

OPEN FORUM LETTER

To the voters of this County, who supported me at the primary on June 6th, 1936, I extend my sincere gratitude, and wish them to know that I treasure, very highly, the expression of their loyal friendship, notwithstanding the fact that I was unsuccessful in my endeavor. It is my firm belief that it is not the quantity, but the quality and sincerity of friendship that really count.

To the people of Person County I wish to acknowledge my deep appreciation for permitting me to serve them, for ten years, as their County Treasurer.

Fearing that I might not again have an appropriate opportunity to direct the attention of the people of this County to certain information I was able to obtain while serving them in my official capacity, and also to remind them of some of their deserving public officials, who have not received due recognition for the faithful and diligent service they have rendered and whose monetary compensation is no true measure of the value of the benefits the people of this County have received under their guidance, from their hands, and as a result of their effective work, experience, and never-failing service.

With pleasure I commend to you your County Auditor; your County Commissioners; and your County Attorney. I could enumerate, but such is not appropriate at this time, many trying hours those men have lived through and many distressing obstacles, gravely important to your general welfare, that they have successfully overcome in behalf of the people of this County. They could have disclosed the hardships they were undergoing for you without just recompense—yes, but they did not because they are fighters and have no time to whine; neither do they thrive on sympathy. It was their duty they were following and not a selfish interest—such is the true test of all good public officials. I deem it not amiss for me to say here that without their able and cooperative counsel and continued assistance to me during those dark and trying days of the recent depression, when banks everywhere were failing and the County funds were in danger, this County like many other Counties in our State, might have suffered heavy financial losses. I invite you to check after these fellows and note the accuracy of their work and foresight.

There are many valuable officials and citizens in our nation who are busy performing their duties unnoticed by their less diligent fellowmen because they do not stop to boost themselves, but that does not mean they do not deserve recognition.

We have right here in our own town and County valuable officials and citizens, but they too have been overlooked, unappreciated, unhonored, and have not received due recognition. Look about you and see if you can recognize any of them. I have, in this article, directed your attention to some—there are others; find them; and give them a little word of cheer, appreciation, and encouragement. You might not agree with me, but I believe that such a word to a deserving citizen is worth its weight in gold.

During one of the commencement exercises at our city school the citizens in this town bade farewell to their former superintendent and at the same time welcomed a new one. The former was discarded like an old shoe after having served ably and well. He must have suffered many heartaches, and successfully conquered as many discouraging obstacles, to have completed, so well, his monumental work. His highest ideal and ambition, before any of us had ever dreamed about such an accomplishment, was to obtain, for the benefit of this town and community, a new up-to-date high school building—well equipped and adequate to serve the needs of the children of our town. We now have that building and it is all that he would have it be—he laid its foundation. We now use it and we are proud of it, but have we forgotten the man who certainly did his part to make such an accomplishment possible. An investigation, among those few who really knew him, will prove that at the close of his last school year as our superintendent, at the commencement exercise I have heretofore mentioned which, incidentally, were conducted in the new high school building, he would have left our midst unhonored in the least for his loyal and faithful friendship and service to this community if it had not been for the graduating class of that year, two or three individuals, and the new superintendent. The individuals suggested that the senior class give a play and raise sufficient funds to present his portrait to the Roxboro high school. One of the seniors delivered the following presentation speech ably written by the new superintendent:

"Some one has wisely said, 'all

history is the shadow of personality.' History is replete with the stories of honors paid and memorials established to the memory of men who have given their lives in their efforts to achieve fame or render human service. Marble shafts and bronze statues stand in great numbers as silent though eloquent reminders of the deeds of the dead. The marble tomb of the 'Unknown Soldiers' draws the attention of thousands to an unidentified man who may have walked scarcely noticed and totally unhonored among his fellow men. A word of commendation, an expression of praise, a touch of human sympathy, might have changed the course of many a life whose plaudits have been sung to ears that have ceased to hear. The fragrance and beauty of a flower clasped in a lifeless hand might have brought the hope and inspiration to a struggling, discouraged soul a few hours before.

"Tonight we are happy in the realization that we have not waited until too late to give evidence of our esteem, our appreciation, our love for a man who, through sixteen years of faithful and efficient service for us, has proved himself a blessing to the boys and girls of this town and community. Tonight we say again in his hearing that we honor him for what he is, that we praise him for his work well done, that we cherish the warmth and sincerity of his friendship.

"As a token and emblem of our love and esteem, that his memory may not die and that his pleasant countenance may constantly be seen within these walls, I hereby present in behalf of the graduating class of — to the Roxboro high school and to its Board of Trustees this portrait of our esteemed former superintendent, —"

Such a well written, accurate and splendid tribute was well deserved, but supported by only a few, it should have had the hearty endorsement of over 5000 voices. How often and easily we discard, disregard and forget our closest and most valuable friends, and however hard they may try to please us does not prolong our forgetfulness. Why is it that most of us are so diligent and selfishly alert to accept benefits made possible by the labor of our fellow workers and at the same time so quick to forget the donor and so slow to recognize his merit? The only gift we have is criticism; the only words we have are cutting; the only respect we have apparently for those who serve us best is disrespect—Socrates drank the hemlock and Christ was crucified.

The new superintendent, whom I

have mentioned, has now traveled the bitter path of his predecessor. Has his service, to this community, deserved the same recognition and tribute he so willingly, sincerely and appropriately gave to one of his fellowmen? Have his services and work merited at least one kind word? If you do not know, it might be worth your while to investigate and find out why he is leaving. If you are vitally interested, as you should be, in the welfare, progress, and success of your town and County, censor carefully, accurately, and soberly every citizen that moves in and every citizen that moves out. Human beings are very cheap these days—it's the dollar that's so valuable. Some day, maybe, we will learn that it is human beings who build communities and not dollars.

