

WEIMAR JONES,  
Editorial Page Editor

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1959

TOO HIGH A PRICE?  
**Straight Talk**

Some straight talk was handed the N. C. League of Municipalities at its convention in Asheville the other day.

Discussing the rapid industrialization of North Carolina, Richard Graves, executive vice-president of the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation, remarked:

This will strengthen the economy and raise the standard of living. But it also will bring an awful lot of trouble.

What used to be agricultural areas in California are now solid masses of urban growth. It did wonderful things for the economy, but destroyed much of the beauty.

It resulted in less desirable living conditions and in a tremendous increase in costs of services to the local government and to the taxpayers.

As former executive director of the League of California Cities, for some 20 years, Mr. Graves knows whereof he speaks, when he tells what happened in that state.

And Robert F. Kennedy, chief counsel for the Senate committee that exposed labor racketeering in this country, told the municipal officials:

North Carolina will face, within five to ten years, the same (labor racket) problems which other areas have met. It's all going to come into your area with industrial growth.

The flat predictions of the speakers that these problems are inevitable is characteristic of much of the thinking of today.

It didn't seem to occur to them, as it doesn't seem to occur to a lot of North Carolinians, that there is an alternative.

Isn't it just possible it might be smart to slow down on industrialization? Isn't there a lot of evidence, in addition to the comments of these two authorities, that a slow, gradual, selective industrialization might prove both more beneficial and cheaper in the end?

**No Longer David**

Mr. Heinz Rollman, who last week switched from the Democratic to the Republican party, probably felt he had abundant cause for so doing.

There was the fact he was defeated for the Democratic nomination for Congress in last year's primary election—a defeat he flatly attributes to the handicap of 26,000 "controlled" votes. There was the fact that, despite the great political strength he showed in that campaign, he was passed over—indeed, probably wasn't even seriously considered—when the 12th district Democratic executive committee met to pick a nominee, after Rep. George A. Shuford resigned. There was the fact that, though Mr. Rollman is a native of Europe, an industrialist with plants in many parts of the world, and a business man who undoubtedly has valuable contacts in Europe, he was passed over when a group of business men were selected for an industry hunt in Europe. There was the fact, in short, that the name "Rollman" has been anathema to most of the Democratic leaders.

The point, though, is not whether Mr. Rollman had cause to leave the Democratic party; that, after all, was his business.

The point is: Has he improved his chances of being elected to Congress next year?

We doubt it. It is true, Mr. Rollman surprised everybody last year. This time he may succeed in pulling the rabbit all the way out of the hat.

There are several reasons, though, for doubting he has improved his chances. Perhaps the best one is this:

His appeal to the voters, last time, was as a man who was not a politician. He sought votes not through the Democratic political organization, but over its head. And he got more than 18,000!

This time, though, he didn't make his announcement until he had conferred with Republican leaders—and some of them have publicly welcomed him. The inference is, he's convinced he can't win without organization party support; and since he can't get the backing of the Democratic "bosses", he's sought the backing of the Republican "bosses".

He no longer, in short, appears as a gallant little David challenging the mighty Goliath.

**LETTERS**

**An Outsider's View**

Editor, The Press:

The proposal to transfer power distribution functions from the Nantahala Power and Light Company to the Duke Power Company is of extreme concern to my wife and me. You may be interested in an outsider's comment on this matter.

I read the list of questions and answers presented in The Press last week and was much impressed with the evasiveness of Mr. McGuire and others of the Duke Power Company in giving their answers to a number of specific questions. They are experts at using a volume of words which say nothing.

The main interest of both the private consumer and the commercial consumer is whether the proposed change will result in increased rates and that question is left completely unanswered.

Some eighteen months ago we purchased a piece of property near Franklin and expect to build a retirement home there in the near future.

We became interested in the Franklin area as a place for retirement because it offered a high standard of living for a relatively low cost, which is a point for major consideration by anyone seeking a spot for retirement. One of the items which enters into the make-up of that low living cost is the current rate for electricity. That becomes an important item if electricity is used for heating and cooking purposes.

We all know that there will be no reduction in costs to the user excepting in a minority of cases and the best that can be hoped for is to hold present rates without increases.

Officials of either of the two companies have given no assurance that increases will not occur as a result of the change. The answers given by the Duke Power Company as published in The Press last week give no definite information, and the public is as much in the dark now as before.

Franklin is evidently desirous of attracting both outside individuals and outside commercial interests and you may be sure that local electricity rates will enter into a decision made in either case.

