

THE COURTHOUSE
Under The Rug?

After all the talk, all the meetings, about the courthouse, where are we?

Exactly where we were before the talk and the meetings. The problem is still there. And we still are short of specific facts.

Nobody knows, for sure, whether it is practical to remodel the present courthouse, or what we'd have when we got through, or what it would cost. And nobody knows, for sure, whether we'd get more for our money by building a new courthouse, or what we'd have when we got through with that, or what that would cost.

And nobody knows, for sure, what the majority of the people of the county want done. It is quite true, as the county commissioners pointed out, that the number attending the courthouse meetings was too small to be representative. Thus, the commissioners are in the dark about what is the majority sentiment. But will they ever know that until a concrete proposal has been submitted to the people in an election?

We don't think the courthouse problem ought to be just swept under the rug. We think it ought to be passed on by the people; it's their courthouse, and it's they who must put up with it if nothing is done, and they who must foot the pay if something is done.

But the people can't pass on the problem unless there is something specific and concrete for them to say yes or no to. It seems to us the time has come for the county commissioners to spend some money for some exact information; time to hire a really competent architect, one with imagination and common sense as well as technical training, and learn from him whether it is worth while to remodel the present structure, and exactly what it would cost. Learn from him, too, what sort of new courthouse would be adequate and a credit to the community for the next fifty years, and what that would cost. And by "learn from him", we have in mind detailed plans and specifications, with drawings any voter can understand.

With such information, there'll be something to submit to the voters. Without it, there can hardly be anything more than more aimless talk that gets nowhere.

Little Red School?

Is the little red schoolhouse on its way back?

Our guess is it isn't; our hope, likewise.

Nonetheless, there seems to be a growing feeling that maybe we've gone too far in the other direction; that we've put too much emphasis on bigness in public schools.

Two bits of evidence of that came the other day from opposite sides of the continent.

What happened in an Idaho community is told in an editorial in The Intermountain, published at Alameda, in that state:

The courage of a little band of parents out on the Arco desert has brought off a victory for children all over Idaho. A victory over brick and mortar and busses, over efficiency and officiousness.

On Monday, District Judge Faber Tway ruled that the grade school in Atomic City shall be reopened. To close it, he said, was an arbitrary, unreasonable and capricious act.

Officials of the Snake River District had ordered abandonment of the school. Parents of the 30-plus elementary pupils living in the desert town, when the buses came to haul their children to the central school in Moreland, refused to put them on the bus. After years of surly and shabby treatment they took their plea to court.

Atomic City won on two counts—the community had not been allowed a proper hearing, nor an election, on the lockup of the desert school, and the school board's action was an unreasonable imposition on small children, too many homes, too many miles away from home . . .

The tykes do their best work in a cosy environment of a small school. There they know the children and the teachers around them. Home, they know, is just around the corner. These simple facts, understood by any parent or teacher with normal affection for and empathy with kids, has been walked all over by administrators intent on efficiency and by trustees intent on building big, beautiful schools as memorials to their own importance . . .

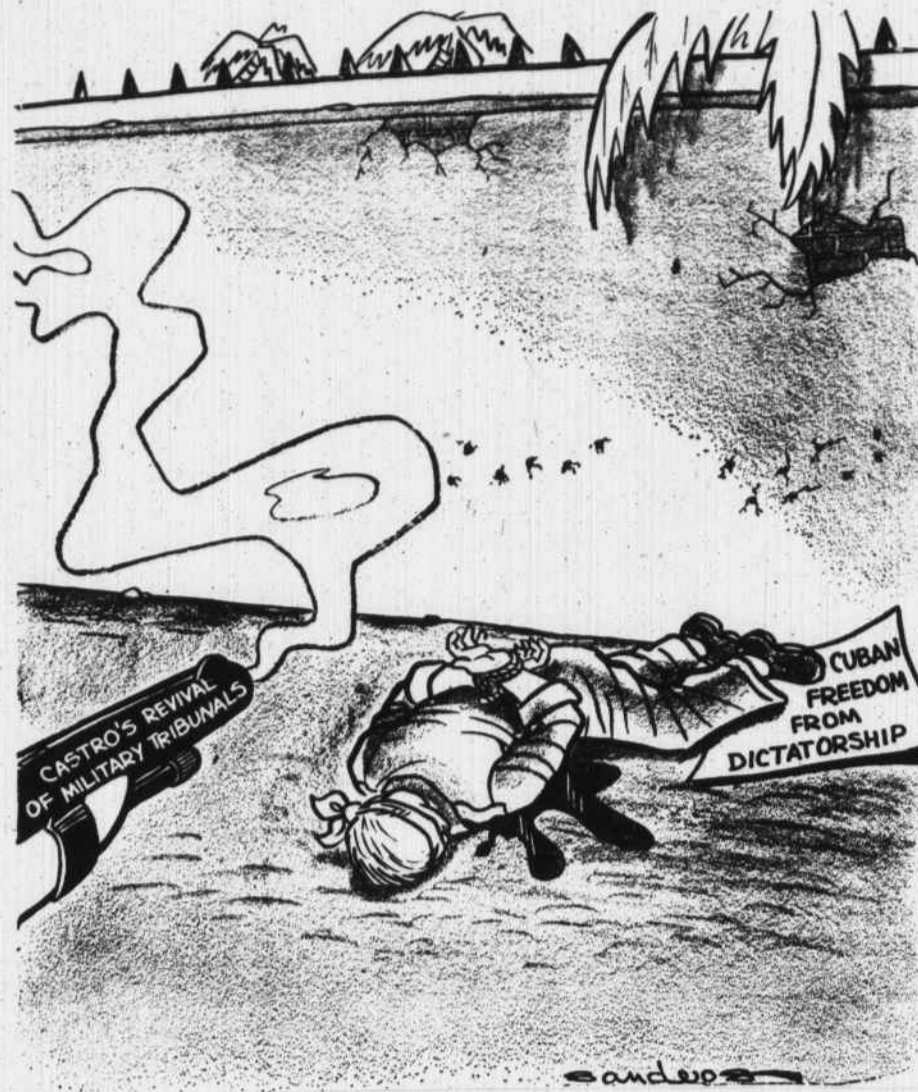
The ugly little school at Atomic City is therefore a shrine to courage and reason. The kids who sit at those beat-up desks are Idaho's most privileged children.

