

# The Franklin Press

and  
The Highlands Maronian

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Editorial Page Editor

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AFTER 17 YEARS

## Another Broken Promise

The issue in the controversy over the Bryson City-Fontana road, in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, is a simple one.

For the basic question is not whether such a road is needed and desirable, or whether it might destroy a natural wilderness, or even whether the motives of its backers are mercenary. All those questions are complex, and so may be debatable.

But the real issue is neither complicated nor debatable. It is a simple question of the good faith of the government of the United States.

The facts, as brought out at last week's meeting in Bryson City, are substantially these:

Back in 1943, a three-way contract was signed under which (a) the TVA transferred 44,000 acres of Swain County land to the National Park Service for the Smoky Park; (b) the Park Service agreed to construct a 26-mile road, through the park, near its southern edge, from a point near Bryson City to Fontana; and (c) the State of North Carolina agreed to build, simultaneously, an access road to the park boundary.

The 44,000 acres was transferred years ago. In 1958, the State went ahead and built the access road. Today that completed project stands as a \$400,000 dead-end road.

The TVA and North Carolina have fulfilled their parts of the contract. But the Park Service continues to use one dodge after another, as Governor Hodges expressed it at the Bryson City meeting, to keep from meeting its commitment.

Governor Hodges, whose conduct in his high office has won national respect, is not a man given to exaggeration. Yet he remarked that federal officials "thought they were pulling a fast one" when they wrote him, last April, asking if the State still wanted the Bryson City-Fontana road built. Before answering, he is carefully collecting information, he explained, because "if I had told them at that time to build the road, they would have done something else to delay it".

After 17 years, the National Park Service is still trying to avoid fulfilling an obligation that is down in black and white!

The question today — and the only real question on this matter — is this simple one: Has the pledged word of the federal government any value?

That question, important as it is, would be less important if this were the first time it had arisen in the administration of the Smoky Park. It is not the first time. This is at least the fourth time the Park Service has broken, or sought to break, a promise.

Land for the park was donated to the federal government. It was given with the express understanding that tolls for admission to the park never would be charged.

But on two separate occasions in recent years, the Park Service has announced plans for charging tolls. On each occasion, it is true, it was forced to back down. But it was forced to do so only after the expenditure of considerable time and money by the people of this region. The people, that is, had to spend time and money to obtain from their government something that government had solemnly promised.

The broken promise that seems most inexcusable, though, had to do not with such things as roads and tolls, but with something that, to many, is sacred.

When the park was created, some 3,000 people lived in the area. Where 3,000 people live, there are cemeteries—and there were a number in the park area; and where there are cemeteries, there are roads leading to them.

When the people moved out of the park area, they were promised that these roads would be kept in repair, so they could visit and keep green the spots where their dead lie buried. That promise has been ignored; those roads are not in repair. And when these folk go by foot to their burying

grounds, they find scenes of desolation.

That particular promise may not be in writing. But it was made; too many people remember it too vividly for there to be any question on that score. Besides, nobody who knows the mountain people can doubt that such a promise was made — these folk never would have left without it!

It is outrageous when people must fight their own government for their rights; it is the first function of government to protect the people's rights. When they must fight their government to force it to keep its own promises, the situation becomes intolerable.

Because that is true, and because there has been a series of broken promises over the years, and because an agency that breaks a promise in North Carolina will break one in Maine or Colorado or Florida, the Smoky Park situation has ceased to be a regional matter. It is a national disgrace.

Somebody in high government position lacks the morality to respect the pledged word. Such a somebody is unfit for public office. It is high time there was a demand for the resignation of that somebody — or, maybe, several such somebodies.

Whose resignation? We do not know. And ordinary citizens lack the facilities to find out.

Fortunately, though, the people have an agency that does have such facilities — the Congress of the United States.

We respectfully suggest that that agency find out.

## Bouquet

Competition is a fine thing. In some areas, though, it can be, and often is, over done.

One such area is sports. So it is encouraging to learn of a sports event here last Wednesday evening at which the importance of winning was so little emphasized that nobody bothered even to keep a score-book.

It was a softball game between the Bryson City and Franklin Jaycees. There were refreshments, there was fellowship, and there was fun, which should be the primary object of any game. Soon the Franklin group will go to Bryson City for a return engagement of a similar nature.

It all started when the Bryson City group challenged the Franklinites. Where it will end nobody knows; for this kind of thing, if it spreads and if it continues, easily might go a long way toward eliminating the over-zealous rivalry, and even suspicion, between neighboring towns and counties that often have held back this whole region.

Our best bow to the Bryson City Jaycees for inaugurating something sensible and, who knows! maybe significant.

## One- Vs. Two-Way Streets

(Rockingham Post-Dispatch)

On September 27, 1956, the town of Franklin, county-seat of Macon county, made two of their streets one-way. Now that town plans to revert to two-ways. . . . Rockingham has had the main street and several other streets, one-way for several years. Most of us who frequent the town are familiar with the one-way streets, but strangers get hopelessly confused—and irritated. Wonder how our people would vote if the matter was submitted to them in the town election in May, 1961?

