

THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

And Evening Chronicle

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W. G. Dowd, 1865-1927

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THURSDAY, JULY 16, 1942

Civic Orphan

Charlotte's Recreational Program Needs a Lift

Charlotte seems unlikely to heed the well-chosen words of Arthur Jones, but the voice of the National Recreation Association has given the city, just for the asking, its first sensible plan for the future. Recreational facilities here are and have been a generation behind the times. That fact needed expression by an expert in the field.

Poor guidance in the past, Jones says, has brought local conditions to their present sorry state, and left a worthy commission in an almost helpless position. Never has the city spent enough money in the recreational field, but has allowed that department to lag along behind the rest of the Government like a forgotten orphan.

While taking state and sectional leadership in many a field, our city has underfunded this all-important civic child, and worse than that, permitted it to proceed year after year with long-range direction. In Charlotte, the Parks and Recreation Commission has too long lived from hand to mouth.

Too many operating seasons have brought only problems of how many parks could be kept in shape, how many recreational fields could be fought into condition, just for the summer. There was never enough money to live in the years to come, when the city's growth was certain to increase its demands. Mr. Jones had his facts straight.

Today, with a commission fully aware of its lack, the city will still in attendance. It is not the city's sufficient to care for a city about half the size of Charlotte; there are pitifully few provisions for Negroes; there are too few trained men; there is still a lack of planning for tomorrow.

The recreational life of Charlotte's life is of no minor importance, but it has never been treated as anything else. Further lack of official action by a Government in sound financial condition would seem to indicate a sort of criminal neglect.

Evil Encore

Old Scottsboro Case Still Burns, In Weekly Fought

Now, after five years, the Scottsboro Case has bobbed up again in the apprehension of one Willie Robertson, who has been free in New York since 1937. Again, he was convicted of annoying a woman, this time on a subway. For his crime, or criminal attempt, he drew ninety days in jail. It wasn't enough.

The original Scottsboro decision, with its death sentences dragged out and postponed while the nation fumed, drew no approval from us. But at that, it seemed closer to the mark than this ninety-day slap on the wrist for the Negro, Robertson. The man obviously is possessed by a warped, burning carnal urge, and three months behind the bars will change him not a whit.

These cases must always be approached with care, but there should be no lack of firm conviction by the court in any action of the country. The difference between the Alabama and New York sentences may have been largely geographical, but was also widened by the comparative mildness of Robertson's latest escapade. The New York magistrate, indeed, looked upon him as a far sadder man than he actually is, in passing the sentence.

A Brooklyn minister, who had cared for the prisoner since he was freed in '37, interceded in his behalf. The court stood firm, until it passed sentence. Selected court-room procedure.

"I taught him Christ and I had him baptized," the minister said.

"This complaint is one of the worst I have ever read," complained the Court.

"This boy was born and raised in my church and I know him as a law-abiding citizen."

"The case has been tried," said the Court. In passing sentence, he remarked:

"The women of this city must be able to feel safe on the streets and highways at all times. We of the courts must help the city to feel all women safe. Today, when women are employed by the Army and the Navy, and in many defense industries, they are out on the streets at night in connection with their duties. We must see to it that they are not subject to any annoyance."

In that case is plain. It should, at least, far exceed any ninety-day punishment.

Timed for explosion at almost the same time was the lynching of a 25-year-old Negro in Texas, suspected of attacking a white woman. The cases, of course, were cousins, but Judge Lynch, as usual, had only suspicion, no proof. It is still a deadly dangerous thing to deliver the law into the hands of the untrustworthy.

To that incident in Traskau, even the ninety-day verdict in New York is preferable.

Old, Old Story

Ton Much From Midway, Too Little Else

No one could have missed, we assume, the newest stories on the battle of Midway, that cheering American victory which blazed over five weeks ago. They came off the wires, as long as your arm, as a depressing exhibit to us. It was one too many in the endless line of resumes. If its release, recounting Jap losses and revealing them upward by a ship or so, was intended as encouragement, it missed the mark.

