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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1958

"Thank You, But It Doesn't Fit Our Symbol"

STRICTLY PERSONAL By WEIMAR JONES



The passing last week of Mrs. J. S. Sloan and, a few hours later, of Mrs. T. W. Angel severed two of the last remaining links that bind today's Macon County to a sturdy past.

Their backgrounds were quite different. Mrs. Angel, to cite just one example, spent her entire 96 years in this county. Mrs. Sloan, on the other hand, was born and grew up in the much less isolated atmosphere of Wallhalla, S. C. — yet became as fiercely loyal to her adopted home as any native.

But despite their dissimilarities, they had much in common. Both reared big families. Both did it in a time of make-do-or-die-out. Both put their homes and families ahead of all else. Both were realists, seeing things exactly as they were, who, growing up in the South immediately after the Civil War, could be anything else, and survive! And both carried over into the Mid-Twentieth Century traditions and ideals and traits that were a bit anomalous in today's world — a world that, by contrast with that of their childhood, must have seemed to them alien indeed.

Carl Sandburg tells the story of how, when a woman presented her baby to General Lee for his blessing, Lee told her: "Teach him to deny himself." (How incongruous that injunction sounds in today's world of such an overabundance there seems little oc-

casation for self-denial!) That was a lesson these two had learned well. All their long lives they denied themselves, and, in so doing, found their greatest happiness.

In both cases, the self-denial centered about a single goal. Somehow, an opportunity must be made for their children to get a college education. How they and their husbands managed it, they themselves probably could not have said. But this is true: Those who whine about the cost of education today have no conception of the high value that earlier generation put on schooling.

Always I had great respect for Mrs. Angel, and my respect grew as I learned to recognize her worth and her achievements. But I cannot write about her intimately, because I never knew her well.

About Mrs. Sloan, I can. Because not only was she my "Aunt Georgia"; as a small boy, I spent almost as much time at her house as at ours.

From those childhood recollections, two pictures stand out.

The first is of a person who could face disaster with serenity. I remember, for example, the atmosphere of despair when one calamitous fire followed another — in a day when almost nobody had insurance. How her courage and hope and determination lightened that atmosphere!

The second is of the good times I had at her house, and of the way her presence made things bright and happy. She was obedient, of course, and instantly; by me as well as by her own. But she had a way of making us want to do the things we were told to do.

frequently had the stellar role. Maybe it was to teach her own children the lesson of self-denial she had learned so well; maybe she was wise enough to know how badly I needed my self-confidence boosted. In any case, she gave me a sense of importance of progress.

She always seemed to have a suggestion of something interesting to do, and somehow, no matter how small it was, she made it seem an adventure — a trip up on the mountain back of the house, for instance, to gather moss and pretty stones.

And when I spent the night, there were the wonderful breakfasts. I'm sure they were substantial breakfasts; almost certainly grits, and probably ham and eggs. But the one thing I remember was the biscuits, popped right out of the oven on to our plates, to be spread with that wonderful combination, great hunks of butter mashed with a fork into thick sorghum molasses. If there hadn't been anything else on the table, those would have been memorable affairs; because "Aunt Georgia" had a way with her that would have made a meal of crusts and water a feast, a gay occasion.

The thing I remember best of all, though, is how she always stood ready with encouragement. One little cheerful word could make us forget our tears before they were dry; in her presence, quarrels changed quickly into laughter; and, when she stood by, the biggest difficulty became a challenge that it was fun to meet, and to conquer.

At her funeral, when the organist played "Rock of Ages", one of her most ardent admirers leaned over and whispered to me: "That hymn fits her best of all. She was a rock".

And she was.

### That Football Incident

In the trouble that followed a recent Bryson City Franklin football game here, it is quite possible the fault wasn't all on one side; it rarely is. It is possible, too, that the worst offenders were fans, rather than players.

However that may be, the incident is one Franklin can hardly take pride in.

This newspaper believes in athletics. A long series of similar incidents, though, seems to point up two things that are becoming increasingly apparent.

First, the so-called "physical education" program in the high schools is not designed primarily for the physical education of all students, but chiefly to produce winning teams. That being true, the one educational function of high school athletics would seem to be to teach sportsmanship. If that is not learned—and these incidents suggest the contrary—is there any real connection between high school athletics, as presently organized, and education?

Second, high school athletic contests are becoming more and more spectacles, staged for the entertainment of the public. And it is the fans' pressure for victory that creates the tension among players, a tension that too often explodes into violence. By just what process of reasoning have we arrived at the conclusion that it is a function of an educational institution to entertain the public?

We wonder if confining high school athletics to inter-mural contests might not be at least a part of the solution.

### Try The General!

Abuse of recruits in the armed forces has popped into the news again, this time at Fort Jackson, S. C. There two sergeants have been tried, convicted, and sentenced for such brave exploits as having recruits dipped in the slime of the kitchen grease pit and forcing them to shout obscenities.

The significant feature of the story is the punishment. The sergeants were not dismissed from the service, they were not "busted" to privates, they were not given prison terms. They were let off with fines, and the loss of one stripe each.

