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and

The Highlands Maconian

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We Need A Jolt

"THESE boys expect a good deal", someone remarked the other day, in referring to the returning servicemen. They've been around, and what was good enough for them before they left home isn't any more. They aren't satisfied with second-rate things, whether it be jobs, or housing, or entertainment, or anything else. They demand the best."

That's fine. More power to them!

If they'll keep on demanding the best, they'll be doing Macon County a great service. That's still another contribution Macon's young men and women, coming back home from service in the armed forces, can make to their home county.

For half a century the South, and particularly the mountain area of the South, was tragically poor. We had to accept what we could pay for; we had to improvise; we had to get along with something that wasn't what we wanted or what we needed, but something that "would do". And our parents and grandparents did a magnificent job of achieving in the face of these obstacles.

Unfortunately, however, we have fallen into the mental habit of being satisfied with things that "will do". We have become accustomed to accepting merchandise "just as good" as what we ask for. We have become reconciled to receiving poor-quality service from the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker. And, worst of all, we have become satisfied with ourselves when we do a job that isn't our best, reassuring ourselves that it "will do".

No longer are we so poor that we have to accept anything second-rate. There's no longer any reason why we shouldn't expect, and demand, just as good merchandise, just as good service, just as good housing, just as good government, just as good entertainment, just as good schools, as are available anywhere else.

And surely there's no reason why we shouldn't demand top quality performance from ourselves.

It's high time we were jolted out of this mental habit of being content with something that merely "will do". And these returning service men and women are the ones who can give us the necessary jolt—if we'll just make Macon County a place where they can both earn a living and get the things from life they can elsewhere.

A Political Duty

If a democracy is to work, it must have two things: First, an intelligent, informed, interested electorate; and, second, honest, intelligent, and aggressive leadership.

It was suggested in this column two weeks ago that it is the responsibility of the voters of Macon County—and of the state and nation, too, of course—to pick the best available men, or women—for public office; that it is the duty of the voters to give serious thought to the selection of officeholders, to urge the best men to run, and then to support those best qualified, regardless of personal interest, or even of personal friendship.

But we can't have good leadership, or good government, without good men in office. And the voters can't pick the best men unless the best men are willing to run. It is all right to take the attitude that "the office should seek the man", but when a good man is urged to run, he has no right to decline simply because he feels he can't afford to hold public office, or because he prefers private life.

Their biographies clearly show that George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, two of the men who made America great and free, longed for the peace of private life; yet they spent most of their adult lives serving their country.

If ever the problems of public office, whether in the nation, the state, or the county, called for good men, it is today.

All men on the earth are merely one great family divided into many branches.—Bandeau.

Physical strength can never permanently withstand the impact of spiritual force.—Franklin D. Roosevelt.

LETTERS

NEEDED: SOME PLANNING

Dear Weimar,

I want to thank you and congratulate you for going back home to run "The Franklin Press." I hope your association with the paper will be as fortunate for you as I believe it is for the county.

A few weeks ago I read in "The Press" the announcement that the old Court House was either going to be torn down or fixed up. I want to add my voice to those who are in favor of fixing it up. To me it seems a shame that anybody even contemplates tearing it down.

The Court House, the Presbyterian and Episcopal churches and the old Masonic Lodge are the only public buildings in Franklin that have any claim to architectural distinction or historical interest. The only ones, in fact, that the people of Franklin can be proud of. All the rest, the post office, (though it's a nice building) the bank building and the other churches have no special interest, no originality, nothing to distinguish them from a thousand other post offices, churches, and bank buildings in a thousand other little towns.

In cities and larger towns in other parts of the country millions of dollars are being spent to restore or reproduce old buildings while Franklin and other little Southern towns seem to feel ashamed of them. They tear them down and line their Main Streets with the most ordinary, shoddy brick and concrete-block structures, giving the streets for a block or two all the ugliness and disadvantages of a city street with none of the advantages of either a city or a country town. And it is not only the small towns that do this. Look at Asheville. The business section with its narrow streets and snarled traffic is a nightmare and its modern court house a monstrosity. I can't remember a single public building there that has any charm or beauty or any claim to historical interest. All because when it was a small town nobody gave any thought to planning it or preserving the things worth preserving.

New England small towns are lovely. They (even towns ten times as large as Franklin) have wide tree-shaded streets with their court houses and banks, surrounded by grass and shrubs, set well back from the sidewalks. I don't think the people in these towns are anything like half as fine as the people in Franklin, but I admire the way they have planned their Main Streets.

