

Editorials through the Years

William Wallace Junkin

The following are excerpts from a series of seven editorials by William Wallace Junkin which appeared in the *Fairfield Ledger* between November 15 and December 27, 1855. They typify the strong sentiment that prevailed in the North in the decade preceding the Civil War.

Why We Are Opposed to the Extension of Slavery

. . . With all the wrongs upon it, we seek not to interfere with the institution of slavery in the states where it exists, for we have no right to do so. We simply propose to struggle against the extension over territories now free. We ask nothing more.

. . . Thus we see that the two principles — despotism and republicanism — can never harmonize. If brought in contact, being at enmity, each will struggle for the mastery — slavery struggling to extend its borders and accumulate power, while republicanism is exerting its power to control the ambitious designs of its enemy and secure the blessings of free institutions to all states which may hereafter be added to the Union of the states.

. . . Washington expressed himself as disposed to give the general government power to abolish slavery. Jefferson forever prevented slavery from existing in the Northwest Territory. Madison prevented the word "slave" being used in the Constitution.

. . . The creators of our form of government hated slavery and were determined to control it and keep it out of the territories. We believe that policy was right — in strict accordance with the true spirit of our institutions. The slavery extensionists of the present day have attempted to overturn this policy of the fathers.

. . . So far as the representation now in Congress is concerned, we have no remedy and do not ask any. We simply ask that the evil shall not be augmented by the addition of more slave states to the Union. We are willing to bear the injustice which has already occurred to the free states contrary to the expectation of the framers of the Constitution, but we want no more of it. The United States must bring all our territories into the Union as free states with representation based upon the actual number of free people contained in them.

. . . Freedom of speech and of the press are two of the greatest defenders of American liberty. A man can not be free if he is deprived of the right to utter the thoughts of a free man. A people can not remain free if the press, the great conductor of public sentiment is gagged and muzzled and forced to do the bidding of the few who may chance to hold a controlling influence in the affairs of state.

The first amendment of the Constitution of the United States provided for the unabridged exercise of those two great rights, by declaring the "Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech or of the press." This provision of the Constitution conferred no new right, but merely provided a protection for the natural rights of every man. God gave the rights, man simply declared that the strong should not deprive the weak of the right to express them.

In sixteen states of the Union, men may speak or publish their sentiments on any subject. In fifteen states this right may not be exercised. The people of the former

invite the slaveholders to come amongst them and defend the institution of slavery. The people of the latter threaten anti-slavery men with death if they dare open their mouths upon this subject. Even the mails are ransacked to prevent the introduction of anti-slavery documents from the free states.

To this wanton aggression of the slave power upon the rights of free men, we object. While we are now compelled to submit to it in fifteen states of the Union, we think that number quite large enough. Therefore we are opposed to the further extension of slavery.

Charles M. Junkin

By 1903, with the Civil War and Reconstruction behind, the nation was concerned with different kinds of problems. The rise of the big city, the age of invention, the mechanization of industry, agricultural unrest, the disappearance of the American frontier, and the advent of the telephone, the electric light, and the automobile ushered in a new era for Americans. The news that a Packard automobile had crossed the continent in fifty-two days under its own power made this editorial of timely interest to readers of the *Fairfield Ledger*.

The American Automobile

It is estimated that 28,000 automobiles were manufactured in the United States last year. The American output of motor vehicles had a value of \$25,000,000. In the same year Great Britain exported motors and parts of motors to the value of \$5,512,310 and France exported

motor cars to the value of \$5,310,200. Seventy French manufacturers of automobiles turned out last year 12,000 motor cars, or less than half the number turned out by American manufacturers.

Commenting on these figures, Henry Norman in *World's Work* for April, expressed the opinion that "business automobiles will soon be universal, commercial travelers will take their samples through the country in suitable motor cars, and the farmers will send their products to market by the co-operative use of automobiles." Mr. Norman believes also that the motor will kill the railway and repeats the threadbare prophecy that it will banish horses from the country as well as from the city.

