

THOSE QUESTIONS About The Courthouse

Macon County's courthouse problem raises three questions:

What can we do? What, that we can do, is the wise and desirable thing to do? And how much are the taxpayers willing to spend?

If what we legally can do were so little as to rule out the possibility of building a new courthouse, then we'd have only two choices: Either remodel the present structure (with the possible construction of a small auxiliary building); or do nothing.

Actually, though, what we legally can do is greater than had generally been thought. State law provides that a county may issue bonds for school purposes up to 5 per cent of its tax valuation, and an additional 5 per cent for other necessary purposes.

That is, in addition to what we owe for schools, it is legally possible for Macon County to go in debt up to an additional 5 per cent for non-school purposes. We could issue bonds for a new courthouse, in other words, provided those bonds did not push our total debt for non-school purposes up beyond 5 per cent of the county's tax valuation.

Our total valuation now is slightly more than \$18,000,000. Thus we legally may owe, for non-school purposes, up to \$900,000.

Our bonded indebtedness for non-school purposes (see Debt Picture below) is now \$286,000. Subtract that figure from the \$900,000 we legally may go in debt, and you get the amount of bonds the law would permit us to issue for a non-school purpose like a courthouse—\$614,000.

In short, we probably can build a new courthouse.

But if it, like the present structure, is to be big enough and sturdy enough and well enough planned to last 70 to 75 years, and if it is to have the dignity and beauty that it must have, if it is going to be something we'll be proud of—if it's going to measure up to those standards, it probably would cost in the neighborhood of \$600,000.

In other words, by going in debt to or nearly to the limit, we probably can build a new courthouse.

Whether it is wise or desirable to put all our bonded debt eggs in one courthouse basket is another question.

HERE'S COUNTY DEBT PICTURE

The county's total bonded indebtedness now stands at \$756,000. (This does not include \$29,600 for schools, borrowed from the State Literary Fund).

Below is a list of the bond issues, divided between school and non-school purposes, with the years the bonds were issued, the interest rates, and the amounts of principal remaining unpaid:

School:		
1942	3 1/2%	\$38,000
1942	3 1/4%	14,000
1950	5 1/4%	12,000
1950	2 1/2%	92,000
1950	2 3/4%	314,000
Total for schools		\$470,000
Non-School:		
1942	3 1/2%	\$32,000
1942	3 1/4%	12,000
1942	3 1/2%	184,000
1942	3 1/4%	58,000
Total for non-school purposes		\$286,000

One Tiny Fact

"See where a prisoner escaped here" . . . "Mercy! and he's still at large?" . . . "Yes, but they hope to catch him soon" . . . "Well 'soon' isn't soon enough. What was he in for?" . . . "Robbery with firearms, serving 10 to 20 years" . . . "Robbery with firearms? Go lock that door this instant! Why, even our lives aren't safe . . ."

Some such conversation must have taken place in many Macon County homes last week, prompted by the news story in The Press about the escape of a prisoner from a road gang.

Well, that probably would have been the general reaction, except for one tiny fact in the story—

the prisoner's age. He is 16.

It was foolish, as well as wrong, for him to try to escape, of course. He'll get more time for this infraction of the prison rules.

But go back to the time you were 16. If, at that age, you had faced the prospect of 10 to 20 years in prison, what would you have done when a chance for escape came?

In a lot of Macon County homes, too, there must have been another disturbing question, maybe not asked out loud, maybe seen only dimly, like a garment in the back of a dark closet:

Can we think of nothing more sensible to do with a 16-year old boy than put him in prison for 10 to 20 years?

'Total Failure'

It wasn't for nothing that some wag, a generation ago, translated the initials of the Tallulah Falls railroad, T. F., as "Total Failure". In similar flippant vein, today it would be easy to say of the proposal that the line be abandoned. "So we won't have a railroad? Well, what of it? We never have had one!"

But it's not as simple as that. However nearly total the T. F.'s failure may have been, it is a railroad. And Macon County and its North Georgia neighbors need a railroad.

For decades now, the T. F. has been crying "wolf, wolf". This time, maybe it's the real thing. If so, it's up to the courts and the Interstate Commerce Commission to decide what shall be done.

In reaching their decision, we hope they'll consider not only the current profit-and-loss figures, but also the line's obligation to the area it was supposed to serve—and the full story of how it has discharged that obligation in the past.

The story does not make pleasant reading. For it has consistently been a story of the short-changing of the region, and especially Franklin and Macon County.

Here are just a few of the highlights:

During its construction, time after time the line stalled—and the people of the region did whatever was necessary to get it started again. When it finally reached Prentiss, it refused to come any farther. Only a court order, as we recall, brought it the last five miles.