Even in New York the City Hall down near Wall Street, where land is worth its weight in gold, sits back from the street in about half an acre of land planted in grass and trees (and early spring jonquills).

Franklin more than most towns has wonderful natural beauty and its homes and residential sections are gracious and attractive. But the business section of Main Street is not only horrid ugly but more crowded, congested, and inconvenient than Fifth Avenue. Why, with all the assets Franklin has, with unlimited space stretching for miles in every direction and comparatively cheap land values, it should jam its stores and office buildings right against each other and right smack up against its narrow Main Street is hard to understand, except that nobody seems to have given any thought to planning it.

I wish some organization could be formed in Franklin to consider the problem of town planning for the future, and of preserving its interesting buildings. An intelligent plan would not only eventually add to the beauty and pleasantness of the town but would be an eminently practical thing to do from the standpoint of good business. First of all, it would attract interest and comment. And further, it would be proof that its citizens were on their toes and more forward looking than most, and this would attract business and capital from other sections of the country. But half-way measures won't do any good. The plan would have to be really courageous and outstanding.

Couldn't a town ordinance be passed stipulating that all future buildings be set back twenty or twenty-five feet from the sidewalk so that some day Main Street could be widened? The street on either side of the Court House ought to be closed. The way it is now it is not only dangerous from the standpoint of traffic, but it ruins the setting of the Court House. The Court House ought to be accorded a position of dignity. Trees should be planted on either side of it, and a big parking space provided on some side street. The inside of the Court House should be modernized and if there is not enough space for all county offices, a new county office building could be built. All new streets should be made wide enough to take care of future traffic and the only way to make them wide enough is to make them twice as wide as anybody can foresee the need of. Trees planted in a lane between the streets and sidewalks would add to the street's pleasantness.

Of course, such a plan would not be easy to carry out and it would take time. But some day, if Franklin continues to grow, something drastic will have to be done to Main Street. And it would be a lot better to plan for it now than to wait twenty-five years, just as it would have been a lot better—and comparatively easy—if it had been planned twenty-five years ago.

I hope there are some people in Franklin who have already been thinking about these things. With careful planning for the future Franklin could easily, in years to come, be the most beautiful County Seat in North Carolina.

With sincerest good wishes to you and "The Press",

ANNIEWILL SILER.

112 West 12th Street,
New York, N. Y.
February 8, 1946.

P. S. I hope nobody thinks I'm being disloyal to my home town. I would never have written this letter if I didn't love Franklin.

PRETTY FACES — GIRLS' AND CLOCKS'

When a clock is without numerals it is in a way the same as a young woman without her lipstick and rouge. They are both pale of face; with dejected expression; lacking prettiness and wholly less attractive than their basic features warrant.

In the case of the modern girl most of whom are vicious; clever, attractive and a pleasure for everyone to see it is a calamity for her to be seen outside her immediate family without her make-up.

Of course, it is her ability to secrete herself behind closed doors when she has household duties to attend. But if someone catches her unawares she is always ill at ease and has a temporary feeling of being inferior and unable to cope with the situation in her usual forthright manner.

The clock more than likely feels the same way, but is less fortunate than the young ladies, because it must show its face to everyone who cares to look: 24 hours every day.

This certainly is a calamity, too. Not just because the people of the vicinity as well as travelers are deprived of the ordinarily pleasant appearance of a well groomed clock, but there are many indications of other ill effects.

It is barely possible that the heart of the clock is caused to flutter and a feeling of unsteadiness come over it. Maybe way down inside it too is effected, causing an inferiority complex that in turn causes it to act contrarily.

The psychological effect may be so great that a fine upstanding clock would say things without thinking. Such as tolling off several more times every hour when all the time she would really rather tell the truth.

In summing up the case by all means let's have our young ladies abroad with proper make-up and likewise give our clock some paint for it's face.

—SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

Franklin, N. C.
February 14, 1946.

If you cannot make light of your troubles, keep them dark.

Wisdom is oft-times nearer when we stoop than when we soar.—Wodsworth.

Say: "I saw it advertised in The Press".

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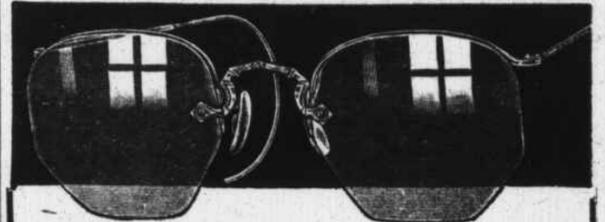
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We have several boundaries of Dogwood stumpage bought. If interested in contract-cutting, see us.

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