

The Franklin Press

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The Highlands Maconian

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Editorial Page Editor

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A LOOK BACKWARD Then And Now

At a time of national peril, the two political parties have adopted their platforms and chosen their nominees. They did so against a background—rather, with the surface appearance—of almost phenomenal unity.

For purposes both of comparison and contrast, it is interesting to go back 100 years for a look at the political situation at another time of national peril. Then it was the open disunity that was almost phenomenal.

Just as this year, in 1860 the Democrats met first. They convened in Charleston, S. C., April 23, but ten days later the convention broke up in disagreement.

After 57 ballots, no Presidential nominee had been agreed upon. Meanwhile, delegates from eight Southern states withdrew when the Northern wing of the party won approval of its platform.

HAS MODERN RING

One plank of that platform, incidentally, has a familiar ring today. It urged the country to abide by decisions of the Supreme Court. The reference was to the 1857 Dred Scott ruling, which held that a slave taken into free territory remained a slave—a ruling that was greeted with angry derision by many in the North.

Having split wide open at Charleston, the Democrats took no action until after Lincoln's nomination; and then each wing of the party acted separately.

The Southerners held an inconclusive meeting in Richmond, then rejoined the party's national convention in a second session in Baltimore on June 18. Again the Southerners walked out, and ten days later held their own convention in Baltimore. They nominated Vice-President John C. Breckinridge, of Kentucky, for President and Joseph Lane (native of Buncombe County), of Oregon, for Vice-President

Meanwhile, the Northern Democrats, also meeting in Baltimore, had chosen a man from Lincoln's state of Illinois, Senator Stephen A. Douglas, (of the Lincoln-Douglas debates) for President; in an effort to placate the South, they picked a Georgian, Herschel V. Johnson, for Vice-President.

A month earlier, still another convention had been held in Baltimore. (That made four in the South, three in Baltimore and one in Charleston; imagine either party even considering a Southern city for its convention today!) This gathering drew together the remnants of the Whig and the American (Know-Nothing) parties. John Bell, of Tennessee, was nominated for President, Edward Everett, of Massachusetts, for Vice-President. This group's platform condemned sectional parties and upheld "the Constitution of the country, the Union of the States, and the enforcement of the laws". It is interesting to note that, despite this approach, which today seems basic, moderate, and workable, the Whig-American ticket ran third in November. Perhaps it trailed for the very reason its platform seemed sound, sensible, and workable—almost nobody, in any camp, wanted moderation.

REJECT RADICAL

When the Republicans met in Chicago May 16, they rejected William H. Seward, of New York, chiefly because he was identified in the public mind with anti-slavery radicalism. On the third ballot, they nominated Lincoln.

That was like a red flag to the South; yet by today's standards, Lincoln seems to have been a moderate. While his Cooper Union speech, three months earlier, had made it clear he would not compromise on extension of slavery, in that speech he had condemned northern extremism and had appealed for sectional understanding. And two years later, in the midst of war, he was to declare:

"If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that."

STRIKING CONTRAST

Though it usually is forgotten, Lincoln was not the first Republican nominee; the party, organized in 1854, had a national ticket in the Presidential election of 1856. Incidentally, there could hardly

have been a greater contrast between the 1856 nominee, the polished, daring, glamorous explorer, John C. Fremont, and the backwoods rail-splitter.

Incidentally, too, in 1860, as in 1960, the Republicans made no effort to win the South (as all three of the other parties did) by picking one nominee from that area. They chose a man from Maine, Hannibal Hamlin, as Lincoln's running mate.

The Republican victory in 1860 probably did not stem solely from that party's stands on slavery and preservation of the Union, though those are the issues we think of today. Like present-day parties, the Republicans did considerable promising. After reaffirming the principles of the Declaration of Independence, the party went on record as favoring the right of each state to control its domestic institutions, internal improvements (nowadays they usually are called "pork-barrel"), a railroad to the Pacific, a homestead law, a liberal immigration policy, and (somewhat by inference) a protective tariff.

LINCOLN VICTORY SURE

Lincoln appears to have been a moderate, in most respects, but even had he so appeared to the voters of 1860, sectional animosities ran too deep to be bridged, as the November election results plainly showed.

