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TRENA P. FOX, EDITOR & PUBLISHER

MISS. ZOE YOUNG, ASSOCIATE EDITOR

THURMAN L. BROWN, SHOP MANAGER

ARCHIE H. BALLEW, PHOTOGRAPHER & PRESSMAN

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Scene From Top O' The Hill

By: Jack Kelly

Another Thanksgiving Day has come and gone. The one just passed was the 104th successive one. You probably thought it was older than that. In one way you are right and in another, and proper one, you are wrong. True, the first Thanksgiving Day, allegedly, commenced in the days of our Pilgrim Fathers but they didn't make it a yearly occurrence. Also, in those days it was only observed in Yankee New England and possibly in a wee bit of the South.

One hundred and four years ago, the then President, Abe Lincoln, in the midst of our greatest War, decided that things were in real tough shape but they possibly could get worse. Therefore he decided to issue a Proclamation ordering a Day of Thanksgiving to the Almighty. He established the last Thursday in November as the date. Lincoln knew his power but, unlike some of his successors, he did not over-estimate it. Somehow or other, Lincoln never confused himself with God. His Proclamation was so worded that the various Governors of the States could (and did) issue a similar Proclamation, and the Holiday was established Nationally.

Who knows what effect this first proclamation had upon the great conflict? How many people paused on that day and gave thought that despite the fact they fought against each other because of viewpoint, they could yet pause to celebrate a common heritage: offer a Thanksgiving to God jointly with their brothers. Less than two years later, the War had concluded.

Each and every President since Lincoln has continued the Proclamation. Only one of them got out of line: Roosevelt.

From the standpoint of the common man, FDR made two Historical mistakes. He tried to pack the Supreme Court and he tried to change Thanksgiving Day. People are funny. They will follow a leader. They will rip up the countryside. They will often do wild, wooly, crazy things, as they follow their accepted leader. However, there is a limit to their docility. Leaders never gauge that limit. Leaders always try for that one more step. That is the time that the people halt the onward rush. Often, they change their leader. History refers to this action as progress. FDR was quite a leader. Twice the people rebuffed him. Yet they kept him as their leader. They also kept their Court and their Thanksgiving Day sacrosanct.

Numerous recorders of History, if not Historians, have accounted for Roosevelt's attempted change of the Turkey Day as an attempt to help business. Claimed it would have allowed an extra two weeks for people to do their Christmas shopping. It didn't work when FDR tried it. The Nation had two Thanksgiving Days that year. The Fed-

eral one proclaimed by the President and the proper one, declared or proclaimed by the various Governors of our States True, this year's holiday was not the "last" Thursday of November, but, you see, people are reasonable, and they recognize that only a trick of the calendar caused the last of the month to fall on a Thursday. Therefore, no complaint was filed or objection made when President Johnson proclaimed the 23rd as Thanksgiving Day. This fact must have appeared noteworthy to the President. He has not done too much recently that was not subject to complaint. He probably kept his fingers crossed until the polls came in.

This year's Holiday finds our Country again engaged in a Civil War. A strange Civil War. Not a Civil War that involves the potential overthrow of our own Form of Government, as the term implies, but a Civil War involving a strange country and people unheard of not too many years ago by most of us.

The rightness or wrongness of our position in the present conflict is not to be discussed in this article. However, since Lincoln inaugurated Thanksgiving during our own Civil War, who is to say that he did not consider the fact of a civil war more than its location as the important reason for a pause in people's thinking, to give thanks to a common God. Possibly, a cease-fire for our Thanksgiving Day might be as fruitful as the contemplated pauses for the upcoming Christmas and New Year's Holidays contemplated.

