

# The Chapel Hill Weekly

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

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## Oscar Coffin

Oscar Coffin's gift for writing, his wide acquaintance, and his understanding of public affairs made him a notable figure in North Carolina journalism when he was yet only a few years out of college. After he joined the University faculty thirty years ago his influence spread and deepened through the expert craftsmanship that he imparted to his students. And it was the public's good fortune that he continued, while teaching, to contribute editorials and a column of comment, serious and humorous by turns, to the Greensboro News.

Scattered all over the world today are newspapermen—reporters and deskmen in cities, foreign correspondents, small town editors—who owe their success, and delight to say so whenever the opportunity offers, to the training that he gave them. He taught them not only how to know news and how to write it but also how to apply their knowledge and reasoning powers to interpreting it. That they learned these things from him explains in large measure why they are successful.

In all the time he was here the University had in its faculty no more striking personality than Oscar Coffin. In his own home or anybody else's, at a tavern table, or in any social gathering he was pungent and humorous, given to unexpected verdicts on all manner of questions. This flavorsome character put him in high favor as a companion. Sometimes he had a rough way of talking that might puzzle strangers, but we who knew him knew it for an aspect of his humor. We were always well aware of his warm and generous heart.—L. G.

## The League of Women Voters

It happens that, just as the League of Women Voters in Chapel Hill prepares to launch its annual fund-raising campaign, I have been reading an article on "The Women's Vote" in the New York Times Magazine.

The Times article is just what you would expect from its title: it is about the numbers of qualified women voters, how large a proportion of them vote, what issues they are most interested in, and the ways the politicians have of appealing to them.

But in the letters and bulletins sent out by Chapel Hill's League of Women Voters, describing its activities and purposes, there is nothing to indicate that it is any more concerned with women voters than with men voters. And, as a matter of fact, it isn't. Its functions are of a nature that would give it a better right to some such title as the League for Political Information.

We all ought to be glad of this. It is fortunate indeed that, while we male citizens permit ourselves to be buried in our various ruts (teaching, preaching, writing, printing, practicing law or medicine, managing the municipality and policing the streets, borrowing and lending money, mending pipes and electric wires, conducting restaurants and filling stations, delivering mail and newspapers and milk, playing tennis and golf, gazing at television screens, attending football games, fishing and hunting, and so on) we have a company of public-spirited women gathering information about the persons and questions we are to pass judgment on, imparting this information to us so that we will know what it's all about, and then making sure that we don't forget to go to the polls.

I have no doubt that the League of Women Voters conforms to its name better in most communities than it does here by concentrating on women; that is, by providing them with information

and stimulating their interest in politics. But that is not the need in Chapel Hill. Here the women are so intelligent and well educated, and so attentive to their civic obligations, that they already know more about political affairs than the men do.

It is not necessary for me to go into a detailed description of what the Chapel Hill League of Women Voters does. All of us are familiar with the meetings it holds, at which representatives of all sides speak; its literature that comes through the mail at campaign time, giving us information about candidates and issues; and the services it performs in getting voters to the polls. The purpose of this piece I am writing now is to urge the people to give the League the support it so well deserves of them. It can't operate without money.

Members of the League are soon to make a round of homes and places of business to solicit contributions. But why not save them and yourselves trouble by contributing without being called on? My advice to one and all is: mail your check to the League of Women Voters, Box 1683, Chapel Hill, or deliver your check or cash to Mrs. Richmond P. Bond, president, or to any of these members of the finance committee: Mrs. W. C. Coker, Mrs. Rashi Fein, Mrs. A. Hughes Bryan, Mrs. Charles H. Burnett, Mrs. Emil T. Chanlett, Mrs. W. W. Cort, Mrs. John N. Couch, Mrs. William C. Friday, and Mrs. John P. Gillin.—L.G.