Carrying 18 free states, Lincoln was elected, with 180 electoral votes. Breckinridge carried 11 slave states, with an electoral vote of 72. Bell, of the middle-of-the-road Whig-American party, took three border states, with 39 electoral votes. The Northern Democrats, headed by Douglas, received Missouri's 9 electoral votes and 3 of New Jersey's.

While Lincoln got less than 40 per cent of the popular vote in the nation, a fusion ticket of the other three parties would have changed the electoral vote result in only three states, and, even without those three, Lincoln would have had an electoral vote majority.

UNITY TODAY

The election took place on November 6. Six weeks later, South Carolina seceded from the Union.

In 1960-61, of course, there'll be no secession. But whether either Presidential nominee is big enough to bring about genuine national unity, in this time of national peril, remains to be seen.

Whatever their fears on that score, all good Americans will pray that one of the candidates will prove to be that big, and that that one will be elected.

Toeing The Mark

(Johnstown, Colo., Breeze)

Many a man is always on his toes because his wife is always on his heels.

Could Be Costly

(Milwaukee Journal)

One thing is certain. Neither party has spent much time seeking out its very best men. Each has accepted the man in the strongest political position. The process could be costly in a world where the American system and way of life is being challenged on every side and where we can afford only the best.

Taste And Age

(Arkansas Gazette)

One of the more interesting research projects to pop up in the news recently is one reported out of Rutgers University, where they are trying to determine whether you can taste as well when you're old as when you're young. At the risk of derailing the whole scientific undertaking, we can't help advancing the rather inescapable conclusions with that you don't; the ability to taste clearly degenerates with age. Look at the number of grown-ups (who used to know the stuff for what it really was) now putting spinach into their mouths not only without blinking an eye, but with something akin to pleasure. It's not the spinach that's changed.

LETTERS

Mountain Nostalgia

Editor, The Press:

"I'll miss the mountains". How I shall miss the mountains this fall, due to illness for past seven months. But my hopes

LEADERS CREATE UNTRUE PICTURE

Transplanted Yankee Sees No Need For Dixie Chip On Shoulder

RUSSELL M. SPEAR in Madison (N. C.) Messenger

I was born in conservative New England fifty six years ago. I grew up in New England. In my early manhood I spent five years in the middle west, in Chicago. For the past twenty six years I have lived in the South. During these years I have come to know and appreciate these diverse sections of our country.

Not a Southerner by birth, I rate better than a native born Southerner. I came here, not by birth, but by choice. I raised a family here and I now have a grandchild who is rapidly acquiring the status of a Carolinian by virtue of birth in this state.

In the twenty six years since I came to North Carolina, the South as a whole, has on its own initiative and resourcefulness—raised itself up from the estate of a backward provincial society to the status of a modern industrial-agricultural society which is the envy of America. No part of this country has shown in so short a time, advancement in so many fields.

That is why I always cringe and grind my teeth when a Southerner, with a chip on his shoulder as big as a five gallon jug, goes out of his way to dare the North to knock it off.

are high for next year.

The dear friends where we rented our cottage on Highlands highway, the beautiful creek that runs from Highlands to Franklin, our friends, the stonecutter and wife, no matter how busy, they always took time for a friendly visit, and from whom my husband bought my handmade earrings with green stones. I am asked by strangers so many times, "Where did you get those beautiful earrings?"

Let's not forget the grocer on one of the country roads, can't remember his name, read that his brother is in court-house, maybe next year I will have pleasure of meeting the brother.

Now let's not forget the Saturday crowds in both Franklin and Sylva, the friendly, smiling faces. How I would love to sit and visit with them. How I would enjoy that. They will never miss me, as I am only one of so many tourists.

Some people count sheep to help bring on sleep at night. I just close my eyes, climb one of the mountain paths until I come to a cabin with a rocker on the porch, and rock myself to dreamland. It works every time.

I have so much to say, but perhaps there will be another time.

MRS. GEORGE W. LEPERT

Gainesville, Fla.

