

The Franklin Press and The Highlands Maconing

Second class mail privileges authorized at Franklin, N. C.
Published every Thursday by The Franklin Press
Telephone 24
"Established in 1885 As The Franklin Press"

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OUTSIDE MACON COUNTY		INSIDE MACON COUNTY	
One Year	\$3.00	One Year	\$2.50
Six Months	1.75	Six Months	1.75
Three Months	1.00	Three Months	1.00
Two Years	5.25	Two Years	4.25
Three Years	7.50	Three Years	6.00

MARCH 6, 1958

Somewhere...

Somewhere, sometime, somehow, it's got to stop.

Today the average citizen pays a tax on virtually everything.

After allowing a measly \$50 a month per dependent to live on, the federal government levies an income tax of \$1 on every \$5 he earns.

The State of North Carolina, while its income tax doesn't start so low and doesn't take so big a hunk, taxes him on even the \$1 Uncle Sam already has taken.

There's a tax on his real and personal property. A tax on his balance in the bank. A tax for use of the sewer lines. A tax on gasoline. A tax for the right to use the highways. A sales tax on purchases. And so it goes. The only thing nobody seems to have thought of is to meter the air we breathe, and charge us so much for each cubic foot we inhale.

And within less than a month here, four new taxes either have become effective or have been imposed:

North Carolina collected an extra dollar for automobile licenses, for its driver training program. The Town of Franklin collected an extra dollar for a town auto tag. The Wildlife Commission has imposed a tax on every man, woman, and child who drops a hook in Nantahala Lake — said to be the next-to-the-last large body of free fishing water in Macon County. And last week the National Park Service imposed a tax for driving on the Blue Ridge Parkway — even the man who lives along the Parkway and contributed land for it must pay \$1 to drive on it to the nearest gas station or grocery store.

Two Regional Projects

The Waynesville Mountaineer editorially lists two highway projects it suggests should be pushed by all Western North Carolina.

One is the modernization of the road from Waynesville to Brevard and to the South Carolina line, to serve as a feeder highway from upper South Carolina.

The other is modernization of the road from Sylva to Murphy, in keeping with the "dream road" now under construction from Balsam to Sylva. As The Mountaineer points out, the road from Sylva to Murphy is out-dated—it never was meant for today's traffic load, much less for the increased travel that surely is ahead.

Neither project would directly affect Franklin. But Macon County is a part of the Western North Carolina unit, and any highway that serves the region serves this county, too. For not only is it true that the tourist who is attracted to Haywood County or Jackson is likely to visit Macon, also, but we here in Macon are a part of the over-all economy of the entire region.

Our Letters

The Press takes pride in the number and quality of letters to the editor it has been privileged to publish recently. Intelligent discussion of public questions, they have been forceful and frank, but, at the same time, reasonable and tolerant. It would be hard to exaggerate the value of such discussion in making democratic government work; we'd welcome more such letters from readers.

An illustration is the friendly feud between the Carpenter brothers about athletics in the schools. (This week's second letter from Mr. Jack Carpen-

ter, in the nature of a postscript to his earlier one, was received prior to last week's publication of that from Mr. Bob Carpenter.) Neither pulled any punches; yet they dealt with the subject in complete good humor, at times jokingly.

It is interesting to note that, although they started from entirely different viewpoints, they seem to have come up with the same conclusion: There is nothing wrong with athletics in itself; the problem arises when the athletic tail tries to wag the academic dog.

In this connection, it seems worth pointing out that usually it is not the students who have been first to lose their sense of proportion, but adults. For often when the public demands a winning team, it isn't the students' good the public has in mind at all, but its own amusement. That, of course, is a form of exploitation of children.

Can Tell Their Children

(Martin Harmon in Kings Mountain Herald)

Today's youngsters are fortunate. Now they will be able to say to their space-age children, "No, today's winters are nothing like they once were."

Constitutional Hodgepodge

(Charlotte Observer)

North Carolina's constitution is 89 years old. It has grown bulky and complex through frequent amendments, but it is basically the same document that was drafted in 1868.

The patchwork shows. Especially in recent years, as conditions changed rapidly and new needs developed, the amending process has been constant and substantial.

What remains, then, is a hodge-podge of constitutional law, some of it good, and much of it out-moded, that is frequently confusing or contradictory.

In his opening message to the 1957 General Assembly, Gov. Luther Hodges called for the appointment of a study commission to determine whether the state constitution needs to be revised. The legislature authorized such a study and the commission has now been appointed.