Only a few days later, the Wall Street Journal published a dispatch from Newton, Mass., that said in part:

While many educators talk of the need to consolidate small high schools into large ones, a number of communities are moving in the opposite direction—they're breaking up large high schools into small ones.

With the start of classes this school year, this prosper-

Short-Lived



ous suburb of Boston figuratively chopped its giant 3,000 student high school into six units, each with an enrollment of 500. Elsewhere around the nation, some 50 schools in the last five years have adopted some form of decentralization, Dr. Stanton Leggett, a New York City educational consultant estimates.

Sanford's Challenge

Terry Sanford, young North Carolina gubernatorial hopeful, gives evidence that he knows people.

He knows, first of all, that people—at least, most of the people in North Carolina—are looking not chiefly for ease and comfort, but for a challenge. And he knows, second, that any state program, to be really successful, cannot be dictated from Raleigh, but must enlist the active support of the people of the state, from Murphy to Manteo.

"The time has come", Mr. Sanford said in a recent speech, "for us to launch a long-range program to make our public schools second to none in the nation."

Well, why shouldn't they be "second to none"? For North Carolina is not a poverty-stricken state. Moreover, better education is not solely a matter of money.

So Mr. Sanford proposes a ten-year "crusade" to improve education in this state. And he proposes that such a program be outlined and submitted to the voters for their ratification; for "we need for all our citizens to become committed to it and to feel a part of it".

The details of what Mr. Sanford has in mind we do not know. What we do know is that such a program is over-due. We believe we know it will have a strong appeal to North Carolinians. And we are convinced, if the details make it a practical, workable plan, the people of this state would ratify such a program overwhelmingly.

Confusion

(Ottawa, Canada, Journal)

A staid gentleman, honorary judge at a horse show, was upset by the dress of some of the girls.

A DIFFERENT PEOPLE

What's Southerner Like? Here's A Yankee's Answer In 1869

WINSTON-SALEM JOURNAL

What are the special traits which give such color and interest to the Southern character?

A penetrating study of the Southern temperament, long forgotten but written with warmth and understanding, has just been unearthed from two 1869 issues of Harper's magazine.

The author was J. W. DeForest, a gifted writer who got to know and respect the Southern character as a Union officer during the Civil War. It has just been re-published in a Harper's magazine anthology, Gentlemen, Scholars and Scoundrels, covering 109 years of the magazine.

Pointing out that Southerners are certainly "a different people from us Northerners," DeForest wrote:

"They are more simple than we, more provincial, more antique, more picturesque; they have fewer of the virtues of modern society, and more of the primitive, the natural virtues; they care less for wealth, art, learning, and the other delicacies of an urban civil-

ization; they care more for individual character and reputation of honor.

"Cowed as we are by the Mrs. Grundy of democracy; molded into tame similarity by a general education, remarkably uniform in degree and nature, we shall do well to study this peculiar people, which will soon lose its peculiarities; we shall do better to engraft upon ourselves its nobler qualities.