Putting aside this question of prophecy, because to abolish the horse, Mr. Norman must abolish the love for the horse, it may be admitted that the automobile, with its wider radius of activity, will come into very general use. A horse and carriage, it is estimated, can move over an area of 425 square miles, while the ordinary automobile has a sphere of activity of 2,827 square miles. Or, to put it in the language of Mr. Norman:

"Every friend in 3,000 square miles can be visited, any place of worship or lecture or concert attended, business appointments kept, the trains met at any railway station, every post, telephone and telegraph office within reach, every preacher and physician accessible, any place reached for golf or tennis or fishing or shooting and, with it all, fresh air inhaled under exhilarating conditions."

This picture of what the coming automobile may do for mankind may be exulted over by the enthusiastic automobilist without greatly intruding upon the field that will always be occupied by the horse. The railroad, instead of abolishing the horse, will call for more horses. The bicycle, that was to run the horse away from the highways and byways, has been almost banished from the highways,

while the horse in greater numbers is on the highways, in the fields and on the streets. The horse will always be with us, but the coming automobile may accomplish wonders for the convenience of men.

Herbert F. McDougal

By 1920 the world had been "made safe for democracy" and people's minds were turning to humanitarian themes. The League of Nations and "universal brotherhood" were on everyone's tongues and pensions had been granted by the national government for Civil Service employees. Prohibition had been legally adopted but "speakeasies" were flourishing.

The 1920's were also years of disillusionment, revolt against Babbittry — the "ballyhoo years," as Frederick Allen described them in his *Only Yesterday*. McDougal, in his editorial, couldn't resist poking fun at the prevailing mode of mass hysteria. City folks were buying stock, farmers were increasing the size of their farms, prosperity lay just around the corner and everyone was passing resolutions.

Passing Resolutions

One of the vicious habits of the American people is that of getting together on the least provocation and passing ringing resolutions on whatever happens to occur to them at the moment or is suggested by somebody in a speech that happens to catch the fancy of the meeting.

A stranger can walk into any session of almost any organization that does not maintain an outer guard, rise

in the back of the room, gain the attention of the chair, and in a few minutes' talk, work the congregation up to a pitch where it will vote with a shout of favor on whatever he may chance to read off a paper which he draws from his pocket at the psychological moment.

If these resolutions could be softly dropped into a waste basket, it would not be so bad and the exercise would be a harmless one but the trouble lies in the fact that someone is always making use of the resolutions as a basis for actions or claims and they do untold damages.

All the heedless voters for the resolutions, of course, are responsible for the results, but there is no way of getting satisfaction from them as by that time they have adjourned and gone home, ready to heed the call for another meeting and pass more resolutions.

What men do who vote for more resolutions is to give personal approval of the sentiment expressed therein as well as to put the full authority of their organization behind the project, whatever it may be. It is an action that ought to be taken upon full authority and should be the result of serious thought and firm judgment. But half of the people who vote for a resolution couldn't tell five minutes afterwards the substance and perhaps half of those who could, would take you around the corner and tell you that they really disapproved of the matter but didn't want to appear contrary or to make hard feelings.

Organizations the country over are voting on the League of Nations, the St. Lawrence waterways project and the ship subsidy and a lot of other questions whose members could not make a beginning of a logical explanation of the basic meaning of any of the propositions.

Dean Taylor

The beginning of the era when Taylor was editor, 1930-1943, was largely colored by the de-

pression and its attendant hardships. Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Gandhi were names that signified unrest on the international front that culminated finally in the outbreak of World War II. Declining farm prices, mortgage foreclosures, unemployment, and bank failures illustrate the same unrest on the home front. The AAA, the CCC, the WPA, and the NRA were alphabeticals familiar to all Iowans. Humanitarianism rose to new peaks as individuals as well as the government did their part to relieve distress.

Whatsoever Ye Would

In this sordid age, selfishness seems to rule nearly all the activities of mankind, but one aged Fairfield widow sees it differently today. It is often said that every man can be reached if only you find "which side his bread is buttered on." A great church recently made this pronouncement.

