

Mississippi's problems go back many years

(Fourth of a series.)

Any study of race relations in Mississippi, or any other state for that matter, must necessarily be made with some understanding of the state itself. What's it like? Where did its people come from? What are the state's strengths? And weaknesses? Some knowledge is necessary to an understanding of the whole problem.

Mississippi has been painted, in recent years, as being peopled with the ignorant and the bigot. It is, in some eyes, the home of the poor, the illiterate, and the ante-bellum Southern mansion, decaying away. It is, to some, a swamp, filled with mosquitos, and populated by lazy people, white and colored, who sleep on the banks of streams while they wait for catfish to bite. Are all these things true? Or any of them?

It would be far more proper to say none of them are true, rather than all. Mississippi has its problems, and the racial issue is not the only one of them. But it has its strengths, too, and those strengths are many.

Mississippi is not a large state, in area nor in population. In area it is somewhat smaller than Oregon's Second Congressional District. In population it is only slightly larger than the state of Oregon. It is a rural state, as is Oregon. It has only one large city, and that one, Jackson, is only about one-fifth the size of the metropolitan Portland area.

Mississippi's problems go back many years. Few Southern states were as badly mauled by the Civil War. It was Mississippi that Grant first tried out his system of total war. It was Mississippi which was laid to waste. At that time it had even fewer residents. It was even more difficult to get its products to the markets of the Eastern seaboard, or Europe. It took Mississippi even longer than most Southern states to recover from the effects of the Civil War.

Mississippi was rich in natural resources. It had large stands of timber, cut over rather quickly and let go back to brush, since the customs — economic and political — of the times did not favor the principle of sustained yield forestry. It had oil and gas, developed recently. It had some of the most fertile farmland in the world, along the Mississippi River. It had some of this country's most destructive flooding, too, as that river went on periodic rampages. Floods are things of the past, now. Its farmland was handled in small units, providing living incomes for thousands of persons.

Progress in other parts of the country spelled trouble for Mississippi. Cotton, the state's main cash crop, began to decline in relative importance in the U.S. with the advent of synthetic fibers. In order to farm successfully, man needed more acreage. He began to put two or three places into one. In one county alone, Lee in the northeast, the number of farms declined by two-thirds in a few years, even though the cultivated acreage remained relatively constant.

The Negro, originally brought to Mississippi as a slave and legally freed 100 years ago, has been the main source of unskilled labor in Mississippi since the first black man from the first African slaveship first arrived. The key to the situation is that word "unskilled." The opportunity for the Negro was limited, whether slave or free. It was considered a waste of money to educate him, because no education was necessary to become a weed chopper, or cotton picker.

The displacement of the farmer was the first step. The perfection of the mechanical cotton picker — and the invention of labor-saving machinery in other industries — was the second. The growing use of chemicals to fight weeds and disease helped, too. The end result was a continuing, serious unemployment condition throughout much of the entire state. It hit Negroes and whites alike. Those with no skills, or no education, found themselves in real trouble.

Many left. The Negroes left to join their cousins, too often in Negro Ghettos in large Northern cities. The poor white, too, left in large numbers. But neither group took all their problems with them. A large number left Grandma and the kids in Mississippi, where they remain a drain on the state.

Most persons in Mississippi, no matter what their race or their views on the state's overriding race problem, agree that its education system was a poor one until a few short years ago. It was worse than poor, it was atrocious by Oregon standards. The state was fractionated into hundreds of little school districts, almost all operating small, poor schools. Negro schools were worse still, little better than no schools at all. In the past ten years the state has gone through a rather extensive school reorganization, and the caliber of education has improved greatly. The education for Negroes has improved the most, but still is not up to the quality offered white youngsters in most localities. There still are some problems in the handling of school finances, but they are improving. Mississippi is

spending an extraordinary amount of its annual income on schools.

But that income is low. The average income in Mississippi is only slightly higher than half the average income in the rest of the United States. Progress is being made, and made rapidly. But it still will be some time before Mississippi schools come up to the standards of the rest of the country.

One must not think from these things that Mississippi has been completely backward throughout its history. Mississippi has a number of notable "firsts" to her credit, some of which might bear repeating:

Mississippi was the first state to adopt laws establishing a uniform system of public schools, in 1846, even though schools of that time were solely for the white population.

It was the first state (1824) to abolish imprisonment for debt. It was the first (1837) to outlaw dueling. It was the first to organize a statewide bar association. It was the first (1895) to abolish the once-common system of leasing convict labor to private contractors. It was the first state to establish a state-financed college for women. It was the first state to establish a statewide system of junior colleges. It has had more Tree Farms than any other state in the union for several years. It was the first political subdivision in the English-speaking world to establish property rights for married women. The national 4-H movement was started in Mississippi.