The original plan was not for a dead-end line. The plan—in fact, we believe, the agreement—was for the line to go on to Bushnell, to connect with the Southern Railway. But, by some means, the T. F. got legal authority to postpone completion of the line for 99 years! The granting of that 99-year extension came, as a complete surprise to everyone but the railroad's officials. They obtained it, that is, before the people and communities affected had an opportunity to protest. (By so doing, the railroad may have cut its own economic throat; with the connection at Bushnell, shipments between Asheville and Atlanta might have been routed over its rails.)

LETTERS

Tear It Down!

Editor, The Press:

The younger generation should have a greater voice in deciding the courthouse question, because they and their children will use it longest.

A civics class in high school last spring generally concluded that Franklin needs slum clearance and the first step should be to remove the present dilapidated courthouse. They added that a modern courthouse with a modern design should be constructed in a new location.

By removing the present county spiltown, these youngsters said, would also allow the street coming into Main Street opposite the front of the courthouse to come straight through the present location of the courthouse to join the street passing beside the Baptist Church. This makes a straight connection needing only one red light. It solves a hair-pulling, complex traffic problem the present generation inherited from those old town forefathers who either lacked foresight or didn't care.

Concern was also expressed about the adult delinquency problem at the courthouse. It was concluded that repulsive

'OH, SAY CAN YOU SEE...'

Strange Story Of The Confusion About Our National Anthem

By HARRY C. BAUER
Director, University of Washington
Libraries. In Wilson Library
Bulletin

As a national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner" suffers one great handicap: it is controversial. Critical musicians argue that the extensive range of an octave and a half presents major difficulties for choral rendition, but ardent patriots insist that the unusual range gives strength and brilliance to an already stirring anthem.

The lengthy transcript of congressional hearings of the Eighty-fifth Congress on resolutions for the adoption of a standard version of the anthem "half conceals, half discloses" the futility of inserting

words and music in the Statues at Large. Even though the hearings were conducted in an orderly manner, harmony did not prevail. In fact, witnesses could not even agree upon the key in which the immortal verses should be sung.

On March 3, 1931, Congress legally adopted "The Star-Spangled Banner" as the national anthem of the United States of America. The enacting resolution was so brief and ambiguous, however, that to this day no one knows precisely what is meant by the cherished song.

A few years ago, a group of school children wrote to a Congressman for an official copy of the anthem. Upon inquiry, he discovered that there is no official version. Whereupon, he introduced a resolution to define exactly what constitutes "The Star-Spangled

Banner."

The Congressman worked too rapidly in selecting a suitable version and as a result, his choice was not a felicitous one. Consequently, he had to introduce a perfected resolution during the second session of the Eighty-fifth Congress. But trouble was already brewing. In utter disapproval of the first resolution, many patriotic groups decided not to support any legislation at all.

Representatives from the groups testified that they would concur in "The Star-Spangled Banner," which they had in mind is uncertain, and therein lies the tragedy of indifferent draftsmanship and preparation of legislation of any kind.

As matters stand today, there is general agreement that Francis

acts by adults such as spitting, loitering, and littering the area and rest rooms with offensive materials should be eliminated. Some said that many of these adults will take up better conduct and manners in public when a more cultured or refined courthouse is provided.

It is said that the present courthouse is sturdy. This may be true because there is enough dried tobacco juice seeped into the floors and foundation to keep the termites out for the next hundred years!

Some people hate to see the present wreck be wrecked! But this is largely because of associated memories and attached sentiments. Should we let sentiment influence our decision? Or, does the fact that somebody's grandfather spit tobacco juice through a certain crack justify spending more money on it?

There may be a few who advocate a remodeling job but please allow me to pass on the desires of most of the younger generation: The only remodeling job that will meet with our approval is to lift up the top brick, take it to a new location, (an attractive place with parking room, we have cars nowadays) slide a modern structure underneath, then put the brick back down.

Franklin,
Route 5.

WILFORD W. CORBIN

Cradle To The Grave

(Manteca, Calif., Bulletin)

These jokes about the state taking care of us from the "cradle to the grave" aren't quite as funny as they used to be.

There was a bill in the Assembly the other day—fortunately it died in committee—which would have allowed school districts to establish nursery schools for children at least three years old, but not old enough for admission to other schools of the district.

How's that for a monumental baby-sitting program?

