

Owen turned down chance to be President

John Owen, a now-forgotten Governor of North Carolina, was one of the very few men in American history to turn down the chance to become President of the United States.

He was born in August, 1787, in Bladen County.

Owen acted as chairman of the Whig Party's nominating convention in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in 1839. After the party had picked William Henry Harrison as its candidate for President, the Vice Presidential nomination was offered to Owen. He refused it, and the spot went to John Tyler of Virginia. (Remember the slogan, "Tippecanoe and Tyler, too"?)

The Whigs won the election of 1840, of course, but after only a month in office Harrison died and Tyler became President.

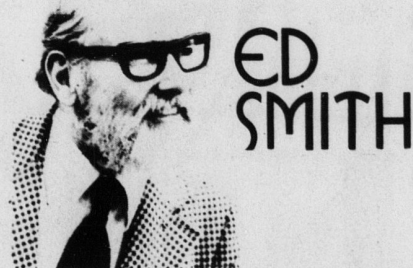
John Owen's luck, meanwhile, had gone from bad to worse. He had been a very creditable Governor of this state (1828-30) as well as legislator and judge. Shortly after refusing the opportunity to become Vice President, however, he suffered a humiliating political defeat, losing a "comeback" local election for state senator in Bladen County. He challenged his opponent to a duel, but the winner laughed it off and the duel never took place. Owen died, frustrated and disappointed, only a year later.

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Few Carolinians of our time had ever heard of Nat Turner until William Styron's popular novel, "The Confessions of Nat Turner," appeared a few years ago. In 1831, however, Turner's name was familiar in North Carolina.

Nat Turner had a decided effect upon the history of this state, although it is quite probable that he never set foot in it.

An obscure Negro slave and part-time preacher, Turner set out upon a slave uprising with six followers on the night of August 21, 1831, in Southampton County, Virginia. Before they were captured and hanged, Turner's group



ED SMITH

murdered between 55 and 60 people.

Word of the uprising spread quickly, and several similar plots were uncovered in eastern North Carolina. The result was widespread unrest among both blacks and whites. Six Negroes were hanged in Wilmington that Fall.

Historians regard the Turner uprising as a turning point in the attitude of most whites toward slavery in this state — and the conditions under which it was practiced here. Until then there had been a great deal of anti-slavery sentiment in North Carolina. The wanton slaughter of whites by Turner's group caused a hardening of attitudes. The legislature quickly passed a number of severely restrictive laws governing the "institution" of slavery. Among other things, for example, it became illegal to teach blacks — free or slave — to read or write, since Turner's supposed "inspiration" for his rebellion had come from reading.

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Former Tar Heel Governor Cameron Morrison died on August 20, 1968, while on a visit to Quebec, Canada.

Morrison was a native of Richmond County, but later moved to Mecklenburg. He served as chief executive of the state from 1921-25. In 1930 he was appointed to fill the unexpired term of U. S. Senator Lee S. Overman, who had died in office. In 1948 Morrison was elected to Congress.

Morrison came to prominence in the 1890's as a leader of the Red Shirts, an organization dedicated to militant white supremacy. His political career lasted over a half-century. As Governor his

chief accomplishment was in paving the state's primary roads. A total of 5,500 miles was paved, linking all of the state's county seats and principal cities.

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Hinton James, the first alumnus of UNC, died August 22, 1847. He was a civil engineer and former state legislator. James became famous for walking from Wilmington to Chapel Hill in 1795 to become the first student to enter the University.

No one asked Elvis who?

No one had to ask Elvis who? I never attended one of his concerts, but I listened to his records, saw many of his films and was one of millions who saw his TV special via satellite from Hawaii.

But right from the beginning Elvis always gave me the impression all of the screaming and adulation broke him up. When he was young, slender and fast he threw himself into each performance and the fans went wild. Later, when he was older, heavier he didn't move so much. He teased.

Elvis obviously enjoyed himself on stage in front of the screaming thousands. He was in total control. He would hit a rest stop in a song, stand perfectly still and knew hysteria would break out in anticipation of what move he might make to punctuate the lyrics.