Unless a definite assurance is given that the proposed transfer will not result in an increase in rates, it should be vigorously opposed. If that assurance is not given, the publicity on the transfer will without question be to the detriment of Franklin.

Beltville, Md.

M. H. DAVIS

**Owe All**

(Northwest Colorado Press)

If the cost of living keeps going up, all that I am or ever hope to be, I owe.

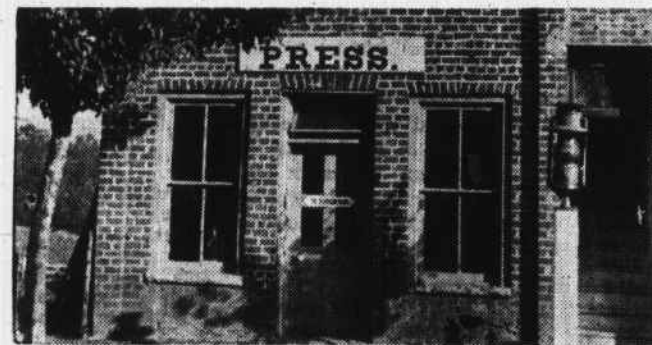
**What They Learn First**

(Northwest Colorado Press)

The first thing kids learn in the first grade is how to whisper without moving their lips.

**DO YOU REMEMBER?**

Looking Backward Through the Files of The Press



**65 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK (1894)**

Mr. Dock Barnard returned home a few days ago from Colorado, where he has been for several months.

Sion Early, of Dillsboro, passed through town Monday on his way home from Toocoo, Ga. He was traveling on a bicycle.

The county (political) canvass opened at Mill Shoal Monday, all the candidates armed with saddle-bags full of tickets.

Lyle Bros. will take pleasure in serving you at the Drug Store.—Adv.

**35 YEARS AGO (1924)**

Macon County has 4,458 children in school under 14 white teachers and five colored.

We will give the election returns by radio. Also other events. Come and visit with us, and listen. You are welcome and will enjoy it. Franklin Pharmacy.—Adv.

**15 YEARS AGO (1944)**

Macon County's \$7,000 quota in the United War Fund has been raised, John M. Archer, Jr., chairman, announced this week.

S/Sgt. Lewie R. Holland, son of Mr. and Mrs. Luther Holland, of Cullasaja, is stationed somewhere in France.

**5 YEARS AGO (1954)**

R. E. McKelvey, of Franklin, is the new president of the North Carolina Independent Telephone Association.

A stone marking the graves of about 50 slaves has been erected in the Rush Cemetery by the Otto community.

RUSSELL M. SPEAR

**Do American People Really Want To Know?**

In MADISON MESSENGER

One of the most alarming developments in recent years is the changing attitude of the American people toward news.

Our democratic process is built on the proposition that government is the business and the property of the common man. It is further predicated on the right of the common man to know what his government is doing. If the democratic form of government is to survive, it must do so on the basis of keeping the common man informed on every phase of its far-flung activities.

This is understood; yet, almost daily we hear: "The press should be curbed" . . . or, "We're playing hell letting the press tell the world about our missile failures, etc., etc."

It is sufficiently alarming that door after door in Washington has been closed to the press in recent years for "reasons of security," or, more often, for no sound reason at all.

When the people themselves clamor for silence, our democratic form of government has reached a sad pass indeed.

There are imperfect reporters and imperfect newspapers, just as there are imperfect lawyers, doctors, theologians; but the American press, as a whole, stacks up as honest and responsible. It has done a terrific job of keeping the

FOR A HUNDRED YEARS —

**Only Pile Of Stones Marked Macon's Grave**

**What Sort Of Man Was One Whose Name This County Bears?**

(EDITOR'S NOTE: All of us who live here know this is Macon County. Most of us know the county was named for Nathaniel Macon. A few of us know when and where he lived and what he did to become famous. But how many of us have any idea what sort of person he was?

Bignall Jones, editor of The Warren Record, Warrenton, gives some clues to the character and personality of this remarkable American, in the article below, reprinted from The Raleigh Times.

Macon, incidentally, lived long enough to know he had been honored by having a county given his name. This county was created and named "Macon" in 1828, nine years before his death.)

By BIGNALL JONES

"They have other sorts of tombs as where an Indian is slain, to that very place they make a heap of stones — or sticks where stones are not to be found — to this memorial every Indian that passes by adds a stone to augment the heap, in respect to the deceased hero."