Left Here 48 Years Ago

Dear Weimar:

I am one of the old time Macon men who left there in 1912 with my bride, Miss Doris Dean, daughter of H. D. Dean, with one hundred fifty dollars in my pocket, and it borrowed from the Bank of Franklin. We landed in Joplin, Mo. I soon was called to the Bates City Baptist Church and have been in Missouri 46 years, having spent two years back in North Carolina, after being discharged from the army after World War I.

Our five children are married and settled in Missouri. My youngest son, Dan Bryson, was called to the pastorate of a church of sixteen hundred members, July 10.

Missouri and all the other Mid-Western states are coming up with a tremendous crop of wheat and corn, as well as other crops. In fact, it looks like enough to flood congress and send them to conference rooms to try to find a way to dispose of it.

This is my fiftieth year in the ministry, and I am enjoying my retirement by doing about as much preaching as I did before. My old mountaineer stock keeps me about as strong and alert as our younger preachers. A mountaineer never forgets that advantage he has had, contact with nature, of which other people can know little. No wonder we have to go back to renew our strength like the eagles.

I note in The Press the going of so many old friends. It makes me want to write all those left behind, but I am still on the go too much for that.

J. A. BRYSON

Columbia, Mo.

Truth may hurt, but it cannot harm.—J. B. Phillips.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Looking Backward Through the Files of The Press



65 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK (1895)

The public school in town opened Monday under Prof. Geo. H. Carpenter and Miss Annie Woodfin, with 47 pupils present.

Work on the new hotel is being pushed along. The roof is on, the floors are being laid and the walls are being plastered, and we hope soon to see the hotel open for the reception of visitors.

35 YEARS AGO (1925)

The Wilson Construction Company finished pouring concrete on the Georgia Road last Monday. The 16-foot concrete road is a little more than 14 miles in length. This company also has the contract to build the concrete road from Franklin to the Jackson County line towards Dillsboro.

15 YEARS AGO (1945)

Slack Auto Parts Company, of Gainesville, Ga., has opened a wholesale and retail branch store here. It is in the building at the rear of the A & P, the new business facing Iotia Street.

In the past three and a half years of wartime, 151 million feet of timber has been cut from the 400,000 acres comprising the Nantahala National Forest, which has its headquarters in Franklin.

5 YEARS AGO (1955)

Paving on the short link of US 23-441 from the State line to Mountain City, Ga., will get under way soon.

The first annual Macon County fair is scheduled to open August 11.

STRICTLY PERSONAL

By WELMAR JONES

This one is just too good to keep.

Like everybody else, I hate to make a fool of myself. Like everybody else, too, when I do, I hesitate to let anybody know about it.

I've been hesitating about this one for months; at last, I've decided it's just too good to keep any longer.

Like so many of my misadventures, this one grew out of faulty vision; nearsighted in the daytime, I see practically nothing at night.

I'd been to church one evening. Afterward, a friend offered to bring me home.

Driving south on Bidwell Street, he inadvertently passed the entrance to Sunset Drive, the east-west street I live on; had gone about half a block beyond the intersection before he realized it.

I told him just to put me out where he was; I didn't mind walking the short distance to our house.

I didn't know what I was letting myself in for.

The trouble was, there's a street light near the intersection of Bidwell and Sunset, and that street light is my landmark; it tells me when I turn off Bidwell into Sunset. That night the street light was out!

I kept walking up the hill, looking for my street. Finally, I realized I had passed the top of the hill, and so had gone much too far.

Feeling with my foot for a break in the curb that would tell me I'd come to a street intersection, I started back down the hill.

At last there was a break in the curb; this was it. So I turned and started, confidently, walking west

toward our house.

Suddenly, something seem to loom up before me; something that looked like a wall, a wall right across the street.

There just couldn't be a wall across the street, I told myself. What could that mean?

so I started on. But I was quickly stopped. There was a wall. There was no getting through or by it. I was hemmed in.

Where in heck was my house? Where in heck was I, anyhow?

I put my hands up and felt the wall; walked a little to the left—there was no break in that wall. Walked a little to the right—still no break in that wall.