Most of these accomplishments came about as the result of a forward-looking, progressive electorate. What others have a hard time remembering is that the electorate was severely limited in numbers, through poll taxes and other devices which effectively kept poor whites and Negroes from voting.

With all these things, Mississippi still has some things which seem strange to much of the rest of the country. Its sheriffs (the chief law enforcement officers in Mississippi) still are paid a percentage of the income they collect for the county. This has undeniably led to the continuation in office of men who could easily be bought and sold. Not all law enforcement officers in Mississippi are dishonest, by any means. But the opportunity exists for profitable dishonesty, for those who wish to take advantage of it.

Mississippi has grown in importance as a wholesale trade center in the South. But the low income

of her own people keeps retail sales figures way below the national average. Since the state's main source of income is a tax on retail sales, the entire state suffers as a result.

The relative drop in importance of cotton as a crop has led into other uses for the farmland of Mississippi. Nearly two million dairy cows are milked there daily. Soybeans and feed grains have become important crops. The state is one of the nation's leader in the production of chicken. Diversified industry is sought avidly, with considerable success. But some new industry is shying away because of recent race troubles.

Perhaps the biggest mistake one could make is to feel that race problems are confined in this country to Mississippi, and the states nearby. The problems of the Negro in Chicago, or New York, or Boston, or Philadelphia, or Los Angeles, or Portland, Oregon, are different problems than the Negro has in Mississippi, to some extent. But to some extent they are the same, manifested in different forms.

The WASP, (White Anglo Saxon Protestant) as he is called in Mississippi, has not been too kind anywhere in this country to the people with whom he disagrees. When their numbers grow in proportion to him, he can be pretty harsh. The WASP has been king in Mississippi since the first settlers came. And a substantial number of his kind are determined that he shall remain king.

This, even more than the lack of education and the lack of income, is the core of Mississippi's present problems. The other two can be licked, in time, and with money. But neither time nor money is a satisfactory answer to the complaint of one rather literate Negro, who put it this way:

"An immigrant from Southern Europe can come here, and become a citizen in a few years. Then he can vote in Mississippi, eat anywhere he wants in Mississippi, and go anywhere he wants, anywhere in the state. He can hire Oriental labor, and their children will go to white schools. My ancestors came here against their wills 300 years ago. They were granted freedom 100 years ago. They have fought wars for their country since. I fought in one of them for 31 months. But in large parts of Mississippi I cannot vote. I cannot eat in many Mississippi restaurants. I cannot use the restrooms in many Mississippi stores. My children must go to inferior schools.

"Why?"

'I don't know if we've ever met before'



Political wolves are howling

The political wolves are beginning to howl for the scalp of Travis Cross, the press secretary of Gov. Mark O. Hatfield. The trouble is, the howl comes not because of what Cross actually said in a recent speech in Boise, Idaho. Original reports of the speech did not get Cross into trouble — in Boise newspapers these were pretty complete. But an Associated Press reporter in Salem picked out one lone paragraph, placed it in the middle of a bunch of editorial comment, and Cross was on the pan.

The press secretary has become an indispensable part of the staff of anyone as highly placed as a governor. A governor, or senator, or president, must of necessity remain close to the people he serves. They must be able to find out what he is doing. The trouble is, if he spends the necessary time answering their questions, he won't have

any time to govern, or legislate, or administer.

Cross is generally acknowledged, even by his critics, to be one of the best political press secretaries in the business. Not all of the admiration for his efforts comes because of his skill at putting his employer in the best possible light. Cross will answer an embarrassing question just as rapidly as he will one designed to put his boss on a pedestal. He has played fair with newsmen in a job where complete fairness is absolutely essential.

Quotable quotes

It's just common sense that my business is bound to pick up. — A liquor store owner, whose establishment was one of 86 permitted to remain open while 103 were closed for selling liquor to minors.

Washington Merry-go-round Dynamite concealed inside upcoming cigaret report

By Jack Anderson

WASHINGTON — The tobacco tycoons are doing their best to delay and dilute the long-awaited presidential report on cigarettes and cancer, which should be ready to release by December 15.

Though elaborate precautions have been taken to make sure the report doesn't leak out before it can be edited, this column can state that the individual studies contain overwhelming evidence that smoking can cause not only lung cancer but heart, stomach, bronchial, and other ailments.