It's a carefully chosen group—four legislators, three attorneys, two judges, two former congressmen, an educator, an editor, a farm leader, a former ambassador.

It will undertake what is potentially one of the most important assignments the Assembly has authorized in recent times.

The constitution ought to be written in the interest of clarity, with a view toward greater flexibility that the modern state requires. Basic tenets that proved good can be retained, those that are no longer pertinent can be eliminated.

It won't be an easy job. Resistance to change is still apparent within the legislature and in many segments of the North Carolina electorate.

Yet there has been recent recognition of the need for constitutional revision, even in Raleigh. Last spring, Senators Perry Martin of Northampton and Luther Hamilton of Carteret introduced a bill that called for a public referendum on a proposed convention to rewrite the state constitution.

Under their plan, one delegate from each of the state's 100 counties would be elected to undertake the revision with, of course, the aid of whatever experts they need to consult.

The Assembly, instead, authorized the appointment of a study commission. And, whatever the legislative motive, the preliminary study provides a sound approach.

The commission will be able to pinpoint the major flaws in the present document and to inform the voting public what revision is needed. From such public awareness, valuable support can develop for meaningful reform.

We commend the inquiry.

Letters

... All Its Life

Editor, The Press:

I have been receiving and reading The Press all its life, and I would miss it if I should quit now. So suppose I will just have to say, "keep it coming". I am inclosing \$3.

E. N. EVANS

Bryson City, N. C.

Suggests Improvement

Dear Mr. Jones:

Another word about streets and roads:

One of the greatest improvements in Franklin was the change to one-way streets. It is no trouble at all for traveling folks to get through. But I have in mind an improvement you could make in the appearance of the town, especially the first impression of a stranger entering Franklin.

The used car lots take away a lot from the beauty of your highways, especially those on the approach to Franklin from Sylva. I am sure the owners would be glad to cooperate with the town's people, so something could be done about it.

I never think of roads in Macon County without remembering the time, in 1915, I walked from the head of Burningtown one afternoon and then rolled a wheelbarrow, loaded with a case of dynamite, back to the mines on the Wilde place, 11 miles. Imagine anybody's doing that today!

J. A. SWAFFORD

Toccoa, Ga.

Three Tests

Dear Weimar:

In my letter ("De-emphasize Athletics", in the February 20 issue of The Press), I offered a criticism but not much of a solution. A complete solution is impossible, but I think there are some things that can be studied.

Out of a class of twenty lovely and intelligent coeds, training to be elementary teachers, I have four failing a course called college arithmetic, which covers what you and I had in the sixth and seventh grades. I can not turn them loose to teach in the schools, because the blind cannot lead the blind.

I think three things will stand examination in any high school:

First, what proportion of those it graduates have taken three years of mathematics, two years of a foreign language, two years of history, four years of English, and three years of science, including physics? And is that proportion approximately the same proportion as those who enter college?

Second, are the teachers in that high school teaching in the same field as the one in which they majored in college? A man who disliked algebra in college cannot teach it in high school.