## Summer Scents

(Huntington, N. Y., Long-Islander)

Each season has its scents, and summer's scents are sleepy ones. They rise from warmth and sunshine, and, unlike the bracing smells of autumn, lead to lazy relaxation and to drowsy dreams. The aroma of pine needles in the hot summer sun—an invitation to stretch out and relax. Or the warm, sweet smell of fresh cut grass, or new mown hay—lulling perfumes, all. The soothing scent of the Sound-cooled breeze, with its salty, dampish smell comes best when the sun's warm too. And the pungent scent of tomato vines, the bread-and-butter smell of privet blossoms, both depend upon a nap-inducing noontime sun to bring them out. Some summer scents depend upon the stars to make them noticed—the heavy, almost tropical odor of the nicotine, the musky perfume of petunias, the honey sweet scent of almost all white flowers—these belong to the gentle warmth of the summer night. Like soft reminders of the sun just set, they invite us to let go and dream, and so to sleep until the sun has warmed the pines again. Sleepy summer scents!

## TIP TO BUSINESSMEN

## A Town Never Benefits By Destroying Its Personality

CELESTINE SIBLEY in Atlanta Constitution

In an age when the most enlightened city planners are advocating off-the-street parking and spending quantities of money to haul in tubs full of dirt and trees and pipe in tinkling fountains to make shopping areas attractive, I was astonished the other day to hear that Decatur merchants contend that cutting down six trees on the courthouse square will improve their business. They have the judgment of some traffic experts to back them up. Slice off that patch of green, cut down those trees, and droves of customers with jangling jeans will come surging in. That's the idea and I don't pro-

ness flows away from them. Downtown Decatur merchants are already suffering from the fact that the new waves of suburbanites find it easy to shop at one of the big, new centers close to home. Women can leave the children in the car and run in wearing shorts or pedal pushers and grab up a pattern or a can of paint or makings for a quick lunch. Cutting down trees may accommodate a few more of these cars — 100 more, I believe is the estimate — but will that save the on-the-square merchants? Testimony at the Decatur City Council meeting the other night was that nearby parking garages

## LETTERS

### About Those Chains

Editor, The Press:

This is in reply to Mr. Wilford Corbin's letter to The Press stating he did not approve of the Florida folks erecting "No Trespassing" signs and putting up chains across their private roads.

We have had our cabin for six years outside of Franklin. Yes, we put up our chains across our private road, not to be inhospitable, but to try to convey it is our private property that we paid for.

Last winter our cabin was robbed. The thieves took all they could carry, even to a case of canned fruit and my curtains. We, too, love our mountain folks and enjoy coming up each year.

I am sure there would be a lot of Florida folks that would appreciate any suggestions as to how to protect their private property.

Ocala, Fla.

MRS. JOHN KELLY

### Let's Reason Together

Editor, The Press:

About our street system: Experience is said to be our best teacher—if we profit by it.

The one-way street system was put into effect, as we understand, to relieve the congestion and confusion experienced on our main business streets, and also to promote the public safety. After several months' trial, a vote of the citizens of Franklin endorsed the change by nearly 2 to 1 majority.

Why, then, should we abandon the present system and revert to the condition we planned to remedy?

No system is perfect, nor, 100 per cent satisfactory to everyone concerned. It would seem to this writer, however, that public safety should be a prime factor in any traffic plan.

Yes, we need more parallel streets, more parking areas, etc.—but—as of now, we do not have these, so why not continue the next best remedy, which is the one-way street system we now have?

It is probable that eventually Franklin will have an adequate by-pass for through travel, but, again that is not true in this year of 1960.

Our present truck-route is a help along this line, but could hardly be called an adequate by-pass. If you have ever tried to pass a truck on Wayah street, you will no doubt agree.

May we offer another suggestion: It is less than three months to the November election. Why not, at the same time, let the people of Franklin express by ballot their choice as to what street system they prefer. Americans believe in majority rule.

Franklin.

E. CLEVE KINGSBERY

### Chips On Southern Shoulders?

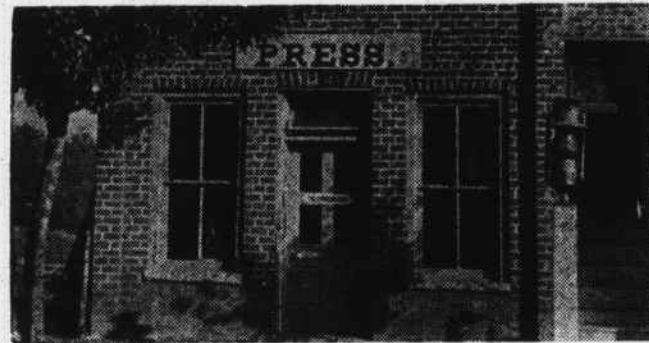
Editor, The Press:

The August 4th edition of The Franklin Press carried a reprinted article under the title of "Transplanted Yankee Sees No Need For Dixie Chip On Shoulder", by R. M. Spear. The article, though written quite seriously, was nonetheless somewhat amusing. It was amusing because it followed the line of

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## DO YOU REMEMBER?