"Self-respect, as the Southerners understood it, has always demanded much fighting. A pugnacity which is not merely warpaint, but which is, so to speak, tattooed into the character, has resulted from this high sentiment of personal value, and from the circumstances which produced the sentiment. It permeates all society; it has infected all individualities. The meekest man by nature, the man who at the North would no more fight than he would jump out of a second-story window, will at the South resent an insult by a blow, or perhaps a stab or pistol-shot . . .

"The pugnacious customs of the Southern society explain in part the extraordinary courage which the Confederate troops displayed during the rebellion. A man might as well be doing soldierly service at Bull Run or The Wilderness as go back to Abbeville and be shot there in the duel or street rencontre which awaited him . . .

"It seems to me that the central trait of the 'chivalrous Southern' (as Southerners used to sometimes identify themselves) is an intense respect for virility. He will forgive almost any vice in a man who is manly; he will admire vices which are but exaggerations of the masculine. If you will fight, if you are strong and skillful enough to kill your antagonist, if you can govern or influence the common herd, if you can ride a dangerous horse over a rough country, if you are a good shot or an expert swordsman, if you stand by your own opinions unflinchingly, if you do your level best on whisky, if you are a devil of a fellow with women, if, in short, you show

vigorous masculine attributes, he will grant you his respect."

DeForest said Southerners blamed the Civil War on the aggressive spirit of Northerners and particularly of the New Englanders.

A Greenville (S.C.) planter, speaking of New Englanders, told him: "They always were, you know, the most quarrelsome people that God ever created. They quarreled in England, and cut off the king's head. They have been quarrelling here ever since they came over in the Mayflower. They got after the Indians and killed them by the thousands. They drove out the Baptist and whipped the Quakers and hung the witches. Then they were the first to pick a fight with the old country. It's my opinion, Sir, and I think you must agree with me, that God never made such another quarrelsome set. What in H—ll he made them for passes my comprehension."

Strictly Personal By WEIMAR JONES

Things I am thankful for:

THANKSGIVING itself. Gratitude is a noble sentiment, and I am glad and proud our forebears felt the humility that alone makes gratitude possible; that they handed down to us the custom of an annual giving of thanks.

Thanksgiving, past, present, and future. The memories of Thanksgivings gone are among my pleasantest — a holiday from school; the family gatherings for Thanksgiving dinner; the football and kick-the-can and a dozen other games played during the long morning of a spend-the-day visit that literally lasted all day; and the mouth-watering spreads when, at last, the dinner was put on the table. By the standards of that day, modern folk virtually starve; and, by the standards of this day, the people of that earlier generation virtually ate themselves into early graves.

And the Thanksgivings to come. They mean football games to be looked forward to, young people home from school, and family gatherings — even if neither the families nor the food are quite as overflowing as they seemed to a small boy.

But what has already happened is only a memory, and what is to come is only an anticipation. This Thanksgiving of 1959 is here, the reality — a day to be observed with gratitude, a day to be enjoyed, one to be savored, like the food on the Thanksgiving table.

THE BLESSINGS of being an American. (What a shock it was when I first learned that other nations do not have Thanksgiving day!) Sure, there's plenty wrong with America. And of course the

peoples of other countries have their own peculiar blessings and virtues. But what American would trade citizenship with someone from another land! (Even most of those misguided young men who defected to Soviet Russia, a few years ago, soon changed their minds.)

THE UNITED NATIONS. Imperfect as it is, ineffective as it sometimes seems, it stands as tangible evidence of men's faith in the possibility of world peace, and of their determination to find a way to bring it about. And so long as men strive for peace, there is assurance that sometime it will be attained. Men's faith and striving, though sometimes it took centuries, always have brought advances.

MACON COUNTY. We are not the sole hope of the world, to be sure. But we are a part of the hope. For how can there be a successful state or nation or international organization like the U.N. unless there are first successful little communities, which set the pattern of faith and honesty and courage and kindness that are the only roads to a better world; and which, must produce the individuals to give leadership to state and nation and world. This Macon County of ours has some things to contribute, and the fact we're small has nothing to do with the value of what we may contribute. Character and ideas and spirit don't come in sizes.

THE FACT I live in this age. By comparison, life, even a hundred years ago, was slow and humdrum. And, what with the dangers of atomic radiation and our race toward more and more speed, life, even a hundred years hence, may

be so dangerous and so hasty it won't be worth living.

NEIGHBORLINESS and kindness. We, here in the mountains, have those things in heapings measure, thank goodness. But we have no monopoly on them. They are everywhere. Imagine life with no such thing as a neighbor, in the best sense of that word; no such thing as kindness and thoughtful consideration of others. That would be a bleak world indeed, so bleak, no amount of wealth, of gadgets, of physical comfort and security could make it other wise.

LAUGHTER. It is a sense of humor that keeps people sane. It is laughter that breaks the strain of everyday living in today's tense world. The ability to laugh has about it something of the divine for it is one of the things that distinguish man from the animal.