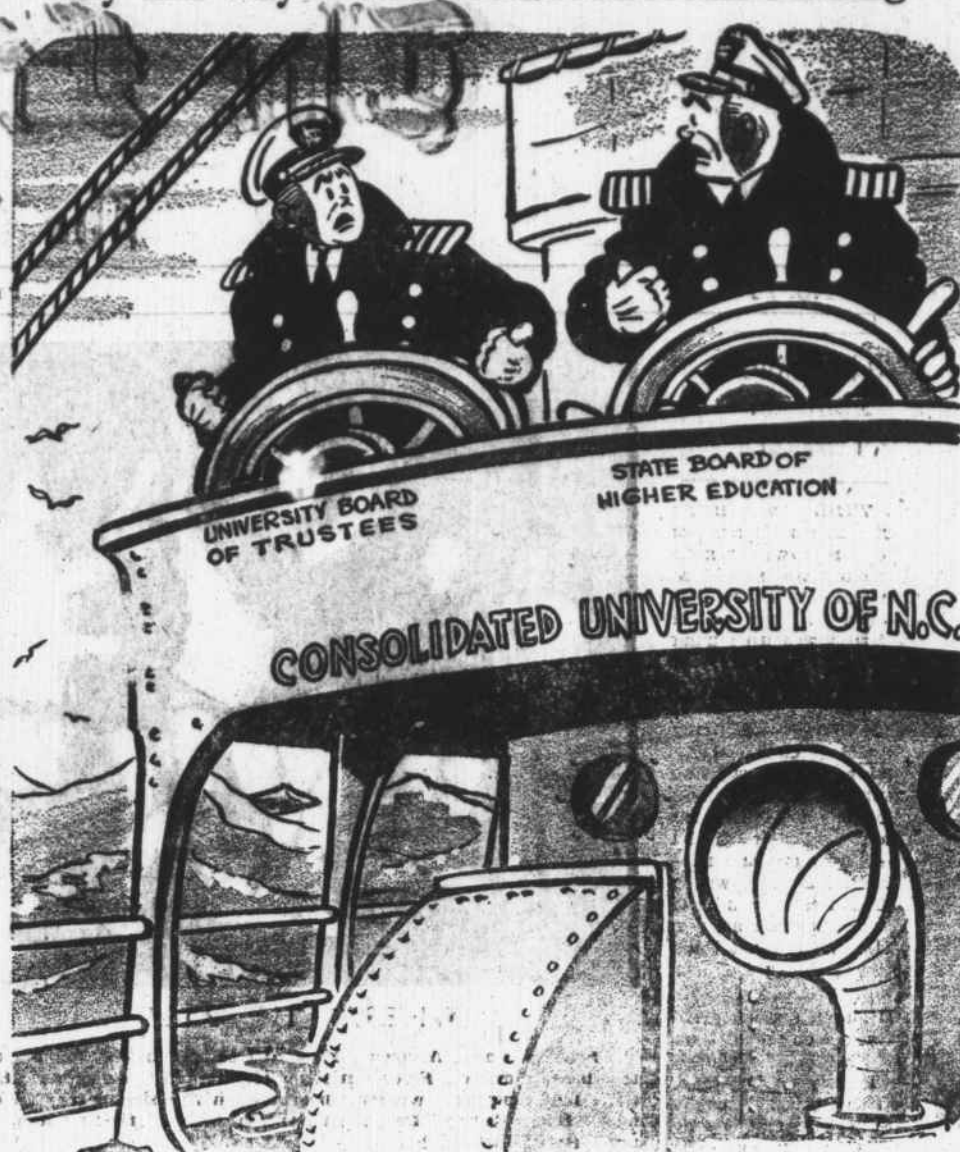
Third, are the parents willing for Johnny to repeat a course if he fails to meet a certain standard, and are the teachers willing to rigidly enforce that standard?

Let Johnny play all the basketball and football he wishes, if he can be a good academic student simultaneously.

JACK CARPENTER

Dahlonega, Ga.

"By The Way—What Course Are You Steering?"



Strictly Personal

By WEIMAR JONES

(EDITOR'S NOTE: "How is 'Miss Carrie'?" many persons inquire. That oft-repeated question suggested this piece.)

It's a waste of time, as far as she is concerned, to put backs on chairs, for she never has been known to touch a chair back.

So, when we visited her the other day, it was not surprising to see her scorn the back rest of the hospital bed that has been set up in her room, at the home of her daughter. She greeted us sitting bolt upright.

At 93, she has been hospitalized twice within two months. Each time, I would guess, the doctors didn't expect her to leave the hospital alive. Each time, she fooled them — and, I am sure, secretly chuckled at proving them wrong. Anyway, we found her very much alive.

The tiny body is weak. But the mind grasps facts and ideas with the quickness and sureness of a steel trap. And the spirit within still flames.

I know her better than most, because it so happens she is my "Aunt Carrie".

It is no accident, though, that Mrs. Lee Crawford is "Aunt Carrie" or "Miss Carrie" or sometimes "Miss Tote" to half the county. Most of the older people know and love her. Most of the younger ones at least know of her — and respect and admire the little old lady who trips so gaily along the street, her vision and hearing better than that of many half her age.

But it is not just her physical stamina that has made her something of an institution in her native Macon. It is a matter of character. She embodies those traits—fierce loyalty, independence, stern honesty, determination, and courage—the people of the mountains most admire. Those, plus an unquenchable zest for life.

Mrs. Jones and I went to North Wilkesboro to see her, hoping we could cheer her up. Well, when the visit was over, it was we who had been cheered, our spirits lifted.

She has the rare gift of having every smallest joy come as a delightful surprise, and her appreciation alone made the trip one of the most rewarding experiences of our lives.