Even more significant, there is no indication whatever that these two will be relieved of their duties of "disciplining" recruits.

That suggests that their attitude represents the official attitude; that their real crimes lay (a) in the form of sadism they selected; and (b) in getting caught. That conclusion is reinforced by the effort of the post public information officer to make it appear that the 5,000 parents' letters received at the post run "about half and half" for and against the "disciplinary" tactics used.

At any army post, the top officers, since they are possessed of something approaching absolute power over those under them, inevitably set the tone, the atmosphere of the post. The real responsibility for what happens is theirs.

We suggest, therefore, that the next time a case like this arises, it might be a good idea to start at the top instead of the bottom, to put the command in general on trial.

### Honor For County

When Norman A. Coker retired recently as president of the Duke Power Company, that sprawling business turned to a Franklin native to take over the reins, electing W. B. McGuire.

It probably is the heaviest business responsibility ever given a Maconian. In winning this high honor for himself, Mr. McGuire reflects honor on his home county, and the people here take pride in the recognition of the ability and character of a product of Franklin.

### Now Let's Spread It

"A better place to live."

That phrase kept recurring as competing communities made their reports at last Thursday's annual Rural Community Development awards dinner.

That phrase, plus accounts of specific efforts toward building better churches, better schools, and better homes, with emphasis on youth.

Those things are not always spectacular, because they often are not tangible. But they are basic. Because, without discounting the importance of other worthwhile activities, the real test of a community is whether it is a good place to live. As one report put it, if there is "a good spiritual environment, all these other things will be added."

This stress on fundamentals is a healthy sign of genuine progress. And what is more, it is a heartening sign that we have in rural Macon a good sense of values.

All we need now is more communities in the program. Nine active community development organizations is good, but it isn't good enough. The goal should be: Every community in Macon County a good place to live.

### One Consolation

(Fort Myers, Fla., News-Press)

The administration is reported planning to ask another postal rate increase next year. If this keeps up, college boys won't be able to afford to write home for money.

### Should Be State-Wide

(Mooresville Tribune)

Several weeks ago, Rep. George Watts Hill, Jr., of Durham announced that he plans to introduce a bill in the 1959 legislature calling for direct election of school board members in his county.

We think this is an excellent idea and we commend Mr. Hill for recognizing the injustice of the present method of naming school board members.

But if such a bill would be good for Durham county, why wouldn't it be just as valid for the other 99 counties in the state?

Off hand, we can't at the moment think of any situation that begs a remedy more than this one.

Under the present system, school board members are nominated in the primary with the names of the Democratic and Republican candidates being sent to the legislature the following year for confirmation.

And with an overwhelming number of Democrats in the legislature, the Democratic school board candidates are always confirmed.

This is the situation that Mr. Hill wants to change for his county. Evidently, he realizes that the county is being robbed of some excellent material simply because a candidate's political persuasion is of the opposition party.

There has been a great deal of comment in the press of the state about Mr. Hill's proposal, and all of it that has come to our attention has been favorable.

Some papers—this one among them—believe that the law should be made state-wide.

As a matter of fact, we hold the same thesis as The Pilot of Southern Pines who says that election of school board members should be on a non-partisan basis as are most municipal elections.

The Pilot declares that it is of the opinion that North Carolina towns and cities are better off because of this and we agree. And if such elections make for better city government, why wouldn't they make for better administration of schools?

Every election year there are school board candidates who plaster the papers in their counties with ads declaring "let's take the schools out of politics."

But suggest to these candidates that school board members be chosen on a non-partisan basis and see what happens. Why, that almost amounts to treason!

Mr. Hill's bill is something we have favored for a long time. But unlike Mr. Hill, we would make the measure applicable to the 100 counties of the state, not just one.

### McGuire To Carry On

(Charlotte Observer)

Announcement of the retirement of Norman A. Coker as president of Duke Power Company removes from the business and industrial scene an executive who has had an intimate view of the Piedmont Carolinas development from a one-industry, one-crop area into the diversified, economically-booming land we know today.

In more than 50 years of service to the interests founded by the late James B. Duke, Mr. Coker's influence has reached into agriculture, education, forestry, and land conservation. His personal qualities, rare wit, and his brand of leadership have been more than significant in turning into reality the dreams James B. Duke dreamed when he invested his tobacco millions in his native region.

And as we salute Mr. Coker for his achievements, we congratulate his successor, William B. McGuire, whose youth, background and training eminently qualify him to carry on in the same tradition set out in Duke Power's motto—"Citizenship-Service."

### Letters

#### Hauled First Log

Editor, The Press:

Will you allow me a small space in your paper to say a word about Franklin and the Zickgraf Lumber Co.

I was raised ten miles west of Franklin in the Upper Cartoogechay community. When just a small boy, I started driving a mule team into Franklin hauling telephone poles. At that time we didn't see the large trucks we see on our highways today; in fact, we had no highways then.

