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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 1956

People's Platform Child Reading Methods: Phonics As Bad As ABCs

Watlington, Wachovia & Civic Progress

Civic leadership, humanitarianism and community affairs generally, few men have worked with greater zeal or strength to build a better Charlotte than John Francis Watlington Jr. Naturally, the Queen City will miss him. But he leaves to assume his new duties as president of Wachovia Bank & Trust Co. with all the good wishes the community can bestow upon a favorite son.

As Robert M. Hanes' successor, he will be following in the footsteps of a truly outstanding Tar Heel. We are confident that he will serve as head of the largest banking institution in the South as Mr. Hanes has served—with distinction.

Our only regret is that Mr. Watlington's new post will take him away from the Queen City, the scene of a long and outstanding record of public service.

There is an old saying that a banker must be born with a tight fist and a cold heart. We can offer no reliable opinion about the tightness of Mr. Watlington's fist but we know that he possesses a heart that is anything but cold. Certainly no Charlottean has been more warm-hearted in devotion to community responsibility.

Mr. Watlington has been active in any number of civic projects. He was one of the mainstays of the United Community Chest and was one of those far-sighted citizens who was responsible for the successful organization of the United Appeal. He has been a leading fundraiser for Mercy Hospital, served on the Salvation Army board, was president of the Chamber of Commerce, served as a member of the executive committee and as a director of United Community Services, was chairman of a highly successful Community Chest campaign, been active in the Kiwanis Club and in Myers Park Presbyterian Church. In 1951 he was Charlotte News Man of the Year.

He participated spiritedly in these many activities while building a firm reputation as a top-notch banker. It was perfect logic for Mr. Watlington to choose banking as a career for he grew up in an atmosphere of banking. His father was a distinguished business and financial leader of northwestern North Carolina and served for many years as president of the Bank of Reidsville. The younger Watlington entered the banking business after completing college — by learning the fundamentals in a clerical job at Wachovia in Winston-Salem. He rose to assistant treasurer there.

In 1939, when Wachovia merged with the Charlotte National Bank and established a Wachovia office in Charlotte, Mr. Watlington came here as assistant vice president. He advanced to membership on the Charlotte board of Wachovia in 1940, a vice presidency in 1942 and was named senior vice president four years later. Under his leadership, the Charlotte office compiled a remarkable record of expansion.

We are sure that the list of Mr. Watlington's achievements will continue to grow in size and significance. He leaves his old post, that of executive head of the Charlotte office, in the able hands of Joseph H. Robinson, another outstanding citizen who has given generously of his time and talent to a variety of civic projects. Wachovia has in Archie K. Davis, now chairman of the board, still another banker who has made public service an important part of his life.

For Mr. Watlington and Wachovia, the future looks bright. Charlotte, although losing a community leader, can comfort itself with the knowledge that Mr. Watlington has already helped to make the Queen City's future a lot brighter by contributing so much to our well-being in the past.

The Ministry: An Act Of Brotherhood

THE creation of an interracial ministerial association in Charlotte and Mecklenburg has not been achieved without some rumblings of discontent. These were inevitable, for the merger of the white and Negro associations was undertaken in a time of social upheaval when any act of brotherhood can be made suspect in the eyes of the overly fearful.

But the ministry has a responsibility that overrides the daily alarms and frights. It is charged with disseminating a doctrine of peace, understanding and love. This duty lies equally on Negro and white. And there is every reason to believe that the ministry will be strengthened by cooperation and consultation between the two groups. Ministers deal with an idea—the greater the idea—the idea that flourish most eventually bring into communion the minds that accept and try to further them.

There is, particularly in this period, a great need for new bonds of friendship and understanding between the races. Perhaps the largest danger growing out of problem posed for the South by the Supreme Court decision is that the ties of friendship and understanding that have permitted the races to live together in peace may be severed by sharp knives of suspicion and antagonism.

No force can be more effective in strengthening these indispensable bonds than the ministry. It should be able to do a better job in concert, than it could in separation. The merger should increase understanding among those who must preach understanding.

Mec Dec: No Time For Optimism

HEARTENING indeed were the things said this week about the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. Mr. Edward B. Meier, who presented a copy of it, struck troubling notes on his church-bell voice, saying to Mayor Van Every: "The eloquence of the ancients would be required to thank you adequately. If I have a 10-year-old son nothing else — this week reveals."

Speaking of it to the Mecklenburg Historical Society, Mrs. Ernest Ives, Adlai Stevenson's sister, said: "Why I remember when as children we sat at Grandfather Stevenson's feet as he told us about the Mecklenburg Declaration."