Then I saw what seemed to be a break, a sort of door through the wall.

And I saw something else; something that shone, even in that dim light.

I reached down and touched it. Instantly, I knew what it was. I had my hand on the handle of a casket!

Was I drunk? Certainly not—I'd just been to church!

Was I crazy? I wondered.

Was I, maybe, dead? Well, I'd picked a convenient spot.

Then it came to me. Potts Funeral Home and casket warehouse is in my neighborhood. Instead of turning into Bidwell Street, I'd turned into the funeral home driveway.

That explanation reassured me somewhat—and, just then, I could stand some reassurance.

Even so, my vision quickly improved enough that I got out of there in a hurry, and this time found my way home.

Poverty And Character

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is from a recent address by Mr. Snider, associate editor of the Greensboro Daily News.)

By William D. Snider

We were poor in North Carolina in the beginning—oh, we were poor. They called us "The Rip Van Winkle State." We had no oil wells, no lucrative natural resources, no heavy industries and on top of that we were landlocked by mountains and ocean. Walter Hines Page once said that "enough brains and character have been wasted in North Carolina in the last 100 years to have managed the civilized globe."

But even in that sometimes debilitating poverty lay the spark of an Aycock, a McIver or a Graham. There was no shame in our poverty. Seventy-five years ago Senator George Pendleton of Ohio delivered a speech in Charlotte in which he paid a magnificent tribute to North Carolina of that day:

"Without great cities or uncul-

tivated wastes, without an excess of riches or degrading poverty, she has provided a university for the education of her sons, and has always known how to treat that middle ground of dignity and honor and of self-respect without which no state is permanently built."

The same is true today—although much of the poverty has disappeared, North Carolina still has no predominant city.

I think some of our poverty and unpretentiousness—not carried to an extreme—has been a healthy thing in North Carolina. Poverty—if not all-consuming—makes for character; and much of North Carolina's rock-ribbed independence springs from an absence, until fairly recent years, of too many material blessings.

You see this in the strong faces of mountain people or men of the Outer Banks. They are self-contained—solid as the mountains or persistent as the sea, with a certain look of eagles about them that clothes, fine or shabby, cannot change.

TO ANCIENT MUSIC

Foot-Pattin' Time In W. N. C.

MORGANTON NEWS-HERALD

Lou Harshaw, publicity director of the Asheville Chamber of Commerce, gets carried away when she starts writing about the "music of the mountains" which will be heard at the 33rd annual Mountain Dance and Folk Festival August 4-6.

And she carries us with her in her enthusiasm as she describes the folk songs and ballads and dancing from the native mountain people of Western North Carolina and the director, colorful Bascom Lamar Lunsford, "Minstrel of the Appalachians," who is preaching the preservation of a priceless heritage in the distinctive music which was brought from the old country by the early settlers in the remote high places of this scenic region."

But what we like best in Lou Harshaw's story about the festival is her description of the folk music and dance as they were enjoyed by a former generation:

"The songs and dances were a vastly important part in the lives of the sturdy pioneers who pitted their strength against the tall slopes and deep valleys of the Blue Ridge and the Great Smoky Mountains.

"On a typical summer evening in the mountains, along about sundown, the children would be gathered in, the men would take up their fiddles and banjos and the women would take down from the wood peg the handmade dulcimer and all the family walk along the path to the neighbor's cabin with its hard packed dirt clearing in the front. Almost by unspoken agreement they would arrive and soon the plaintive, sometimes sad, sometimes gay music would float out into the coolness of the dusk. Soon some of the men take the center of the clearing in a dust-raising, fast moving clog step, each trying to outdo the other. Then the women would be taken in and the square dance circle formed and the intricate precise patterns of the dance woven much as the shuttle wove the hand loomed homespun of the whirl of the skirts."

Having seen the young people who make up the championship Enka square dance team perform at the recent N.C. Press Association convention there, we marvel at how well the Asheville region is preserving the "priceless heritage" of mountain music and dances, bringing to hotel ballrooms and city auditoriums the pleasurable entertainment that simple mountain people used to brighten their neighborhood gatherings. It's well worth saving.