The Answer

(Rocky Mountain News)

The right to petition Congress, to buttonhole a congressman, is unquestioned. But there is no constitutional mandate requiring a congressman to do more than listen politely. The answer, then, is not to abolish lobbies, but to elect congressmen with consciences sturdy enough and backbones stiff enough to resist such pressures.

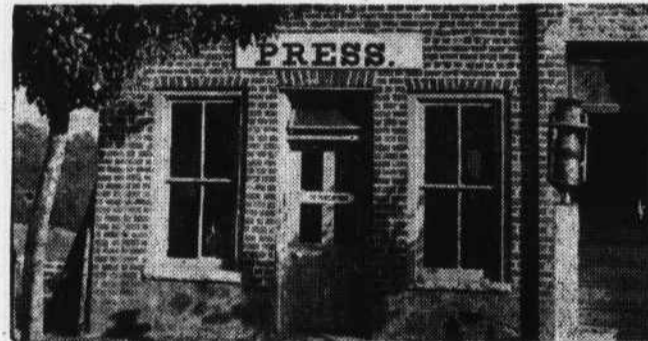
Unskilled Labor

(Eaton, Colo., Herald)

It frequently happens that the self-made man is an outstanding example of unskilled labor.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Looking Backward Through the Files of The Press



65 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK
(1894)

Overshirts at 20 cents at Wright's. Farmers' heavy suspenders, 15 cents.—Adv.

We would like to have some corn on subscriptions.—The Press.

A little hail was seen among the rain Saturday. The wheat crop is generally good, so far as we can learn. Rye is excellent.

Mr. R. C. Green killed a fine specimen of Little Egret at Siler's mill pond last Wednesday. It was perfectly white.

35 YEARS AGO
(1924)

Misses Helen and Blanche Moore spent a few days with their mother, Mrs. Wister Moore. They were on their way from Maryville College, where Blanche graduated this year.—Prentiss item.

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Moore and little daughter returned Wednesday from Fossil, Ore., where they have been making their home for some time.

15 YEARS AGO
(1944)

S/Sgt. James C. Jacobs, son of Mr. and Mrs. Gene L. Jacobs, who has been stationed overseas for the past 20 months, is home on a 21-day furlough.

5 YEARS AGO
(1954)

The link of US 23 from Cowee Gap to Dillsboro, under construction for several months, will be closed to all traffic for the next two months.

The temperature here last Sunday rose to 97, with a high of 94 registered on Saturday, and 92 on Monday.



STRICTLY PERSONAL

By WELMAR JONES

"You people are upset about the looks of your courthouse. Well, it's a thing of beauty compared with that old hotel porch that hangs out over the sidewalk on downtown Main Street. It's about the first thing a tourist sees when he comes to Franklin. That porch, now, really is a sight . . . and usually it's full of washings, hung out to dry. I've seen 'em there on Sundays! That eyesore wouldn't be tolerated even in Harlem."

Those are not my words. They are the words of a man who spends part of each year here, and so one who obviously likes Franklin and is interested in it; and, I thought as I listened, they are the words of a man who sees things here more clearly for the very reason he doesn't see them every day.

I thanked him for his comments. But, inwardly, I fumed; I always do when my home town is criticized.

That porch, I thought, has been there ever since I can remember. It figured pleasantly in my boyhood. It was a shelter over the sidewalk, when it rained. And it was the gathering place, summer afternoons, of what seemed to a small boy of such beauty and elegance as to suggest fairy princesses. I had always thought of that porch as picturesque. Subconsciously, I resented what I had heard.

But the next time I was up

town, I stopped on the opposite side of the street and took a good look at something that had met my eyes often, but which I hadn't really seen in years.

That look was not reassuring. Gone were the fairy-princess ladies; the porch was deserted. Gone was the elegance. Gone was the paint . . . But there, sure enough, were the washings hung out to dry.

Picturesque? Well, maybe it was, once. But not any more.

Then the critic's phrase, "even in Harlem", came back to me, and I realized what he meant: What he saw suggested to him the exterior of a slum.

Now I'm not one who believes in sticking to technicalities, just for the sake of technicalities. I am not one who would be in favor of demanding the removal of that porch solely because it overhangs the town's sidewalk, solely because its supporting posts are on town property. If it added to Franklin's appearance, if it still were picturesque, I'd say, don't disturb it.

But the fact that it does overhang the sidewalk, the fact that it's supporting posts do stand on the town property, mean it is there only through the town's sufferance.

Well, after that look, I wondered if sufferance, in this case, hasn't ceased to be a virtue.

MARY ELLEN ALBARES

English As She Is Spoken

In HERTFORD HERALD

What kind of English do you use? Pretty fair American, with a trace of slang for spice, heavily laced with a Southern softness? Twice recently, I have heard educators advocate a return to the expressive "folk words" our forefathers used—an English which is still found in caves and upcountry of the Appalachians.