These words stir the hearts of Mec Dec partisans. But they should be advised against over optimism. Grandfather Stevenson was a vice president. Adlai may be president. Mr. Murrow influential and prominent. But so long as Dr. Christopher Crittenden guards the archive gates in Raleigh, the Mec Dec shall not pass the river, not until Mr. Murrow puts the original copy on Sx 17 Now and Adlai goes to the White House and calls out the National Guard.

It saves a lot of trouble, if, instead of having to earn money and save it, you can just go and borrow it.

People's Platform Child Reading Methods: Phonics As Bad As ABCs

Charlotte Editors: The News: WHEN you want to telephone a man named Johnson, it's important to know that you will find him listed after J and before K. For that reason, I cannot accept Dr. Carl F. Brown's advice not to teach a pre-school child the alphabet because "knowing the names of the letters may make it difficult for the child to learn the sounds the letters stand for."

Along with about Dr. Brown offers a lot of sound counsel in his "You, Your Child, and Reading," which was summarized in a recent news story. But when he tries to defend an indefensible position on teaching methods, it just doesn't come off.

IRRITATED PARENTS Says the doctor: "Some parents are irritated because they do not understand the new methods which schools use today. They long to return to the 'good old days' when the teachers really knew how to teach."

As a parent of two pre-school children, I don't give a hoot—and I doubt that many others do—about what method teachers use as long as the child becomes a reasonably good spell-er and reader.

PARENTS are interested in the end results. Methods employed by the schools may vary, but it seems only when they fail to teach Johnny to read and spell acceptably. No thinking parent has any objection to newer methods, if they work—and they only talk about the good old days because that is the only other method they know.

Surveys by Rudolph Fiesch and others indicate that the phonics method of teaching reading and spelling generally produces poor readers and spellers. If the surveys are accurate, why do the missionaries from Morningside Heights continue to defend the Columbia University party line?

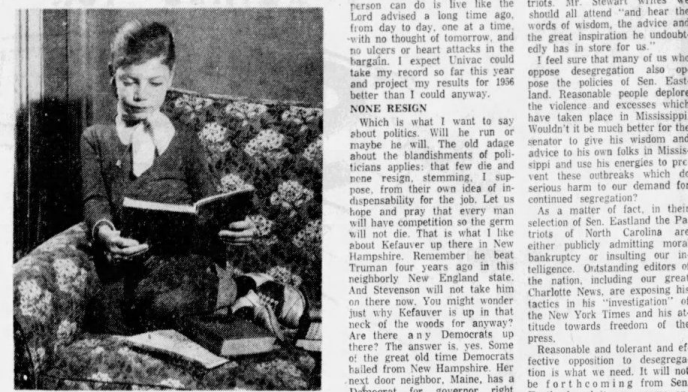
TELEVISION methods were abandoned to experiment with phonics, and the educators don't want to use the ABC's it seems to me it's time to try another experiment.

Are't educators who stubbornly give bow sermons to certain methods which have proved ineffective just as ridiculous as the parents who blindly insist on a return to the good old days?

The record of American schools and school teachers is proud and impressive. They deserve every parent's commendation and gratitude for accepting and discharging their duty as conscientious citizens rightfully belonging to parents.

If the phonics experiment hasn't worked out, it would seem to me the total echelon of education would keep the confidence of parents if it admitted it and started looking for a better method—old or new.

—RALPH E. GIBSON



Were The Good Old Days Bad?

punishment is, not in itself, a more grave deprecation against society and the individual than could possibly be any defense for which a criminal is executed.

A recent news story concerning a young man who was dragged to the execution chamber and there slain by us through our representatives of law and order—in spite of the wretched fellow's pitiful pleas for mercy—provides me to cry shame on those who would allow such a revolting scene of horror to be a legally sanctioned part of our civilized life.

OTHER SIDE: The negative (opposing) position in regard to the issue of capital punishment is difficult to defend against the arguments of those who can see only that a particular criminal offender may truly deserve punishment, but we should look further into this matter and try to determine if society is really helping itself in any way by commissioning officials to perpetrate legalized homicide.

As long as men may with public sanction take human life, there remains only the most callous pretension that murder committed by and against individuals is the crime of such magnitude as popularly conceived. Capital punishment encourages—not deters—murder; it gives it a certain respectability.

MALIGNANCY: A criminal offender such as a murderer may deserve anything that could possibly happen to him; true, but we continue to foster a malignancy among us when we authorize men of the law to strike down, mercilessly, in cold blood, the offender. In the case mentioned, did the judges in the box grout on the bench and the executors of this young man show him a bit more leniency than he gave the woman whom he brutally murdered?

They did not. The guards put him in chains and dragged him (repentant or not) to the chamber of horrors; and there the executioner slew him, disregarding his cry for mercy. Society would not have had this criminal murdered had he not been so society, then, condone a killing—while calling it an "execution" — that it certainly could and should prevent. Has not research proved that capital punishment has little or no effect on the crime rate? Has the help in an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth been thoroughly reviewed? Should society, or even an individual, seek revenge?