He recorded his share of nonsense songs such as "Houng Dog" and "Blue Suede Shoes," but he also did more than his share of mood pieces, heartfelt pieces, which leads me to believe he was very serious about his music.

His lifelong religious training was always evident in the more serious renderings where he used a gospel-style backup group. And he sang religious songs with the same enthusiasm as his rock numbers.

I think his voice improved with age and as a singer he was much more effective when singing the more tender lyrics. "I Can't Help Falling In Love With You" is still one of my favorites. That one came out when I was doing duty as a nighttime deejay down in Belmont and for a long time I managed to spin that one at least twice before "the old clock on the wall said it was time to go."



TOM MCINTYRE

As a film actor Elvis began incredibly bad, but enthusiastic as evidenced by his performances in "Love Me Tender" and "Jailhouse Rock."

It was to Col. Tom Parker's credit that he guided Elvis' film career into the more lavish, fast-paced and humorous type stories where the music could be included more naturally. It was a move to get Elvis back into the thing he did best — entertain.

It strikes me as amazing that Elvis was able to resist what so many others with huge followings have not been able to and that's become politically and socially topical. Personally, I appreciated this because, for me, Elvis helped me retain some minute chunk of the lifestyle lived when I was teenager. Back when entertainers entertained and left the politics to politicians.

Elvis is gone, so just enjoy the memories and the music and don't you believe it when the sensational tabloids and magazines begin reporting that Elvis is still alive and living in South America.



Poet's Corner

AN EMPTY HOUSE

His chair is in place at the table
God has taken him away
Now he's up in Heaven
This leaves us so lonely every day.

He was such a good boy
Everyone seemed to love him
When we think how much we miss him
Our eyes with tears get dim.

He was really very handsome
With pretty curly hair
He was a good ball player
Everything Tommy done was fair.

Last Wed. 10th, he passed away
It was so sudden and quick
No one thought of him dying
For he was never sick.

No one knows what its like
Until we lose a child of our own
Everything reminds you of him
His things are still at home.

Dedicated to
Bill and Claudia Grissom
By MYRTLE M. GOFORTH



Spell out 'cooperation'

Kings Mountain has been criticized severely for failing to have a representative at a county-wide officials meeting in Shelby last week to discuss the county-wide water system proposal.

The fact is the city's chief spokesman, Mayor John H. Moss, was vacationing in Chicago last week and couldn't very well attend this meeting sponsored by the Shelby Chamber of Commerce.

However, the mayor did give a verbal pledge to Commissioner Josh Hinnant of Kings Mountain that the city could be counted on for cooperation in the matter.

Just what that cooperation would amount to, no one knows at this point, so the mayor's statement is a pretty broad one under the circumstances.

One of the county commissioners said the first step toward a county-wide water system is an agreement of mutual cooperation between the City of Shelby and the City of Kings Mountain. We assume that means pledging use of the two city's water systems in cases of emergency.

The same county commissioner also said that prior to his going on the board, the general story was that Kings Mountain "stole" the idea for the Buffalo Creek source as the beginnings of a reservoir that had been hatched by the county commissioners. This may have something to do with the underlying feelings of hostility that seem to exist between Shelby and Kings Mountain. History tells us these feelings go back much further than that.

To continue to harbor these feelings in this day and time is sheer nonsense. But to take the fact our mayor took much deserved time off for a vacation at the same time a county-wide meeting is called as this city's unspoken statement that there will be no cooperation with the remainder of the county is also sheer nonsense.

Now is the time for the powers that be to get together and spell out some specifics as to what "cooperation" between Shelby and Kings Mountain are to be. The issue of a county-wide water system has been kicked around for some time and the residents living in the outlying areas of the county certainly deserve a proper and adequate water supply. But we agree with the county commissioner who made the "cooperation" comment that the citizens of Kings Mountain should not be expected to pay through the nose to provide a system and the water.

We should note that Kings Mountain at present is not only on the record for KM, but for customers in certain sections of Bessemer City and into Grover for water.