Dr. I. G. Greer, retired from a busy career as a Baptist minister and orphanage superintendent, has spent his life searching out these last vestiges of a stout Scotch and Irish heritage, planted like brave trees which survive the mountain arduos.

"You've never lived until you've found a beau who will sidegoddle up to you in the moonlight," Dr. Greer chuckled. He said one of his Methodist parson friends loved that word, sidegoddle. What does it mean? Why, sidegoddle of course—like a house on the road sidegoddlin' to the main road.

This flavor of speech is a thing of great price, these days. In the course of his career, Dr. Greer said he was once written by one of the leading folklore experts of our country, teaching at Yale University. The linguist wanted to know if Dr. Greer had ever heard

the word gadge. Have you? Robert Browning uses the word just once in his poetry—but the mountain folk know it. It is a sharp instrument, used to pierce things.

From talk, Dr. Greer went to song—folk songs and ballads, the finest music there is. None of this "hillbilly" stuff, but stories told in song, handed down from generation to generation. A folk singer doesn't have to worry about whether he can sing or not—his only care is to transmit the story he wants to tell to his listeners. Dr. Greer illustrated his point by singing his real mountain version of "Tom Dula," which you wouldn't have doozed as the current "Tom Dooley." Clamor from the audience led to "The Man That Looks Like Me," with "Barbry Allen," sung as far back as 1662, as an encore.

Up in the mountains, at Asheville I heard another exponent of the art of plain speech. Dr. Anna Hawkes, national president of the American Association of University Women, makes her home in a wide spot called Orleans, Vermont. And she's loaded with stories of Vermont speech and manners.

One of her favorites is about the two old Vermonters, playing checkers in the country store which one of them owned. The telephone in the store began to ring, and ring. Finally one said to the owner, "Why don't you answer it?" The owner, never missing a move, shrugged, "I put that there phone in fer my own convenience."

Dr. Hawkes says that in Vermont they never say that they're going to "widen" a road—instead, they say they're going to widen it. Here is an old English word which conveys not only the idea of width, but of breadth. That is, indeed, our trouble in America these days, according to this woman who has spent her life in education: We need to remember all dimensions, and widen our outlook.

Truer words were never spoken.

NEVER LOW-RATE THE COMMA!

LONDON, Eng.—Never underestimate the power of a comma! Because an English millionaire's will was improperly punctuated a judge ruled that the estate of the deceased should be treated as if the man had died without making a will.

The fate of a fortune of \$1,540,000 hung on a couple of commas. And because a high court judge would not decide where the two commas should have been, the estate of Canon William Buttie will be divided up among his family equally.

The former lawyer turned clergyman died in 1953 leaving a large estate that he had built up by shrewd investment.

But when it came to his will, he left only confusion. "Its punctuation is a matter of such doubt that I really have no idea what ought to be done," the judge said. He then ruled on the equal split.

TOSSING BABY OUT WITH BATH WATER

Concern for racial attitudes in books has reached excessive lengths in a number of cases recently—both on the part of those who think a book is racially offensive to Negroes and also on the part of those who think a book is offensive to whites.

There was, for instance, the case of a children's book, "The Rabbit's Wedding." This volume was banned from the open shelves of public libraries in Alabama because in it a white rabbit marries a black one.

From the opposite point of view, busybodies have been combing and condemning children's books for words or attitudes that might be termed offensive to Negroes. While it is true that some word usage and certain attitudes toward Negroes have become taboo or out of style in the past decade or so, it does seem to us that some of the conclusions drawn by the do-gooders are ridiculous.

If the people generally don't use those words or hold those attitudes now, what harm is it for a child to know that they once did? Certainly, if it means removing a good book from circulation, isn't that throwing out the baby with the bath water?—Southern Pines Pilot.

bowdlerized version some time ago.

There have been repeated attempts to suppress the third stanza of "The Star-Spangled Banner" lest it offend an ally. As early as 1912 the National Education Association unanimously adopted a version specifically excluding the third stanza.

As for other significant alterations, even Stevenson's "Home Book of Verse" contains the line "Then conquer we must, for our cause it is just" instead of Key's less assuring "When our cause it is just."

Stevenson also substituted the phrase, "now conceals, now discloses," in lieu of Key's more poetic, "Half conceals, half discloses." At the congressional hearing there was endless quibbling over minor changes in the verses.

The two versions have at least one thing in common: they are both faulty. The Office of Education completely renounced its