"This day we met with several heaps of stones, being the monuments of seven Indians that were slain by the Sinners or Troquois. Our Indian guide added a stone to each heap." — Lawson's History of North Carolina, pages 18 and 41.

There is a marker there now that marks the lonely grave of Warren County's most illustrious citizen, telling the date of his birth and death and recounting some of the things that made him illustrious.

But for more than a hundred years the grave of Nathaniel Macon and that of his wife and child were marked only by growing piles of stones, tossed there by infrequent visitors who had heard of his request that no marker be placed at his grave, but that those who might pass by would toss a stone upon his grave.

There is nothing in Nathaniel Macon's will in the vault of the courthouse in Warrenton to indicate that Mr. Macon cared one way or another about his grave or its marking, or, for that matter, about his funeral. A notation in this faded document suggests to his executor, Weldon Edwards, that he might provide grog for those who attended his funeral, but Mr. Macon added that the executor could do it or not, just as he thought best.

Instruction or no instruction in a will, the rumor has persisted that Mr. Macon requested in his old age that his grave be marked only by stones tossed upon it by those who passed by. The will shows there was sufficient money for a tombstone, but there was no tombstone for a hundred years until a much later generation decided that Mr. Macon's grave had been neglected too long, but during those hundred years there was a growing pile of stones that is now nearly as high as the not too modest monument.

**WAS IT MODESTY?**

That Mr. Macon was an eccentric man is readily admitted. One wonders if the stones, a part of his eccentricity, was due to it, to modesty and simplicity, or possibly just the opposite. Did Mr. Macon fancy himself as a warrior in the service of his people, or had life really taught him that all is vanity?

"Do not go to the needless expense of marking my grave with a monument; let anyone who cares toss a rock upon my grave."

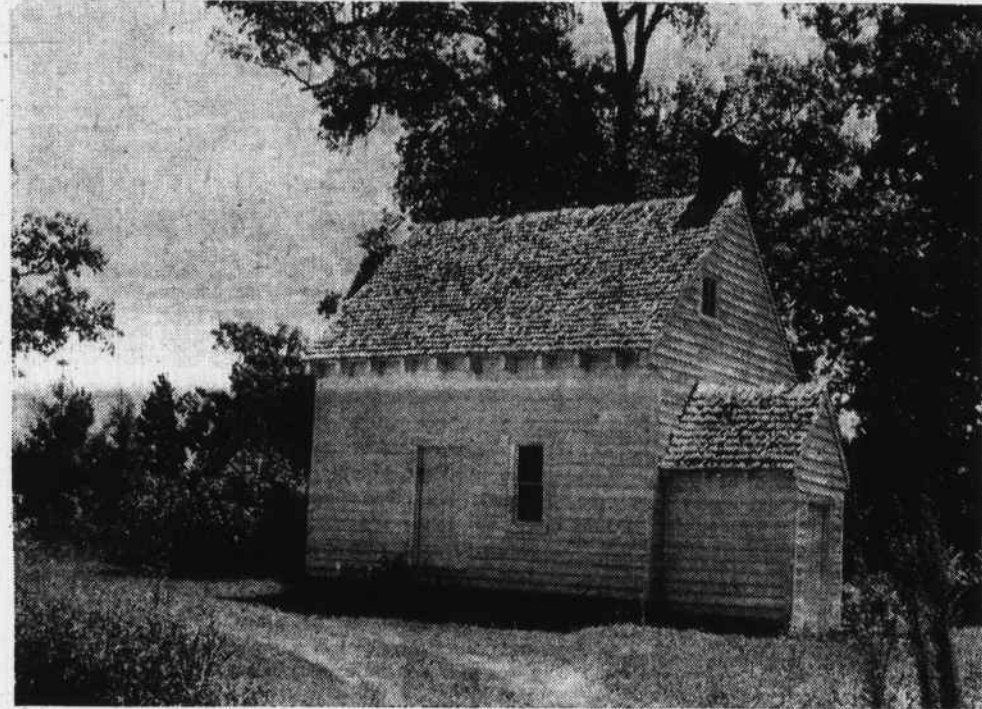
This has the mark of the simple man who has been taught the vanity of life, but is unwilling to shut his friends out of simple remembrance. Perhaps so. That may have been its meaning to many of Mr. Macon's younger friends, and certainly it has been the meaning to the thousands of persons who have visited his grave in the intervening years since the word spread through Warren County that Mr. Macon was dead.