## The Preference of a Member of the Staff

I am going to vote for Eisenhower. This does not mean that I agree with all the extravagant praise that Republican spokesmen have showered upon his administration, but I admire him for his character and ability and I believe that the country is more apt to be safe, and that people of all classes will be better off, with him as President than with Stevenson.

Here I am not speaking for the Weekly. This is merely a statement of the preference of one member of the staff. I have not talked with other members of the staff about the election and do not know how any of them are going to vote.

It seems to me that as the campaign has proceeded Stevenson has been grabbing desperately at anything he hoped he could make an issue of. And his two most important proposals, to abolish the draft and to stop the H-bomb tests, are actually dangerous. I would certainly rather trust Eisenhower than Stevenson to be our commander-in-chief and to answer these questions that vitally affect the nation's safety.

Eisenhower has done everything he possibly could to persuade Soviet Russia to enter into an agreement, safeguarded by an inspection system, for the abandonment of atomic tests, but has met only with rebuffs. He has declared himself ready to open negotiations not only for this step but for general disarmament. For the United States to give up its best protection, the power to answer attack by attack, would be to put itself at the mercy of a potential enemy that has proved itself merciless.

Our country's voters may be divided on many lines. For example, one division is between men and women. Another is according to place of residence (New England, the South, the Middle West, etc.). Another that has become important in recent years, also residential but in a different way, is between city-dwellers and suburbanites. Another is according to occupation (farmers, "white-collar" workers, factory workers, "small business" men, etc.). Appeals for votes are made, on various occasions, on the basis of all these divisions.

But as a campaign approaches its climax the division that is most interesting to both the spectator and the professional politician, and puts the latter into a frightful state of worry, is between the partisan voters and the independent voters.

All the writers on politics agree that Eisenhower's big margin over Stevenson four years ago (electoral vote, 442 to 89; popular vote, 33,936,000 to 27,315,000) was due to his winning the support of such a great number of independent voters. The prevailing opinion is that his proportion of the independent vote will not be as large this year as it was in 1952 but that it will still be large enough to re-elect him.

Independent voters are in two main categories. Some do not belong to any party. Others are enrolled with this or that party but are not what are called thick-and-thin members. They usually vote with it but do not hesitate

## Chapel Hill Chaff

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Cutten has dispelled any possible doubt about the matter by telling me that he has never met Mrs. Post. So, it seems that the butter couldn't have been anybody's but Mr. Day's.

One more exemplar of a long North Carolina tradition—that the name Willie is pronounced Wiley—was in the village last Saturday, and Collier Cobb did us the good turn of bringing him and his wife in to call on us after the football game. Before I leave the subject of Wiley and Wiley let me recall that two of the illustrious names in North Carolina history are sounded Wiley Jones and Wiley P. Mangum but are in all the written and printed records as Willie Jones and Willie P. Mangum.

Our callers were Mr. and Mrs. Willie Long of Gaysburg in Halifax county. They live on a farm alongside the Roanoke river, and live a much more peaceful life now that the river has been tamed by dams than they used to when it was uninhibited and went on frequent rampages.

"Eight hundred acres of my land, planted in cotton and peanuts, were washed away in 1940," Mr. Long told me. "They say that's more crop land than any other one person ever lost in a single flood."

I envisioned a vast hole left, as an eternal curse on the landscape, by the receding waters.

"What became of the place where your land had been?" I asked.

"Well," said Mr. Long, with the happy smile of a man who is remembering a stroke of good fortune, "the river covered it over with about a foot in depth of rich black soil, so rich that the next year I got a crop worth twice as much as the one I lost."

Mr. Long attended the John Graham school in Warrenton among whose other alumni are Frank P. Graham, Robert B. House, and Collier Cobb. Mr. Long and Mr. Cobb were students together in the University here. While Mr. Cobb stayed on to be graduated Mr. Long quit college after two years and went back to Halifax county to join the family in farming. From all I hear he hasn't lost anything, either in assets or contentment, by cutting short his academic career. And his manner of speaking during his lively narrative of the Roanoke river's assault on his farm and the disappearance of his cotton and peanuts showed he had plenty of culture. I couldn't see but that, in polish of language, he achieved a stand-off with his accompanying bachelor of arts, Mr. Cobb. Maybe he's been absorbing education year by year from his communion with our North Carolina's Ol' Man River.