Americans at home will have no over-reaction to reading of victory for our armed services, but they will wonder about this post-mortem. Midway had been exploited many times before, from every possible angle. Heroes were a dime a dozen; their stories were told and retold; they were brought home for exhibition.

We are forced to agree with the magazine, which branded the Navy's handling of Midway and Coral Sea news as a Hollywood war. A grateful public ate up those stories, but it derived no good from them. Midway, after all, was a great victory of defense. It stopped a grave threat, but won no war. The news of it was a welcome relief, but it was a stranger that several weeks had been won, in three days of fighting.

A Navy office refusing to give more than a few whispers of the true situation in the Aleutians (which seems unfavorable to the U. S.) can find time in issue as important a month-late total of destruction given and destruction taken at Midway. There is something to be said for withholding too-quick information lest it benefit the enemy—but if the Japs were unable to learn what they wanted to learn from the great maze of personal stories from Midway, they never learn.

Instead of hearing old news of a victory presented as the first official count, we would prefer to be told the truth of other theaters of action, where things are not quite so glorious.

Welcome Charge

War on Venereal Disease By Army and FBI Cheering

The Carolinas, and the nation, for that matter, may take heart from the new drive against venereal diseases by the combined forces of the FBI, the Army and local authorities. In ordinary times, local control in such an area is ineffectual, and the menace continued to spread. The two real weapons, the May Act and the White Slave Act, can win real victories for us at home if they are enforced.

Here, and in other towns through the two states, the FBI is sponsoring conferences of all three authorities on the coming battle. The campaign begins, of course, in order that areas around the big Army camps might be thoroughly policed and cleaned up. But, up to now, power, local control in such an area is ineffectual, and the menace continued to spread. The two real weapons, the May Act and the White Slave Act, can win real victories for us at home if they are enforced.

We believe that, in a great many communities, these powerful agencies will have to take over eventually. Free from any encumbrances, free from political interference, and interested only in getting the job done, FBI and Army could do a vastly superior work. They might save time and wasted effort by taking over now, themselves.

Control of these old enemies to public health may mean to us, as a by-product of war. If we win the fight in any section of the country, and can hold the ground won in post-war years, we will have met with a great success. On the books of the nation, this is an old entry. It is high time it was marked paid.

Sweeping a double-header in the crucial Pacific series exceeds our fondest hopes. The most we had come to expect was one consecutive victory.



Platform Of The People

History Upheld Gardner

Editors, The News:

I have just received from friends a clipping of your recent editorial entitled "Who of 1932?" I have read this editorial with real interest and deep appreciation.

When the storm was breaking in 1932, your editorial served to remind me of the fact that I was compelled by a sense of duty to perform one of the most painful and embarrassing acts of my public life. I saw our revenue declining from what was once a solid stream into a mere trickle.

As Director of the Budget, I cut appropriations made by the Legislature to our institutions and departments and agencies of the State in the person of a 1-2 million dollars. This task was made more difficult by reason of the fact that I am at heart a progressive and believe in liberal policies. I was adequate compensation for public service. I knew many of the cuts would hurt, but if I had not had the courage to face the facts, I am afraid that the credit of North Carolina would have collapsed.

In fact, I know our banks would not have repaid my paper if we had not shown a disposition in North Carolina to do everything within our power to cut the cost of Government.

I remember that in January, 1932, I went to New York to secure a \$1 million dollar note and was told by the manager of the United States Marine Corps, and the situation so acute, they did not feel warranted in continuing the loan. It was about to be called, and if it had been a woman, she would have been flogged and North Carolina would have been the first state to declare a moratorium on debt.

I was even urged by a group of distinguished bankers in North Carolina in a conference in the Governor's Mansion in January, 1932, to take steps as Governor to prevent the withdrawal of the deposits in North Carolina banks. I was utterly amazed the suggestion and refused to be stampeded.