"The present industrial order is unchristian; unethical and anti-social because it is based largely on the profit motive, which is a direct appeal to selfishness. A satisfactory social organism can not grow out of an unsocial seed."

However that may be, there is still to be found a few seeds of unselfishness as a few citizens of Fairfield have discovered within the past day or two. A news article in today's *Ledger* recounts the fact that an old lady, about 70 years of age, an invalid suffering from a stroke, could not pay the mortgage on her property. It was held by a corporation which was compelled to foreclose. When notified to vacate the property she did not do so, hoping against hope for some unseen help. Finally, last week, it

came. Now she is to end her days in the old family home.

Fairfield has a lot of praiseworthy things but the praise, in this case unfortunately, has to be shipped out of the state. A cousin of the widow, is mayor of Morristown, N. J., and in a roundabout way he learned of his relative and her plight. Literally, he flew to her relief, for while he was in Cleveland he chartered a plane, flew to Des Moines, met another relative and came to Fairfield. "His Honor" spent just one hour in Fairfield, but it was a good day's work, since he satisfied the mortgage and assured the widow that she would be secure in her home for the remainder of her days.

The Scriptures record that such deeds have been greeted with these words: "Come ye blessed of my Father." Morristown's mayor went a long way off of his course to do an unostentatious act of kindness, and one that cost him something. Perhaps — nay, certainly there is yet balm in Gilead.

W. E. Sherlock

The big depression of the 1930's caused economists and even the ordinary man to inquire into the causes and panaceas for such occurrences. This editorial gives a down-to-earth illustration of the advantages of the profit system as practised in the United States.

Why the Profit System Is Absolutely Essential

A great deal is said by several kinds of leftists about abolishing the profit system. It is claimed by many of those schools of thought that one person or institution can not make a profit without some other person or institution suffers a loss in the amount of profit gained by the first named person or institution.

It can be easily proven that this contention is a fallacy of the rankest kind. I can illustrate its fallaciousness by an event that is transpiring in Fairfield at this moment.

Beyond a doubt, Charles Gage is one of the nation's most artistic and accurate map makers. His maps are all made "by hand" — nothing but hand labor goes into each of his maps. In his case it can be said that labor receives all of the income, no profit goes to capital.

To produce a map of Fairfield that measures up to Charles' high standards, it takes probably three weeks of 48 hours — 144 hours in all — probably longer. When he has completed one of his masterpieces, he can not sell it for more than \$50, if that much. That would mean barely 34 cents an hour for the labor necessary to create the map. He could not afford to continue making maps for that wage.

However, we have another outstanding man in Fairfield. His name is LaVerne Flambo, a promoter. He is what the leftists may call a person who makes his living by not soiling his hands — who really lives off the labors of the working man. The more sensible folks call him a master salesman, an organizer. The reader may call him a promoter, but that is no disgrace.

There is still another man in the city who believes in the profit motive. He can not draw an attractive map. He does, however, know how to print them. He knows where he can have plates made from Charley's map. He has the presses upon which he can put those plates and print several hundred an hour.

His name is Ross Walker. He owns one of the most up-to-date printing plants west of Chicago. He may be called a grafter for living off the labors of his printers and pressmen. But if he did not have the equipment to reproduce such articles as Charley's map he would not need the printers and pressmen.

LaVerne calls on Ross. They estimate what it will cost to have the color-plates made, what the map stock will cost, how many press-runs will have to be made—in short, what the cost of production will be to enable Ross to pay his pressmen good wages and have a fair profit left for his time and the use of his equipment which is his capital investment.

Then they must take into account LaVerne's commission for selling and delivering the product. He should have a good profit because selling a product is probably the most important part in the manufacture and distribution of any article of merchandise.

LaVerne and Ross decide they can sell the map for \$5.00 if they can find an outlet for 200 maps. They estimate they can pay Charley \$200 for making the master map.

But Ross is the capitalist in this triumvirate. He is the man who has to take the chances. If the product sells, he makes a profit. If it does not, he suffers a loss. The laborers in Ross' shop take no chances. They get their wages every Saturday night whether Ross makes or loses.