## Music in a Chaotic World

(Editor's Note: In this week of frightening developments around the world, some of the observations made in a recent article by Benjamin Swain, director of the N. C. Symphony Orchestra, are poignant-ly appropriate. Excerpts quoted here attest to the value inherent in the musical experience available to N. C. citizens through their Symphony, currently completing its local

membership enrollment.)

During the fourth and fifth centuries, some of our forefathers probably ate human flesh. They lived in a world of savagery, violence, ignorance, and superstition. Although civilization has progressed on some fronts, the world is still a chaotic world. It is a world ridden with debt and wracked by war and destitution. It is a world in which there is an appalling increase of thought controls, racial conflicts, and social dilemmas. Goya, the Spanish painter of the nineteenth century, caustically depicted civilization as one ass trying to teach another.

Tobacco, peanuts, fish, cotton, overalls, towels, and cigarettes may be symbols of one kind of progress in North Carolina turned down to go for Hoover. I voted for F. D. R. every time he ran, and for Truman against Dewey. Four years ago I voted for Eisenhower. I have always voted for Democrats for offices other than President and Vice-President. One Democrat I have been voting for ever since 1938 with exceptional pleasure is Congressman Carl Durham.

When I lived in New York there was a sizable and sometimes successful Fusion ("anti-Tammany") party for city elections, made up of Republicans, independents, and temporarily independent Democrats. I voted with the Fusionists and once held a minor office in a Fusion administration. Tammany was in such bad odor that some people prominent in the national Democratic party were Fusionists. F.D.R., when Governor, had a Tammany mayor, James J. Walker, expelled from office. Woodrow Wilson was hostile to Tammany (which had showed its hostility to him at the 1912 nomination convention) and favored the independent Democrats in New York with federal patronage.

Now as to the candidate who has been the most bitterly attacked in the present campaign:

Not only have Democratic partisans been making Vice-President Nixon a special target for criticism; many independents and Republicans have expressed themselves as being reluctant to vote for Eisenhower because they can't vote for him without voting for Nixon too. It's only a guess how many votes this reluctance will cost Eisenhower; you find much difference of opinion about it in the newspapers.

I think the Democrats have gone too far in their abuse of Nixon. Of course he has said foolish things, but who hasn't? It seems to me he has made creditable progress toward growing out of his foolishness. He has performed the duties of his office well and as time has passed his political manners have improved. In fact, in his recent campaigning he has been more courteous toward his opponents than they have been toward him.

There is another point to be made. The voter has got to make a choice between Vice-Presidential as between Presidential candidates. I cannot see any reason to vote for Kefauver in preference to Nixon.—L.G.

## From Our Files

### 5 Years Ago

The football team that is ranked No. 1 in the U. S.—that of the University of Tennessee—will play Carolina tomorrow in the Kenan Stadium.

The Chapel Hill Community Club an affiliate of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, is participating in the Federation's campaign to raise money for 150,000 CARE packages to be sent to Korea.

### 10 Years Ago

When W. C. Coker, the botanist, was on his way from home to Davie Hall Monday, he saw a pure-white chimpanzee playing on the rock wall that forms the east boundary of the Arboretum. White chimpanzees are very rare.

Next Tuesday is election day. There are two Constitutional amendments to be voted on: one to raise the pay of members of the legislature, one to make women eligible for jury duty.

### 15 Years Ago

A large new batch of clothing for English boys and girls, every garment bearing the label of the Chapel Hill Community Work Room, is now on its way to England. On Tuesday the women of the Community Work Room proudly wrapped the 69 boys' shirts, the 192 girls' cotton dresses, and 59 girls' woolen shirts, and sent them on their way to the export Dept. of the Red Cross in Jersey City.

membership enrollment.)