Dear Editor,

It is ironic that two recent letters appearing in your newspaper blasting Insurance Commissioner John Ingram came from Michael L. Herman and Lamar Gunter, full-time paid employees of the insurance industry. Herman and Gunter are ministers of propaganda who try to hide behind the cloak of an impartial news service. The North Carolina Insurance News Service is another of the expensive lobbying tools of the powerful insurance industry, which can spread the insurance viewpoint at a moment's notice.

Herman and Gunter know full well that under the new insurance law that insurance companies, beginning September 1, 1977 can file and begin immediately to use higher rates for so-called "non-essential" insurance. If the Commissioner disapproves rate increases the companies will still charge the higher rates until the Court rules.

Keep sports in its proper place

Dear Editor,

I am writing this letter, not as a man who is bitter at the world, but as one who loves my Lord, my city, my neighbors, my church and my many friends. Some people call me old which is true with my age, but I'm still young at heart and still have a feeling and a concern for young people.

I played baseball for several years and still enjoy sports.

Up to a certain point or degree, I feel there is a place for sports in the life and the programs of our churches, providing we keep the sport in its proper place. This is the main reason for this letter.

In the first place I am much against sports being played on the Lord's Day and especially when they are being sponsored and played by our churches. The fact that last Sunday afternoon, Aug. 14, a church league softball tournament was being played here in Kings Mountain greatly upset me. If my understanding is correct that the "top man" said the churches had to play on Sunday or get out, then I think it is time we get a new "top man" or else get out.

What happened last Sunday has been done, but it is my hopes and my prayers that in thinking of the future, at least our churches and our preachers will have enough respect and reverence for the Lord's Day that there will not be any

And under the new law, the rating standards are greatly weakened and it may be impossible to overturn a rate hike once it is in effect.

The 60-day period which Mr. Herman referred to in his letter only applies to the so-called "essential" lines of insurance — private passenger auto, worker's compensation and homeowners. But again if the elected Insurance Commissioner disapproves rate increases, the higher rates will still go into effect.

The law has been drastically changed because rates can now go into effect whether the Commissioner approves or disapproves them. In the past, rates could not go into effect without the Commissioner's approval.

Mr. Gunter referred in his letter to the fact Commissioner Ingram "blocked" a rate reduction for extended coverage rates.

This so-called rate reduction for extended coverage was "blocked" by

the Commissioner because the filing added deductibles to the policies which had never been attached to such policies before. In other words, under a deductible the insurance companies would not pay the first \$50.00 or \$100.00 of damage. Therefore, this filing was not a true rate reduction. The homeowner would be paying less for less coverage.

When the insurance industry filed for a decrease without the deductible, the Commissioner approved the filing. The companies at that time took the matter to Court.

Mr. Herman in his letter admits that under the new law there will be higher rates for citizens who live in cities and for citizens who are placed in the Reinsurance Facility. These are blatant forms of discrimination. Under this new system, safe drivers will pay more (and subsidize bad drivers) simply because they happen to live in a city or simply because insurance companies choose to place them in the Facility for some discriminatory reason. (Of the 480,000 people in the Reinsurance Facility only 60,000 cost the insurance companies money. 520,000 citizens did not cost the insurance companies anything. Mr. Herman's insurance special interest wants to line its pockets with unfair extra charges from these safe drivers who cost the insurance industry nothing.) You can see that this unfairness in the new law damages the safe driver law which abolished age and sex discrimination.

John Ingram has always fought for the safe driver — the bad driver should be penalized while the safe driver should be rewarded with a lower rate. A safe driver in a city should not be charged more than a bad driver who lives in a rural area.

The letters of Herman and Gunter illustrate the most tragic aspect of the new insurance law — that is, the General Assembly bought the insurance industry's propaganda rather than listening to the will of the people of North Carolina.

It is refreshing to know that all of Cleveland County's Senators — Ollie Harris, Marshall Rauch and Helen Marvin — and two of our three Representatives — Bob Falls and Edith Lutz — voted against this bad legislation and courageously stood firm for the people of North Carolina against the special interests!

B. E. "BUCK" LATTIMORE
Assistant Commissioner of Insurance

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