AVENGING ANGEL? Do we not brutalize ourselves with this business of capital punishment; do not this senseless legalized slaughter help perpetuate the tendency in man to strike down his fellowman. Remember that the individual executed in the case at hand may have "got what was coming to him" but that our society supposedly abhors murder and must examine itself for practices that do in reality promote it rather than prevent it. Also, do we want in our midst men whom we have empowered to condemn other men to death; do we want among us men who are authorized to drag other men into death chambers, there to self-righteously slay them: are we gods and do we consider our society or its man-made justice an avenging angel? Capital punishment is just as abominable and senseless as is individual murder.

—J. J. JUSTINE

Estes Among Friends In New Hampshire

Charlotte Editors: The News: FREE EDITOR of The News and the editors of a thousand other publications—"no doubt, have been busy thinking through the mud that is to be the year 1956, prophesying, guessting, hoping and maybe grumbling their way ahead, when about all any

Charlotte Aftermath Of Fire: Light Of Friendship

Charlotte Editors: The News: SO many kindnesses have been shown my family since fire destroyed our home in the Wilmore community on Jan. 4 that it will be impossible ever to express our gratitude adequately.

But my wife, my children and I would like an opportunity publicly through your newspaper, to thank friends who came to our rescue in such a gracious way. The first of extreme kindnesses I recall is that of a friend of my father's, a Mr. J. J. Cline, who had provided necessary and comforts in a manner which exceeded all expectations of Christian charity.

Although we may never be able to repay this debt of gratitude, we shall never forget what these sincere friends have done.

—JOHN W. CLEAFOR

Let Eastland Advise His Own Constituents

Charlotte Editors: The News: I AM a native born Tar Heel and just as strongly opposed to desegregation as is John B. Eastland. However, I must reject his advice on the actions we should take.

I believe I am able to think for myself and write for myself and not leave such matters in the hands of the Patriots of North Carolina or any other group.

MAIN SPEAKER: The belief is strengthened in reading that Sen. Eastland of Mississippi is coming to Charlotte as the main speaker for the Patriots of North Carolina in the selection of a new Eastland.

Charlotte Pronouncements

Charlotte Editors: The News: I LIVE like an elephant, not like a rat," is the profound counsel of an eminent physician. The elephant lives longer than the rat because its movements are slow, but the snail is even slower than the elephant yet has a shorter life than the rat.

It is very easy and very effective to make categorical and paradoxical pronouncements. I like doing it myself, sometimes. But if you are worth a brass farthing, — Vladimir Kraynov in "The Impudent Midge."

Charlotte Emotional Magic

Charlotte The Nature Of Beauty

Charlotte By THOMAS MANN: In "Young Joseph" THERE ARE reasons to be laments of beauty, but a law advances itself to the understanding and not to the emotions. Beauty is not an emotion, it is a matter of understanding and control. Hence the vapidity of perfect beauty, which leaves nothing to the fingers. For the emotions need something to forgive, else they turn away in sheer boredom.

Charlotte Carpet Of Smoke Good Advertising

Charlotte Editors: The News: BROTHER, your paper surely does a commendable job of what made Charlotte grow. Smokestacks . . .

Charlotte Lined Charlotte Trip

Charlotte Editors: The News: I IS with great appreciation that we write this letter to you. On January 6, our classes were taken on a tour of your most interesting plant and the guide, Mr. Edwards, was very cordial and courteous. Let us find a way to build up good public relations among schools and the press and we all enjoyed the tour more than we could express.

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Washington Over Head

Washington Rubbing Eyes

From The Greensboro Daily News

THE CHARM OF OLD BRICK

ONE of the most thoughtgiving, and enervating, fads of our time is the use of old brick in construction, for that is so old of antiquity. The pride of the trade is the old-fashioned brick, molded by hand, fired in low heat kilns long ago.

Speaking of it to the Mecklenburg Historical Society, Mrs. Ernest Ives, Adlai Stevenson's sister, said: "Why I remember when as children we sat at Grandfather Stevenson's feet as he told us about the Mecklenburg Declaration."

By the time they go into new construction, they have not only accumulated charm-to-beauty, but high cost added by non-toe-cheap modern labor. To their new owners, they are almost always beyond price and worth the whole long vening campaign of discovery, haggling, purchase, cleaning, and rebuilding. Houses made of them are becoming numerous, and old brick walls enclose some of the most picturesque Carolina gardens. One of the most popular of special brick types in our region is hand-made, deliberately put through long, slow, expensive processes so as to capture some of the old-time beauty lost in most modern masonry.

Old brick, humble in origin, cheap in its youth, unimpressing in its telling, is still a small sign that newest is by no means always best.



HERB LOCK DROB THE WASHINGTON POST U.S.

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