Once Upon A Time

There Was A Lady Marine

THIRTEEN-PACKED experiences encountered aboard an American warship by a young woman disguised as a man highlight the interesting story of her adventures years ago by Miss Lucy Brewster as a member of the United States Marine Corps.

Miss Brewster, who is now a well-known actress, related her experiences several years later, in a book entitled "The Lady Marine." She claimed she participated in four sea engagements.

According to her story, Miss Brewster's military adventures began two years after she had left the home of her parents for Boston, 40 miles away, to start work as a domestic. At twenty, she found herself in the line of duty, and that fact, together with a strong desire to enlist in the military, led her to join the Marines.

"From my awkward appearance in attempting to assume the character of a man, I was not without fear that I should be exposed," Miss Brewster said later. "But my appearance helped until I was passing through Court Street, when I ventured to speak to a person of my own sex. As the woman answered my question with a ready smile, I was strengthened in my confidence that I could pass as a man."

The daring young lady gained more confidence after she strolled into a restaurant and ordered a meal in a gruff, soldier-like manner. Shortly thereafter, she was assigned to the duty of a cook's helper, and she remained in the military until she was discharged.

Through physical examinations were not included in the enlistment routine of that day and Miss Brewster had little difficulty joining the Marine Corps under the name of George Baker. She was assigned to the 66-gun frigate Constitution, commanded by Captain James Hull, and loaded the warship the next day.

Describing her early experiences aboard the Constitution, Miss Brewster said:

"New scenes opened to my view. Pains were taken by the Marine Corps officers to instruct me in the manual of exercise. My good fortune in having Lieutenant William B. Bunch, a humorist and experienced officer, for my commanding officer, was much in my favor."

After I had followed this advice the State would have been wrecked.

You recall that in 1920 our State bonded debt was \$11 million dollars. In 1930 it was more than \$70 million. In 1938 the total debt of local governments was \$60 million dollars and in 1939 it was \$75 million. In other words, in the period to which you refer in your editorial, the total bonded debt of the State and the sub-divisions was \$27 million dollars. The local units of government, as you well know, counties, cities, towns, hamlets and villages, had gone on a rampage and incurred debt without regard to ability to pay, and in many instances controls were made in back rooms without any knowledge on the part of the public.

I made up my mind that this had to stop or the real results of our credit would be ruined. I never saw such a situation as towns and city authorities exhibited when they were compelled to come to Raleigh to submit their anticipated bond issues in the scrutiny of the Local Government Commission. Some of them went so far as to call me a Mussolini.

I did not intend to go into this review of the past, but I could not help but feel how much I appreciate your reviewing the past and to tell you of my profound appreciation for your kind references to my services in this period. I can tell you that I made up my mind to meet the situation and to let the consequences take care of themselves. I knew I was doing an unpopular thing. I knew I had some personal enemies, my acts were blasting them. I preferred to play for the verdict of history and I am glad that I have been able to live to rejoice in your kind editorial. There is much competition in your kindnes.

Again thanking you and with every kind wish, I am, Sir, very respectfully,
O. MAX GARDNER.
Washington 11 C.

WASHINGTON.

THE ability of President Roosevelt himself to circumvent bureaucratic red tape and political wire pulling in connection with his war program, called into question by the story of how Mrs. Pearl Harbor, briefly stated, the chronology of events respecting it is as follows:

Oct. 7, 1941—Rear Admiral Clegg, after inspecting the property, asked and received from Mr. Clark an offer to sell it complete for \$2,000,000.

Nov. 8—Rear Admiral Row T. McIntyre, who combines the functions of Surgeon General of the Navy and Presidential physician, notified Mr. Clark that President Roosevelt had directed him to purchase the property and had set aside \$2,000,000 from his war emergency fund to pay for it.

Nov. 11—Admiral McIntyre and Mr. Clark conferred in the White House. The property was appraised at length and the \$2,000,000 purchase price released.

