

# CHAPEL HILL NEWS LEADER

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## The Growing Body Of Ignorance

"Los Angeles is in Missouri; Denver and Boston are in Wisconsin; the Appalachian Mountains are in the Oklahoma Panhandle, and Chesapeake Bay is in the Gulf of Mexico."

The Daily Tar Heel cites these as answers to questions propounded to a class in Geology at the University. They have enraged the Richmond Times-Dispatch, which asks: "Could idiocy be more complete? What are our secondary schools teaching the youth of the land when such answers as these come from college students?"

It cannot be said that the schools, secondary or otherwise, are wholly to blame. It has been the steady complaint of college teachers for years that the students coming up each fall for entrance have no body of general information.

They don't know the Bible, they don't know English, they don't know Mathematics. Whose is the fault?

The schools, with enormous demands made on them and with efforts thus spread thin, may be partly to blame, but the primary guilt must be laid on influences that work against

the American home.

Any observer can testify that the home is no longer a center for teaching, for learning, for culture, or for the general information which a youngster must have in order to meet the demands of current life.

The forces that once operated in the USA were centripetal—that is, they tended to make youth seek its normal center, the home. Nowadays the forces are centrifugal and dispersive. The automobile and other agencies take the young people away from the piano and the center table out to night clubs, honkytonks, and other resorts, while the parents either sit alone or go out themselves in search of amusement.

To maintain a home which will act as a center of information and development means a constant struggle with interests which tend to nullify its influence or break it apart. The schools are not entirely to blame, nor are parents. Modern influences make for dispersal, which is the enemy of concentration. But without concentration, what learning can there be?

## Pervasive Throughout

The severest thing recently said about the present fanatical pressure on the University in connection with the choice of athletic coaches was said by Gordon Gray in a public report issued just before his withdrawal as president. Said he:

I must report my continued concern over the question of the influence of intercollegiate athletics in the University. I refer, not to athletics as such or even to great interest in athletics, but rather to the fact that the demands of athletics often become pervasive throughout the institution and have an adverse effect on other and more central parts of our program. Athletics, particularly 'big time' athletics, have a way of becoming an issue in other areas of our work. On occasion, the pressures supporting athletics activities in seeking to defend the athletic operations create a threat to the morale and effectiveness of administrative and faculty action.

I would refer in this connection to the action of the recent General Assembly. At the same

time when it was cutting revenues and raising student fees, even cutting appropriations for the libraries, it was in effect subsidizing athletics by not requiring any out of state scholarship students to pay the general increased rate. This was over the stated opposition of the President, and was not in the best interest of the University.

It is to be noted that Mr. Gray emphasized those demands that "often become pervasive throughout the institution".

This is a way of saying that the tail often tries to run the dog, and that the University has to struggle to maintain those parts of its educational program which are central and vital.

Athletics exist for the purpose of giving growing boys the exercise and recreation suited to their time of life.

If their elders cannot control the attempts to use athletics for other purposes, how about turning the management and direction of athletics back to the boys?

## What Should Be The Punishment?

A man not only pours kerosene over his young wife and baby in their bed and sets fire to them.

The first reaction to this abhorrent story is that the perpetrator is a fiend and should be treated like one.

Yet second thought will say that no normal human being could be capable of such a deed.

The man is possibly far gone in a dangerous type of illness, or is a sick animal who attacks anyone touching him.

Older beliefs will say that instant execution should follow such a deed, in order that the punishment may act as a deterrent to other wicked men.

Yet we are confronted with the cold fact that drastic, even horrible, punishments have not deterred men from crime, but have rather attracted a certain form of sympathy for

them that has acted as an encouragement to further crime.

Retaliation simply does not work. Death holds no fear for abnormally crazed and fearful men. Then what should be done in such a case?

In the first place, it seems evident that such a crime is the result of an emotional storm. The treatment then should come from a psychiatrist. The legal aspect should be dealt with by a lawyer. And since the family concerned was not a prosperous one, an economist might be called in.

So that instead of having the usual indifferent jury of twelve men, the jury sitting on the case might consist of the three specialists just mentioned.

This solution would not be perfect, but it might be a step out of the routine punishments that so often fail of the desired effects.

## Water And Sun To Run Car

Robert C. Bowen in Christian Science Monitor  
Phoenix, Ariz.

Let's stop a moment and look into the fairly distant future. The time may be coming when you can use water and sunshine to run the family car.