We were touched, too, by the sweetness and tenderness of one mellowed by the years; impressed by the selflessness that prompted her, forgetful of her own ills, to ask in detail about her friends here—"give them all my love"; and moved by the indomitable spirit that, for more than 90 years, has forced her frail body to do its bidding.

"I'm going to get up," she told us, firmly—and the determination in the voice carried conviction to those who heard it.

Born near the end of the Civil War, she grew up at a time when poverty was the rule; and never has life been easy for her. The hardship, disappointment, and grief that have come her way might have embittered one of weaker character. But never once has she been sorry for herself—

and never has she allowed anybody else to be.

Life hasn't been hard for her for the very good reason she hasn't considered it hard. On the contrary, she has always thought of herself as fortunate. That came out, a year or two ago, in a remark—one of the rare occasions when she has spoken of her religion: "I never get up in the morning," she said, "without thanking God for all my many blessings."

From the first, Carrie Sloan was something of a rebel and a spitfire. The years have cushioned, but happily have not extinguished, that spirit. The stories of her quick repartee and of her do-or-die determination would fill a small book.

There is the one about her reply to the sometimes irascible "Old Dr. (J. M.) Lyle" seeing her, a tiny girl, dressed all in yellow, he called, "Good morning, Miss Yellowjacket." Quick as a flash came the answer: "Good morning, Mr. Hornet."

There is the one about the time she was determined not to be "found", when the game was hide-and-seek. She was found only when a passerby rushed into the Sloan home to alarm the family — she was hanging by her fingers to the outer ledge of a second-story window.

There was the occasion when one of a group of teasing boys, on the way to school, kissed her little-girl older sister—whose dignity was outraged. The sister was lame, so small Carrie took charge. Armed with rocks, she drove the entire group of boys to the very top of a nearby tree.

Then, there was the time, when she was in her 70's, that a vicious bull got into the cornfield on the Crawford farm. Everybody who was at home was afraid of him. Everybody, that is, but "Miss Carrie", who, as far as her friends will,

know, never has feared anything. Picking up a pitchfork, she marched determinedly after the bull; and that animal, evidently realizing he was out-matched, marched meekly to the barn and into his stall.

And there is the Siler Family Meeting picnic dinner story. At that annual reunion, a table is set for the elderly and infirm. But "Miss Tote" has never been found there. "Sit at the old folks table? Not me!" Instead, she always gravitates toward a young group — persons nearer her own spiritual age.

Even those who enjoy them most often find these family gatherings somewhat exhausting. But not she! It has become a custom, in recent years, for a group to gather in some home, each Family Meeting night, for music; and usually the star performer is "Cousin Carrie", at the piano. For an hour or more, she creates a pleasantly nostalgic atmosphere, as one old favorite follows another—all played by ear.

Finally, there was the Franklin Centennial Ball, in 1955, when she was 90. She had just been crowned Queen (Mr. Ernest Rankin was King). The band struck up an old-fashioned waltz, and a nephew asked her to dance. Everybody else stopped dancing, to watch, and a hush fell as she moved across the floor, graceful and charming as a girl — and danced the waltz through.

How has she stayed so young so long?

The record of her life seems to suggest several things—by never taking it easy, by never being afraid, by never ceasing to laugh.

But when someone once asked her for her own recipe, her answer was as prompt as it was to-the-point:

"Never give up!" She never has — and never will.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Looking Backward Through the Files of The Press

65 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK (1893)

A trio of lightning rod salesmen struck the town Saturday. Capt. W. P. Moore, of Clay county, was in town two or three days of last week.

Mr. Ray introduced a bill in the legislature the 24th ult. to incorporate the Harriman, Franklin and South Atlantic railroad.

Plow points 25 and 30 cents at the Hardware.—Adv.

25 YEARS AGO (1933)

Although the state banking holiday expired Monday, the Bank of Franklin remained closed Thursday under the nation-wide bank moratorium ordered by President Roosevelt.

At a regular meeting of Nequassa Chapter No. 43, Order of the Eastern Star, Thursday evening, Mrs. George Dean was elected worthy matron.

Pay of the commissioners of Macon County is limited to \$12 a month, plus travel expenses to and from the place of meeting, under terms of a bill passed by the legislature.

10 YEARS AGO (1948)

The Board of County Commissioners Monday ordered issuance of \$4,000,000 in bonds "for the building of school buildings in various communities throughout Macon County". The bonds were voted by the people more than two years ago.

Miss Ann Lyle and Miss Marie Jennings are the honor students of the 1948 graduating class of the Franklin High School.