I was in Franklin about a month ago and I feel sure there isn't a town anywhere that is growing any faster than Franklin. And as for the Zickgraf Lumber Company, I think it has done a great part in helping Franklin to grow so fast.

I wonder if Mr. W. C. Zickgraf remembers who sold him the first log to be sawed when their mill started operation at Franklin in 1933. It was my brother and I. This was a large white oak we cut on the Poplar Cove Creek in Sawmill Cove. We hauled it to the Zickgraf Mill with a team of mules.

HOMER LEDBETTER

East Canton, Ohio.

The end of law is not to abolish or restrain, but to preserve and enlarge freedom. . . . Where there is no law, there is no freedom—John Locke.

#### ENVY OF WORLD

#### South Has Something That Cannot Be Taught, Must Be Caught

Robert B. House

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This is from an address at the recent convention of the United Daughters of the Confederacy at Elizabeth City. Mr. House, retired chancellor of the University of North Carolina, is remembered here as the principal speaker at the 1957 dinner meeting of the Franklin Chamber of Commerce.)

They stood for three things more permanent than nations: 1) Love of Home, 2) Love of each other; and 3) Love of God. They were not talkers. They expressed their spirit in deeds. It was the talkers who launched the conflict they had to endure. In our day of confusion I fear only the extremist talkers who have all the answers and loudly give them. Some things can be seen and fought for more clearly than they can be expressed in words.

The Confederacy is not a lost cause. It is an immortal Greek tragedy with a Christian conclusion; viz, spiritual triumph through suffering. I think the South has something in this to teach the North. And since the North has clearly demonstrated that it will not do without us, I hope it will some day learn to do with us, something it has not learned in three hundred years.

General Lee, his Confederate soldiers, and the Confederate women are the heroes and the heroines of our immortal tragedy. There were just not enough of them to force their point on the battlefield. But their quality has made its way into the American spirit, and when that is lost, all America will be lost too.

"Young man," says the hero of Thomson's "Lone Star Preacher," talking in '64. "When I came up here in '61 I had State's Rights on my mind. I never gave much thought to the politics of it. I'm a minister of the Gospel when I'm home. Now, I don't know. I hear the boys talk. Reckon, if we're fighting for anything, we're fighting for General Lee. A man's bound to fight for what he believes in. He's bound to keep on fighting—that part of it's with him. But whether he wins or not — that's with God. I reckon we'll keep on fighting, while there's any of us left."

The South had its small quota of pillared mansions. It had a much larger quota of simple frame houses and log cabins.

#### BUT WHAT DID HE DO YESTERDAY?

The fellow who boasts about what he's going to do tomorrow usually is quiet about what he did yesterday.

—Eaton, Colo., Herald

#### DO YOU REMEMBER?

Looking Backward Through the Files of The Press  
65 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK (1893)

If you are a gentleman you will never find it necessary to say so.

The Public school term, taught by Rev. J. R. Pendergrass and Miss Anna Woodfin, closed last Friday.

Geo. A. Jones, Esq., has bought Mr. J. G. Siler's mill, together with all his land on that side of the road.

The last two weeks have afforded fine weather for gathering corn, but the ground is becoming dry and hard for wheat sowing.

25 YEARS AGO (1933)

Macon County piled up a surprisingly large prohibition majority in Tuesday's election, voting more than four to one against repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. The dries had a majority of more than 150,000 in the state.

The S & L Five and Ten Cent Store and Sloan Brothers & Co. will open for business in their new quarters in the Asher Building Saturday, it was announced by Harold Sloan. The building, a handsome modern brick structure of two stories, is now completed, except for a few finishing touches.

10 YEARS AGO

Miss Nora Moody, Macon County teacher who is now studying at Peabody College, Nashville, Tenn., has been named president of Peabody's elementary council.

Macon County voters, following the national trend, Tuesday gave majorities to the Democrats for every office on the national, state, district, and county tickets. In one of the greatest upsets in American political history, Harry S. Truman was reelected President.

### UNCLE ALEX'S SAYIN'S

Some folks can't seem to learn a man can be honest and still be polite.

Ain't nothin' like a little frost to ripen the persimmon — or a little trouble to meller a man.

They's an old sayin' that the race ain't always to the swift. A lot o' tore up automobiles shore beat that an out.

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each other with a smile and chuckle of complete mutual understanding in the South than in any other region of like size in the world. Perhaps this feeling of neighborhood is our most unique achievement and the great thing we have to teach America and the world. Perhaps it is a result of our tragedy. We have seen folks stripped of everything but what they couldn't lose. We have had to make do with this residue and have found it lovable. There was no union before the war. The South fought for its ideal of what union ought to be no less than the North fought for its idea. I have heard the deeply humane poet, Carl Sandburg, say that the conflict was inevitable. Certainly a clash of ideals is never settled by human contriving. The settlement is with God who never seems to be in a hurry.

While General Lee, the Confederate soldiers, and the Confederate woman never talked much to man, they did talk to their knees much to God. And, better still, they listened. Perhaps they can still teach that to confused America, until we can hear the still small voice out of the present whirlwind.