Shortly after this Thanksgiving Day, our Country's population reached 200 million. That is a lot of prayer potential. Probably the 1 out of every 400 who found himself in Viet Nam for this date prayed a little more sincerely than those of us who were more fortunate and gathered in family groups or other friendly assemblages for celebration. Since no "pull" exists on the crowded condition of the "prayer lanes" from the various places of assemblage to the Heavenly Throne, we will never know for certain which area had the biggest "rating" for that 24 hours. However, I feel that many of our leading Clergymen will agree that the likelihood of the normal channels being as crowded as Viet Nam Special from our boys over there was very slim indeed. Lots of Churches I passed did not appear too crowded. Matter of fact, I forgot to visit one myself.

Every day is Christmas to the person who receives U.S. Savings Bonds. In seven years he will receive \$1 for every \$3 you pay out now for his E Bonds.



End of fall and just before winter begins.

Let's All Fight For Safer Highways!

By: Cpl. A. C. Gray

I have just celebrated my 20th years as a traffic officer . . . I have many memories, pleasant memories of joyful occasions, happy outings and above all my many friends.

But, I also have horrible memories of terrible incidents . . . the unpleasant duty of delivering death messages, the broken homes, the weeping of mourners in our churches, and the means of the dying on the highways.

I remember walking among the dead along the railroad tracks, with an arm in my hand, searching among the bodies to find one with a missing arm . . . an upturned face in the roadway and the rest of the body a distance away . . . cutting torches sparkling in the night, cutting the twisted metal away from mangled bodies . . . playing with a two-year old girl in my home on Sunday and seeing her in her coffin on Wednesday . . . searching the roadside after a wreck and finding the upturned face of a 17-year-old boy in the beam of my flashlight, his body down in the ditch . . . pulling six teenagers from the wrecked, half-submerged vehicle in the tailwaters of Lake Lucy, four dead and two crippled for life . . . two small boys sitting on the shoulder of the road crying, blood and tears streaming down their face, their father lying on one side of them dead and their mother on the other side dying.

I remember standing in the center of the roadway crying, the body of a little four-year-old girl in my arms, her golden hair flowing in the wind, her blood running down and dripping off the end of my elbows. Yes, six feet and 200 pounds of TOUGH COP crying unashamedly and I looked up to God and I prayed, "Oh, Lord have mercy."

These horrible incidents, all true, and many, many others, did not happen on battlefields of far-off lands. They happened within a few miles of the City of Henderson . . . Here in North Carolina.

YOU, THE PEOPLE, ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN STOP IT! WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT IN OUR FIGHT FOR SAFER HIGHWAYS!



SOUTH BOSTON, VA., GAZETTE - VIRGINIAN: "A young person today, dissatisfied with school and anxious to get out and work for the money he wants, is heading down a dead-end street if he pursues his dreams without a high school diploma. He finds out too late that the job he longed for will be at best a dull, dirty one with little opportunity for advancement. Or, the jobless rate of 13 per cent for school dropouts suddenly becomes very real to him as he observes that he doesn't have the ticket he needs to get through the employers' doors. For many of these young people, there is still time. They can go back and finish high school. For others, it is too late. . . . The education they get now charts the course not only for their individual lives but for the welfare of our country in the coming decades."

JACKSON, MO., POST & CASH-BOOK: "It's not a pretty scene to come upon, shattered glass, twisted metal, oozing oil and gasoline, moans of pain and the flowing of a man's life-blood don't give you a comfortable

feeling. How can drivers be made to realize that a bit more caution, a bit more kindness, a bit more courtesy and a lot more decency would put an end to many of these scenes."

LITCHFIELD, MINN., REVIEW: "another example of the government's inconsistency can be noted at the Tennessee Valley Hydroelectric plant where because of greater costs of operation the government is boosting power rates 7 to 9 per cent. Private business feels the increase in operation (costs) just as much as the government. One would think and expect the government to set an example of holding the line rather than hiking it up and at the same time denying private business the same privilege."

ODESSA, TEXAS, AMERICAN: ". . . a recent rummage for something in the back of a desk drawer turned up a letter bearing a first class mail stamp priced at three cents. Know what the date on the stamp was, 1957."

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