And humor, laughter, like most of the joys of life, is something that must be shared. Ever tell a funny story to a group and have nobody laugh?

Most of us take pride in our sense of humor. Most of us will admit to any fault, to any lack except the lack of a sense of humor. That's something all of us no matter how humorless, claim we have.

Yet how thankful we should be that others have it, too. For most of the fun of laughing is laughing together. . . .

Of course it's a cock-eyed world. Of course we face terrible problems. Of course there's a lot of evil, seemingly powerful evil loose in the world.

But boy; am I thankful to be alive in this exciting age!

WHAT'S CASTRO LIKE?
The Cuban Puzzle

AS SEEN BY A NEWSMA

What are we to make of the situation in Cuba?

Most of us find it so confusing, we don't know what to make of it. And, after hearing it discussed by a qualified observer who knows it first-hand, I found myself not less, but more, confused.

The confusion, I suspect, grows out of the human element. For it is rare indeed that a human is all good or all bad. And at the center of the situation in Cuba is a human — a young man named Fidel Castro.

It would simplify matters to write Castro off as a demagogue, a fanatic, just another dictator — and maybe he is all of those. Yet, in Charlotte the other night, I heard a newspaperman, talking to other newspapermen, say some good things about Castro.

The speaker was Francis L. McCarthy, head of the Havana bureau of the United Press International. He was not sympathetic to Castro; in fact, he was bitter about Castro's treatment of the press, especially about his charges against the press. But he said of Castro:

"He is obviously sincere. He is obviously determined to improve the lot of the underdog in Cuba. And he obviously has helped the Cuban at the bottom of the economic ladder."

True, he's done it by high-handed methods. He's arbitrarily forced a reduction in rents, for example. And he's trying to break up the big sugar plantations and see to it that each Cuban has a little plot of land on which he can grow, not sugar cane, but the things he needs to eat.

He proposes to carry out this land reform by expropriation — that is, arbitrarily taking the land from its present owners, many of them Americans. Yet, the speaker said, land reform is so badly needed in Cuba that the United States government told Castro, soon after he came to power, that it would work with him; discuss with him the methods of expropriation, and try to work out something that would result in a break-up of the big plantations in such a way as to be reasonably fair to the present owners.

Castro's reaction: A refusal to discuss it with Washington, and continued, growing abuse of this country.

The speaker cited his efforts to give the peasants a chance; the fact that Castro is a master showman, and that virtually every Cuban family has a TV set and even see Castro's exhibitions on television; and, finally, the marked facial resemblance of this bearded young man, still in his early thirties, to Jesus. In a country made up chiefly of illiterates, who are mostly Catholics, that resemblance has a tremendous, if unconscious, effect.

Mr. McCarthy added — and I had the feeling he might be "whistling in the dark" — that, while 75 per cent of the people still worship Castro, the other 25 per cent on longer support him. "And, at first, he had 100 per cent support."

There are several groups from which opposition can be organized, and is being organized. First of all, there are the politicians who now are out of power; second, there are the wealthy who, quite naturally, don't like to lose their influence and perquisites; finally,

the Cuban army today is "people's army", made up of lettered peasants — and former regular army soldiers, listed men as well as officers, on the outside looking in. No they'd like to get back on the inside.

How long can Castro last? The speaker pointed to a variety of indices that suggest the country's economy is near collapse. But, he said, if Castro ride out the next few months, he may be in power for several years.

It probably depends on how strong and effective the organic resistance becomes.

What can and will the United States government do? Americans have a billion dollars invested in Cuba; that country has been the United States showcase for good relations between Washington and its neighbors; and Cuba lies only a few miles from United States territory at Key West. Despite the fact that Cuba is an independent country, the American government will sit idly by forever, the UPI believes.

He said Washington already warned the Castro government that, if abuse of the United States continues, our State Department, as a first step, will advise American tourists to avoid Cuba.

In no case, the speaker phrased, will Washington permit Cuba to be taken over by Communists.

But is Fidel Castro a Communist? Mr. McCarthy — and he obviously is no friend of Castro — feels sure he is not. "And I think that more on his Catholic background than on his actions."

In fact, everything he does in with Communist policy. There is little doubt that many of his chief lieutenants are sympathetic to Communism, if actually card-carrying members of the Communist party.

SOME JOTTINGS
FROM A NOTEBOOK

Elbow grease is a better lubricant than soft soap.

You may get in deep water, you should not stay in it. That's what a fish does.

You have a well trained men if it will enable you to fo the unpleasant things.

The chap whose sleeves rolled up the highest does no ways do the most work.

Don't expect too much of others. Remember, they are much better than you are.

Some people are not satisfied with going to the extreme. They want to start there.—Ande (S. C.) Independent.