Dec. 3—A Navy Board, appointed by Rear Admiral Den Morell, chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, appraised the property at approximately \$2,350,000.

Dec. 9—(The day after Pearl Harbor)—President Roosevelt took over the property by Executive order. This order stated that the purchase would be financed from the President's emergency fund and added the phrase that "final price of acquisition will be subject to negotiation of condemnation at fair market value."

Dec. 19—The Navy formally announced that the Norouzan Hotel had been purchased for \$2,000,000.

Jan. 2—Rear Admiral W. H. Woodson, Judge Advocate General, directed preparation of certificate of title and advised with Admiral Morell that transfer should be as of Dec. 9.

Jan. 15—In support of a request for appropriation to pay the President from using his emergency fund Admiral McIntyre testified that "the Navy has purchased the Clark Hotel property."

"These properties are really worth three and a half to five million dollars and our purchase price was \$2,000,000," he said.

Beautiful Confusion

Under questioning Admiral McIntyre told the Congressmen how he tried to get Mrs. Clark down to \$1,800,000.

"I wanted to get below the \$2,000,000 mark just on general principle," he said, "but there was not time. Moreover this property I know had over \$3,000,000 spent on it and everyone who has inspected it—in fact, I had at least five different groups of civilians look it over before we even asked our people to look at it—thinks we made a good buy."

"Of course, we had to find some way to finance this thing and after sounding out the budget and they all thought it was a pretty good deal, I took a chance on the President and said, 'What would happen if the highest asked you to use a part of your fund to pay for this thing?' I didn't get a very good answer at the start but when he said, 'I'll take it over before we even asked our people to look at it—thinks we made a good buy.'"

On the face of this record Mr. Clark certainly was justified in assuming that the \$2,000,000 was as good as in his pocket, but such was not the case. On the contrary, after five and a half months of additional stalling, during which time his property had been completely transferred, he received notice last week that the Department of Justice had instituted a condemnation suit in the Federal Court at Los Angeles to determine what will be paid for it. Now he is faced with a long and costly legal war, with no assurance as in when or how much he will be paid.

Why this turn of events? Well, from the first day when it became known that the Government was considering purchase of his property, Mr. Clark has been assailed by a least horde of would-be brokers, all claiming political influence and threatening that he never would be paid unless he divided up. One of three threats that "I guess by this time you've found out you can't deal directly with the Government."

The moral question involved, of course, is whether the Government should make a bona fide bargain, take over a man's property, and then back out under protection of the Constitutional provision that the Government cannot be sued. It is an estimated point of law also that in a condemnation proceeding the measure of value is "the amount that in all probability would have been arrived at by fair negotiations between an owner willing to sell and a purchaser willing to buy." Such a negotiation in the present case reached the figure of \$2,000,000.

One, Two, Grin

Anything But That

Stewart Anderson

In Reports of Laughter

A REPORTER was interviewing President Calvin Coolidge. "Do you wish to say anything about Prohibition?" was the first question.

"No."

"About the farm bloc?"

"No."

"About the World War?"

"No."

The reporter turned to go.

"By the way," said Coolidge, "don't quote me."

Just Take a Look!

From Pathfinder

THE dull sergeant was putting a squad of draftees through their first parade. Finally, he appeared at the front of the line, he roared:

"Whatamatter! Don't you know how to line up?" All fell out and look at the line they made!"

Side Glances



"I'm bringing you my laundry as my contribution for aid to China—but see that you don't overcharge me!"

TODAY'S MILE THOUGHT

If you have a "difficultly" in overcoming, do not delay. Do it now. Do not postpone a disagreeable task. Let it go up at once. A thousand times over, it is better to overcome it—Numbers 13-30.

Visitin' Round

Redundant
Owlery Hill Inn,
London (Dinner)
Mrs. T. E. Smith is enjoying fruit
cakes and waffles. She is quite
able to overcome it—Numbers
13-30.