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## I Like Chapel Hill

By Billy Arthur

Bart Bartholomew is public information officer for the UNC Division of Health Affairs, which includes Memorial Hospital. Last week he was unexpectedly admitted to the hospital as a patient and called UNC News Bureau Director Pete Ivey to tell him.

Pete's laconic reply was, "Don't expect time and a half overtime pay just because you're going to be at the hospital 24 hours a day."

Paul Lytle's in the dog house, so to speak. He's now charged with the operation of the Bank of Chapel Hill's drive-up teller window on East Rosemary Street, but he can't duck out for an early morning coffee break and it's mighty lonesome out there for a person accustomed to seeing a lot of foot-traffic.

However, Paul seems to be mighty happy playing president of his own little bank.

But, I'm not wholly happy about the situation.

I like Paul and I like the bank, and I think I should be the one to help. But the bank's officials don't think so.

I offered to relieve him, but the top brass misconstrued the meaning of my offer.

"Relieve him of what?" they asked. "That's just what we're afraid you would do—relieve him and us, too, of cash."

Over in Raleigh recently I chanced across a friend of long-standing—Ed Buchan of Kinston. He was there with his Missus, enjoying the comfort of the hotel lobby and the pleasure of renewing friendships with people who had come to the State Fair and to the Democrats' banquet.

"Uncle Ed"—that's what I always call him—wanted to know about people hereabouts, especially Carl Teague.

"I'm particularly fond of Carl," he said. "You know, he and I roomed together when we went to school at Buie's Creek and later when we attended the University. You want to get Billy Carmichael to tell you about the time Carl and I got religion at the big camp meeting."

That I've got to hear.

Without looking up the number in the telephone book, I tried to dial Walker's Funeral Home the other day.

A voice answered: "Carolina Inn. Ridout speaking." "I was trying to get the funeral home," I told C. F. Ridout.

"Well, Billy, you got the Inn," he said nicely.

I couldn't resist the temptation, so I let go: "But I didn't miss it much, did I?"

How Mr. Ridout maintains such an even disposition and is as pleasant as he is all the time is beyond me.

## Book Reviews

By Robert Bartholomew  
WOODROW WILSON AND THE POLITICS OF MORALITY. By John Morton Blum. Edited by Oscar Handlin. Little, Brown & Co. Boston. 215 pp. \$3.50.

As a young boy Woodrow Wilson dreamed of winning glory by distinguished speeches that would move people and governments to great things. It was a mark of greatness that he remained true to his dream and that his dream so largely came true. On the other hand, the stubbornness with which he followed his ideals at times blinded him to people and his dealings with them.

Wilson left his touch on each job he undertook, but it was as President that he left his most enduring mark. As he had hoped to do, he led Congress to great achievements and his party to large victories.

This is one of the Library of American Biography series that has been edited by Oscar Handlin. Other volumes of the series are biographies of Grant, Franklin, Webster and Hughes, just to mention a few.

The author is professor of history at MIT. He is also author of "Joe Turnulty and the Wilson Era" and "The Republican Roosevelt."

LES GIRLS. By Constance Tomkinson. Little, Brown & Co. Boston. 274 pp. \$3.95.

This is an unconventional and funny story of a very unusual young lady, Constance Tomkinson, whose path from a small dancing group to the famous Folies was strewn with surprises, admirers and a goodly amount of just plain work. In Italy, where the plumbing was prehistoric and the men even more so, Tommy and her friends found three escorts safer than one. This nonfiction work, written by a minister's daughter who ends up in the chorus of the Folies Bergere, is one of the better humorous books of the season. A delightful series of drawings by David Knight captures the spirit of the book.

AIRPORT ROAD CHAPEL HILL  
HOME OF CHOICE CHARCOAL BROILED HICKORY SMOKED STEAKS—FLAMING SHISKEBAB—BUFFET EVERY SUNDAY