The profit incentive did not rob labor in Ross' shop, and it most certainly did not rob the purchasers of the product. The purchaser who induced Charley to draw the first map had to pay \$50 for the map. Because of that something we call mass production, he got his map for \$5.

Because of the fact that Charley, Ross and LaVerne all made a satisfactory profit and labor was given satisfactory wages, the triumvirate decide to produce a map of Jefferson county. They are positive they can sell 1,000 maps.

Charley can be paid \$500 for drawing and coloring the master map. LaVerne will have to organize and direct a sales force. He, probably, can not make any cut in the commission he received in selling the map of Fairfield. Ross may be able to make a small reduction in the cost of

producing the finished map. They may probably find they can sell the maps for \$4.25 to \$4.50 each to the purchasers.

The theory of abolishing profits is so silly that we are forced to wonder why apparently mentally balanced people will be led astray by such a fallacy.

Walter Williams

These editorials are typical of the fine work that is appearing in Iowa newspapers at the present time. Every *Ledger* subscriber is only as far from a good discussion of current issues as he is from his editorial page. If what Will Rogers said is true — "All I know is what I see in the newspapers" — every subscriber should be well informed.

Mrs. Morrow's Definition of Good Deeds

Recently Mrs. Dwight Morrow, widow of the former United States Senator and Ambassador to Mexico, put into a single sentence at the dedication of a community hospital a thought which might well be inscribed on the corner stones of many institutions. The sentence was:

"Never take your hospital for granted because people you never knew have broken their hearts to get it for you."

There need not be a too great departure from that sentence in setting down a truth about every college building, every church, every Y. M. C. A., every building which is erected through the generosity of a few or many individuals. We in Fairfield have seen a magnificent example of it in the case of Parsons college where the many have not been content to leave the job to a few. Within their capacity to do so hundreds of persons have helped to build such a monument to the good in men in the new dormitory which will soon be dedicated.

Possibly the students do not fully understand that others are helping them to get an education by such generous acts. But some day they will understand and they, too, will do as their benefactors are now doing and thereby pass on to others some of their own life.

For no good reason the thought occurs to us right now that there are some strange beliefs about what constitutes doing good. With a good many people it is a negative thing. Those people go about declaiming about something they regard as evil and delude themselves that they are thereby doing good. Some day we are going to get out of patience sufficiently to ask some of them what they have done to make the world a better place in which to live.

We know in advance what we will hear. They will tell us that they are fighting evil. In our book that isn't much. And it has been our observation that a good many of the folks who give that kind of an answer are not the ones about whom Mrs. Morrow was talking.

What's There To Fear In An Honest Inquiry?

Notwithstanding the sound and fury which has been heard over the appointment of Senator Alden Doud to make a survey of the higher educational institutions in the state for the interim committee of the legislature we will be looking forward to the report with interest. And we expect to learn something.

All that we've read thus far concerns the tuition charged in the three state supported schools. Mr. Doud tells us that his instructions from the interim committee did not contemplate an inquiry in that field at all. The committee, he said, wanted a factual survey of the educational facilities which are available in the state at a level above the high schools. Such a survey should, we assume, report the relationship between tuition rates at state supported

schools and the privately endowed schools. But surely those are fact which everybody is entitled to know, though it appears that the interim committee was not much interested in that phase of the matter.

The privately endowed colleges should welcome such a survey. They are having rough going because of the trend from the small colleges to the schools at the university level. It is our guess that the liberal arts colleges in Iowa could handle almost twice as many students as they now have. That certainly is a fact which, if true, the legislature is entitled to know.

We also believe that if Iowa could achieve a well balanced higher educational program with the liberal arts colleges enabled to operate near to capacity their educational programs could be strengthened to the point where fewer students would feel that they need to go to the state schools. If the report which the interim committee is going to get sheds some light on that matter it will be well worth while.

And, incidentally, it is our opinion there are a lot of students going to the universities who would be far better off in the smaller liberal arts colleges. This is beside the point in the current inquiry but we wonder if there are not some folks who are afraid to have an honest inquiry made into that question.