclaimed himself judge, jury and prosecutor.

Last year, the Fountain Amendment--while not accepting the "deferral" premise--was adopted overwhelmingly in the House. As finally approved, it prohibited any "deferral" for more than 60 days without a hearing.

Again, an unequivocal expression by Congress was ignored by Howe and his staff. We have recently found that at least 46 school districts throughout the South were placed on the "deferred" list and kept there beyond the 60-day limit and without hearings. They have now been removed from that list.

Let us hope for the kind of attitude and approach which will result in the use of Federal funds as they were intended. But until that time comes, we must remain on guard against continued bureaucratic abuse of our people.