Indians were here in Mr. Macon's time and they had for generations marked the graves of their warriors with stones, and in passing years Indian braves added to the heap that marked the resting place of a fallen warrior. It could be that Mr. Macon was not quite serious in his request and that it was just one of those things bandied about after the passage of the cup that cheers. But his remarks were taken seriously. If anyone doubts this, let him look at the rocks that mark the grave of Mr. Macon.

That Mr. Macon was an able man there can be little doubt. That he was a politician and played up to the public may be surmised. But that he was unduly modest or simple is not likely. On the contrary, there is much to make one believe that he was somewhat autocratic, had faith in his own judgment and was very determined.



FRIENDS WERE SAID to have been asked to put a rock on Nathaniel Macon's grave when they visited it. This pile of stones—over the graves of Macon, his wife, and their child—grew for more than a century. The marker is recent. The man whose name Macon County bears is buried at lonely Luck Springs, in Warren County.



NO MANSION, THIS — Here's the restored home of Nathaniel Macon, once visited by the great and near-great of North Carolina and Virginia. With just one room and a loft, where did guests sleep?

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**STORY OF SHEEP**

There was the matter of the sheep, which showed Mr. Macon to be a very determined man if not always a wise man. There are two versions of this story handed down from father to son.

One was that Mr. Macon, upon leaving home for a long journey, told his overseer to keep his flock of sheep in a certain pasture and not to move them under any circumstances until his return. A

drought occurred, the sheep were not moved to a fresh pasture and as a consequence they starved to death. When Mr. Macon returned and learned of what happened, he commended the man for obeying his orders, and told him that he would rather have lost his sheep than to have his overseer disobey him.

The second version is that Mr. Macon's son-in-law told the overseer to move the sheep, and the overseer replied that to do so would cost him his job. Then the son-in-law, Mr. Eaton, said that he would take full responsibility for shifting the sheep. The overseer said that just the same it would cost him his job. It did, for Mr. Macon returned to find his sheep alive, but moved, and promptly discharged the overseer for disobeying his orders.

The legend, as legends have a habit of being, was probably embellished, but such a legend could only have grown about a recognized trait of character.

**OFF BEATEN PATH**

It is not hard to reach the home site of Mr. Macon, thanks to the late Governor Kerr Scott's rural road program. But it is off the beaten path and one reaching there first sees the piles of stones over Mr. Macon's grave and those of his wife and child; and one sees a restored crib, a small cabin and smokehouse, also restored.

There is a caretaker's home nearby, but the graves, the crib, the cabin, and the smokehouse are all that remains to remind one that here was the home of a Revolutionary soldier, a Congressman, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, United States Senator, inheritor of the mantle

of Wiley Jones, and as inheritor, for some years political boss of North Carolina.

All good histories will tell about the speakership, and the senatorship, and the honors he won in the halls of Congress, if little or nothing is said about his influence in the politics of the state. But a man must have had tremendous political power to grab

off the political honors of the state for his friends from one small county. Admitting that they were able, it is hard to believe that they were all that good. How can one explain the fact that Warren County had at one and the same time the district's Congressman, the Governor of the State, and both United States Senators? How can one explain it except by realizing Mr. Macon's power?

**ONLY ONE ROOM**

The restored cabin is small. It has one room with a large fire place in one end, an attic, reached by a narrow stair or ladder, and with a full basement beneath. The smokehouse was well built, but it not overly large. It may be that there were guest houses in the grove, but the weight of evidence was that Mr. Macon did not entertain on a lavish scale in his rather inaccessible plantation home.

But to this cabin must have come the great and the near-great of the county and state and from nearby Virginia. One wonders just what were the sleeping arrangements? Did Mr. Macon and his wife go up into the loft of the house? —Continued on back page

**BIOGRAPHICAL FACTS —**

**Nathaniel Macon**

Born in Warren County, N. C., Dec. 17, 1758. Died there June 29, 1837.

Educated at College of New Jersey (now Princeton). Studied law, 1777-1780. Served as a common soldier in the Continental Army, 1780-1782, refusing any pay or military distinction.

Member U. S. House of Representatives, 1791-1815. Speaker of the House, 1801-1807. U. S. Senator, 1815 till his resignation in 1828.

President of the convention called in 1835 to revise N. C. Constitution.

Opposed adoption of U. S. Constitution on grounds it gave too much power to federal government. Bitter critic of Alien and Sedition laws.