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LYNN NISBET:

Around Capitol Square

DEMOCRATS — Raleigh as the capital city of Democratic State is used to having a lot of Democrats around, the kind spelled with a big D. Also a lot of the kind spelled with a little d. Both were here Wednesday and Thursday for the biennial North Carolina Democratic Convention. Hotels began to fill early Wednesday afternoon and the convention attendants gathered in huddles to discuss plans for the big event.

DIFFERENCES — They were all Democrats, but there was obvious factional divisions among them. The differences were mostly on minor matters. There seemed a high degree of unanimity in desire and purpose to maintain the "principles of the Democratic party." The trouble comes in defining these principles. There were ardent advocates of ideas enunciated by Thomas Jefferson and Grover Cleveland. There were enthusiasts for the concepts of Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt. And there were just as strong contenders for the theories practiced, if not proclaimed, by Andrew Jackson and Harry Truman. These differences are fundamental but not too serious. Jefferson and Cleveland believed that the government belonged to the people of the United States. Wilson and Roosevelt thought it belonged to the whole world. Jackson and Truman thought it belonged to the president.

COMPREHENSIVE — The integration of these contrasting ideologies into the overall concept of democracy has been the strength—and often the weakness—of the Democratic party. One of the marvels of politics is that the same folks can recognize allegiance to Jefferson and Jackson, Cleveland and Truman. At state level it is just as hard to reconcile loyalty to Governors Aycock, McLean, Cherry and Scott, all in one package. The fact that all Democratic Presidents and all Democratic Governors are accorded approximately equal acclaim is testimony to the comprehensive scope of the Democratic party and the basic tenets of majority control. Widely divergent as the ideas of these recognized leaders have been and are, all the people have gone along in support of policies as they changed with changing administrations.

PERSONALITIES — Another very interesting subject for study is the impact of personalities. There is preponderant political support among the convention delegates for Richard Russell for President and William Umstead for Governor. But Hubert Olive, major contender against Umstead for the governorship, is personally just as popular as the admittedly leading candidate. Both Olive and Umstead have been around the hotels and convention halls. No presidential candidate has shown up but it takes no great sense of discernment to discover that partisans of

Kefauver are just as personally popular as advocates of Russell. And there is ample evidence that Harry Truman has many friends in the assembled throng who would be happy to support him for another term in the White House, not on account of his political philosophy half so much as because of personal regard for the man and some of his close friends in North Carolina.

FINAGLING — A lot of back-stage "finagling" goes on at a convention like this. Most of it involves both personalities and principles. There is the case of Joe Doakes who wants desperately to be a delegate to the national convention from a district where John Doe has a lot influence. Joe and John are good personal friends, but they disagree on political issues. John would like to help Joe get in line to go to Chicago on account of friendship, but first he must ascertain whether Joe will vote right at the big convention. After several conferences that matter is settled and John is ready to help Joe—only to learn that he is all wrong on governor or congressman or some other office, and that his selection would add prestige to "the other side." Then there are further conferences, and maybe Joe agrees to vote right all the way, because he'd rather go to the convention than to have his favorites nominated in the primary. That is all right all the way. But maybe Joe bucks and won't agree to go all the way. Then the whole deal is off and John has to look up another prospective delegate who is "right."

IMPORTANT — This kind of activity is more important than most people realize. On the surface it would not seem that the personal friendship between Joe Doakes and John Doe would have anything to do with who is the Democratic Candidate for President. It does have a lot to do with it; because there is a supposedly authenticated story about one vote in a precinct deciding who would be the delegates to a county convention, where one vote determined the personnel of the delegation to the state convention. There again one vote chose the national convention delegates, where one vote was the balance of power between two leading presidential candidates. So it is that when you see Joe and John in confidential talk, chances are they are talking about how the kids got along with measles, or how Mary likes her new house; but they may be deciding who will be the next President of the United States. It is this element of chance that makes political conventions so interesting to watch, and so important in the governmental scheme of North Carolina and the United States.

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