Looking Backward Through the Files of The Press



### 65 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

(1895)

Mr. John Weaver and family, of Buncombe County, are visiting relatives in this county.

Uncle Shade Stalcup and wife, of Cherokee County, were visiting their son, Wm. R. Stalcup, Saturday and Sunday.

Mr. Robert L. Ritchie has a storehouse to rent on the site of the Rabun Gap Institute, at Rabun Gap, Ga.

### 35 YEARS AGO

(1925)

Last Saturday the 18-foot concrete drive on East Main Street was opened to traffic. Some already refer to this hill as the "Ford speedway". But cars of all makes are glad of the opportunity to use this short cut to the railroad station and other points east. Incidentally, the opening of this street straight up the hill relieved the congestion on Palmer Street.

### 15 YEARS AGO

(1945)

The Macon County Roll of Honor, a board which bears the names of the more than 1,500 Macon County boys and girls who have entered the armed services—many of them having given their lives—was pictured in the New York Herald Tribune August 5. In front of the roster are crosses, on which flowers are placed by relatives and friends, for those who have died in the service.

### 5 YEARS AGO

(1955)

The marriage of Miss Patricia Landrum to Curley Walker will take place this evening.

## PERSONAL

By WEIMAR JONES

On Main Street one day last week, I took refuge under a store awning from a downpour of rain. It wasn't an ordinary drizzle, but a really hard rain. Meanwhile, all the time the sun was shining brightly.

That reminded me, of course, of the old saying that, when the sun shines during a rain, it means the Bad Man is beating his wife.

I first heard that as a very small boy, and even then, I wondered what was the connection between a weather phenomenon (though of course I didn't use that term then) and the devil's domestic troubles. I've wondered many times since. Last week I wondered again.

Sometimes, perhaps, I'll find a folklorist — or better still, maybe, a specialist in superstitions — who can give me a satisfactory explanation.

Nothing truer was ever written than the "Acres of Diamonds" piece, popular years ago. It told how a man searched the world over for riches, and finally came back home, a broken old man still without wealth — only to discover diamonds in his own back yard.

Variations of that theme constantly occur right here in Macon County. There are opportunities which we, who live right under them, never see. We go elsewhere seeking the greener pastures, only to have someone else — often someone who came in from the outside — see and develop the opportunities we passed up. Recent instances are too well known to make it necessary to list them.

There are, on the other hand, plenty of cases of those who resisted the greener-pastures temptation, stayed at home, and, while few here have acquired great wealth, did well.

I was one of those who was sure there were no opportunities here.

At last, though, I changed my mind, and came back home. I was fortunate enough to get back before I was either ancient or entirely broken. In my case, of course, there were no "acres of diamonds" — or of dollars, either. Yet I found the thing all of us really look for hardest, the chance to do the things we want to do and the satisfaction of doing them not, perhaps, really well, but well enough to make doing them a pleasure.

A brand new and somewhat different instance of how we overlook the opportunities at home came to light the other day, in an unexpected field. A young man visited Franklin to collect information about Silas McDowell, a scholar of the last century who won national fame by propounding the theory of the "thermal belt."

## RACIAL DIFFERENCE

### 'Pursuit Af Happiness' Stressed

ROCK VALLEY (Iowa) BEE

Colored people seem to have the edge on white people as far as knowing how to live without having too many ulcers.

Many of them live like white people would like to live — without trivial worries. To illustrate: I have a friend, Glen Houdek, who has sort of semi-retired and has built himself a home in Florida.

When he was building his home Glen had a colored "boy" doing odd jobs about the place. He still works a little even now that it is finished. George, the colored boy, was always broke. Glen asked him why he didn't save some of his money, put it in the bank for a rainy day, and all the other Franklinitisms like "a penny saved is a penny earned."

## NO CHILDHOOD LEFT

### Victims Of Own Vast Foolishness

Cincinnati MOUNT VERNON PRESS

It must have started, I think, with long pants for little boys. Wherever it started, however it grew, we in this lovely land are the victims of a vast foolishness of our own creation. Of a sudden, a childish child-

## PENALTY

One local fellow says his memory is becoming so bad he is going to have to quit lying.

—Moran (Kan.) Sentinel

And this is bad and sad for it throws the living of a long and happy life out of kilter. The peaks are passed while the children are still in the valley . . . the thrills are gone before they can be properly appreciated.

When all the good "firsts" are crammed into a few immature years, what can we expect but a seeking and searching for new experiences down the more devious paths of life?

## BEG YOUR

### PARDON

When you go back to your home town, after a long absence, it never is quite the same. Many people have had that experience. Few, though, tell about it as vividly as did an article published on this page last week. That piece was by Leonard Dudley, writing in the Mooreville Tribune. Due to a mix-up of headlines, it was erroneously attributed to the Cincinnati Mount Washington Press.