In the Courts of justice, there is a well established rule that it is better to acquit ten guilty persons than to convict one innocent man. Can it be said that one good citizen is worth ten bad ones? I know of one citizen who, years ago, escaped from our boundaries, was branded a criminal, and at present is nationally and internationally known and respected. I also have known of some who have come within our folds, highly recommended, but in reality didn't prove out so well. I remember one in particular who came to our fair little city with promise of making it a metropolis in no time. Some of us believed in him; cooperated with and supported him; praised him to the skies and draped ourselves about him as if he were a long lost friend. To our great disappointment he like some of the rest didn't prove out so well. Sometimes, when it becomes necessary to seek out some one to perform work, of a public nature, in our home community, it is better to call on one whom we know and whose ability, time and experience have proved in preference to placing so much confidence in one we do not know so well. This rule, however, is not the best in every case.

In the presentation speech it was well quoted that "All history is the shadow of personality." Equally well can it be said that every community, city, or state is also the shadow of personality. Our own town and County are the shadow of personality. If our town is prosperous, and its history is replete with stories of progress, there is some person or persons who made it so. If, however, our community is retrogressing, the same rule applies—there is some person or persons who are making it so. Therefore, every citizen in a town is continually faced with the vitally important question: Is our town and

is our County progressing and becoming a more desirable place in which to live, or is it afflicted with the antithesis?

Speaking of personalities in a community, since the dawn of civilization, or rather the beginning of organized efforts of man when the spirit of individualism merged into a more fraternal spirit of joint enterprise, people, unfortunately, have divided themselves into classes. "The two orders into which Romulus originally divided the Roman people (note that even in those early days one man made the division, were composed of patrons and clients. Each of the early leading families or gentes had gathered about itself numerous servants and dependents, thus making a community of lords and vassals. The patrons, or lords, were members of the three tribes, and hence of the body-politic, while their clients had nothing whatever to do with the state except through their private relation to their lords as vassals. In the course of time these patrons, as patricii, came to be called patricians, as distinguished from the patres or senators. They alone could make the laws and choose the king. They were the POPULUS ROMANUS; and when the Roman people are spoken of, it is the patricians alone who are designated. Then there came into existence a third class, composed at first probably of unclassified remnants of the earliest people, swelling into great numbers chiefly through the conquest of other cities. They were freed men but not citizens. They were unlike the clients in that they were subject to no lord or patron, and like them in that they had no connection with the state. These were the plebians, the common people."

Today even though our motives and customs have changed we continue to maintain strong caste barriers. In a considerable number of our cities, towns, and counties, the citizens are divided into groups, and in many respects they resemble the ancient Roman division. Let us consider briefly the divisions of one of our modern towns. There is one group which we call the wealthy class. The number of this group has decreased somewhat, however, since the last depression, but even before the depression this group composed the smallest number of all the groups. Being the wealthy class, as a natural consequence, makes them the most influential class of persons in the community. Do good and true citizens want that kind of purchased influence? They

are the people who have the biggest homes, the biggest and best automobiles; do less constructive work and make more noise than all the rest. All they seek to do is to make profits and make sure that they get all the praise and honor for every step of progress the community makes; and to use their wealth and false influence to see that every really important institution and official place in the village comes under their exclusive jurisdiction. They are the POPULUS ROMANUS, patricians, patrons, or lords—the body-politic. "They make all the laws" and when the community or town, in which they live, is spoken of, "it is the patricians alone who are designated." They slightly make one think of Stalin's Russia, Hitler's Germany, and Mussolini's Italy.

There is a second group usually found in most communities and easily recognized by their parasitic characteristics. They flit wildly from pillar to post—first on one side of a controversy and then on the other. They are the ones "you can't put your finger on." The number of this group is somewhat larger than the wealthy group. It has to be larger because they are the servants of wealth. They are the vassals, the clients, and have nothing whatever to do with the State, except through their master's instructions, and likewise have no interest for the community and its general welfare except such meritorious things as might by chance fall across their path on their journey to raise themselves higher in the estimation of their masters and

in "their private relation to their lords as vassals." You will usually find this group regularly employed in the private business of the masters and also serve their lords as errand boys and henchmen in questions and negotiations of a public nature; but always their efforts, however spent, or for a selfish and private gain for themselves and their masters. Their biggest day is election day, for it is at this time that they exhibit most notoriously the object of their affection, and prove to their superiors that they are and have been loyal servants. It's funny about this group and pathetic too—they are not allowed to speak or think for themselves, their daily job is to speak the master's voice and think the master's thoughts—that is, so far as the master will let them know about what he is thinking. These slaves of money and master are all eyes and ears and go about doing whatever selfish work their servitude might call them to, stealthily snooping, and whenever they see or hear of one or more of the third group (when such things happen it is usually promulgated in the third group,) whom I shall later describe, doing some constructive work, un-

(Continued on Back Page)

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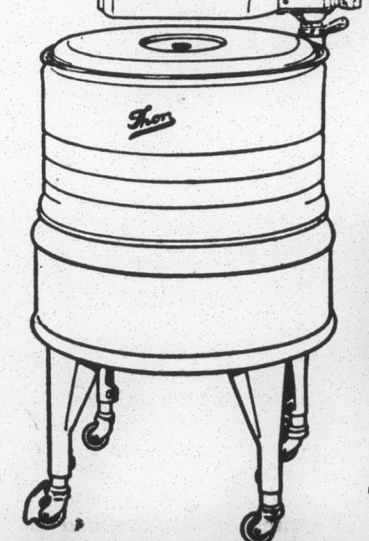
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