Solar scientists have not mentioned this specifically, but at the recent World Symposium on Applied Solar Energy here, they said the use of sunlight to turn water into a high grade fuel for lighting your home and running your industry is one of their long range hopes for the future.

This is what these experts call "artificial photosynthesis." It is one way of fixing the energy of sunshine in a highly useful form—in this case by using it to break water into hydrogen and oxygen gases which later can be burned together.

The other kind of photosynthesis—the kind used by green plants to make food and fuel—is also a highly effective way to use sun power. This is another process the solar scientists hope to learn how to control. They are already well on their way to understanding it, and may someday be able to use it to produce food in a factory.

### FUEL RESERVES EBB

There are the long range prospects which the solar scientists have in mind for what they call "engineered photosynthesis."

For countless millenniums, plants have been carrying on this process of turning the energy of sunlight into edible food and burnable fuels. And they have been doing it quite well, if you should ask your local farmer. But the solar experts say that the needs of men are beginning to outstrip the ability of the plants to supply them. At the same time, the reserves of coal, oil, and gas are, in the long range view of this story, running low.

The answer, according to these experts, is to be found in the twin energies of the atom and the sun. But, if sun power is to take its place beside atomic energy on any significant scale some means will have to be found to store it in a highly useful form.

### LABORATORY STAGE

This is the job of photosynthesis, both artificial and biological. It is the reason why the solar scientists in Phoenix called it the most important long range process in applied solar energy.

At the moment, both types of photosynthesis, used in the way needed to meet large scale demands for food and fuel, are very much in the early laboratory stages. But the solar scientists have a good research grip on both processes.

Already, some limited experiments have used sunlight to constitute gases of hydrogen and

oxygen. This is the way to turn it into fuel, for these gases can be burned together to give a hotter flame than any present day furnace can handle.

Some of this work, as carried on at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was outlined at the conference by Prof. Lawrence J. Heidt.

The difficulty with the experiments to date, he explained, is that they require special auxiliary chemicals and an expensive kind of quartz to filter the sunlight, since only one small part of the sunlight spectrum can be used in the reactions being studied in his laboratory. Also, he said that almost all the common impurities in water inherit the reaction so that only assuredly pure water can be used.

These are the kinds of hurdles that any successful development of this method of using solar energy must overcome. So far, Professor Heidt said, they have been discouraging. But, he added, "the process is still very much in the research stage. We still think . . . that it may eventually be of economic importance. . . ."

Jesse E. Hobson, director of Stanford Research Institute, said that he agreed with this estimate. The prospect of splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen with sunlight is one of the big-

## A Human County History

There has been, in recent years, a big improvement in the writing of county histories. There is less emphasis on dry facts and more on people.

"Zeb's Black Baby", a short history of Vance County, N. C., is an example. The author of it is an old Chapel Hillian, Samuel Thomas Peace, who was once the only employee of the only bank in Chapel Hill and who used to take the funds home with him nights for safekeeping. He came here from Oxford but has lived many years in Henderson.

Vance County was named for Senator Zebulon B. Vance, who looked kindly on a political maneuver which formed the county out of Granville, Franklin and Warren counties. Because it was likely to go Republican, Vance named the new county "Zeb's Black Baby", according to a legend cited by Peace.

This book is rich in legend and not a little folklore, which give life and color to the whole narrative. People who like good historical reading will enjoy this book. Legend is plainly labelled in such a way as not to confuse it with documented history. The human factor is uppermost.

For example, there is a chapter on the Nut Bush Presbyterian Church, which on January 20, 1868, convicted and excommunicated a girl for becoming an unwed mother. "She and her babe were put in a two-horse wagon (but not by the church) and provided with a Negro driver. The mother of the young girl stuck by her daughter and went along too. When the wagon arrived at the foothills of the mountains of West Virginia it was met by a young man who took charge of the wagon and the colored man was told to get back home the best way he could. And that was the last the folks back home ever saw of the young girl and her child".

Peace's book is evidence that

the good old days were not good for everybody. There were cruelty, crudity, and much drinking of corn liquor. But there was also much humor and practical joking. At the battle of Mechanicsville in June, 1862, a private wanted to be excused on the ground that he was sick. "Yes, damn it", said the captain, "I know you are sick. But it's only the battlefield colic. Ill not excuse you."

## Too Many Ahead Of Him