These studies are now being boiled down by Dr. Peter H. Ravn of the National Library of Medicine into a report that should present a devastating case against the tobacco habit.

It will be submitted to pack-a-day smoker Anthony Celebrezze, the efficient, ebullient Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, who hasn't concealed his lack of enthusiasm for battling the tobacco interests.

He has made it plain that he doesn't consider it "the proper role of the federal government to tell citizens to stop smoking."

He puts smoking in the same category as over-eating and over-drinking, insisting privately: "I don't believe that the prohibition of smoking by the federal government would be any more effective than the prohibition of alcohol."

A HEW spokesman assured this column, however, that Celebrezze believes the government has a duty to warn citizens against health hazards.

Celebrezze will send the report up to President Kennedy, who is even less anxious to get his fingers burned by the cigaret controversy. Certainly, he has no desire to antagonize tobacco state senators and congressmen while his civil rights reforms and tax cuts are still pending.

When the cigaret subject was brought up at a May, 1962, press conference, the President handled it like a butt that had burned down to his fingers.

"That matter is sensitive enough and the stock market is in sufficient difficulty without my giving you an answer," he hedged. "... Perhaps I would be glad to respond to that question in more detail next week."

The following week, he turned the problem over to an advisory committee and announced happily that "the survey would take some months to go into."

Now the survey is finished, and the President is confronted with another hot issue on the eve of his re-election campaign.

The loudest howls about the presidential report are coming from the Agriculture Department, which is more concerned about the tobacco crop than public health. If the report is made public on December 15, it might hurt the December tobacco auctions.

Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman, who smokes sparingly, is fearful that the report will reduce cigaret sales and damage an important industry.

Apprehension over the forthcoming report is also high at the Federal Trade Commission, which is responsible for regulating dangerous and deceptive advertising.

Eighteen months ago, the commission acknowledged to Senator Maurice Neuberger, D-Ore., that it has authority to crack down on tobacco advertising. The commission put off her demand for action, however, by claiming it needed "competent probative scientific evidence."

This should now be furnished by the presidential committee, thus putting the commission on the spot. It may have no alternative but to require tobacco companies to include a warning of the cigaret hazards in all their newspaper, magazine ads and radio-TV commercials.

Thus the future TV announcer, after declaring sonorously that "thinking men smoke Viceroy's," may be obliged to warn the thinking man that cigarettes can cause lung cancer and heart trouble.

The advertising abuses are hit by Senator Neuberger in a book, "Smokescreen," just off the Prentice Hall Press.

She checked on commercials, for example, depicting baseball stars Mickey Mantle, Roger Maris, and Whitey Ford as contented Camel smokers.

She found that Mantle had smoked Camels briefly, then had switched to Viceroy's. But

Program to help high school, college youngsters understand Constitution in financial difficulty

By Lyle C. Wilson
UPI Staff Writer

There must be a wealthy foundation or philanthropist somewhere in the United States who would be eager to help American high school and college students understand and revere the Constitution of the United States.

If such there be, this essay is for the attention of that foundation or that generous individual. Roughly \$300,000 is needed immediately to keep this project going. Thereafter a large sum of money would be needed each year to maintain it.

These would not be overly large sums to invest in the citizenship and patriotism of young America. The investment would permit large-scale distribution of the most informative book on the U.S. Constitution that has come across this desk in 36 years of Washington reporting.

he was last reported using Bantron, an anti-smoking pill.

Maris also had smoked Camels, but had stopped smoking altogether a month before the commercial appeared. The only information the senator could find on Ford's smoking habits was a sports story quoting him after a shutout victory:

"This was the best I've felt for nine innings since the first game of the World Series against Cincinnati," boasted Ford.

The reason for his improvement: "I quit smoking," said Ford.

The President's study committee on smoking and health has done little original research but has merely summed up the existing information on the tobacco problem. Several distinguished doctors contributed studies.

One of the most convincing reports was submitted by Harvard's noted statistician, Prof. William Cochran, who compiled staggering statistical evidence that cigarettes cause lung cancer, heart trouble, and other ailments.

After 20 years, for example, a pack-a-day smoker is 200 times more likely to develop bronchial adenocarcinoma, a type of lung cancer, than is a non-smoker.

The book is Thomas James Norton's "Constitution of the United States; Its Sources and Its Applications," published by the Committee for Constitutional Government, Inc., 117 Liberty St., New York 6, N.Y. First printing was in 1941. There have been 21 editions since.

The committee's advisory board includes: Dr. William Black, San Diego, Calif.; Dr. George Crane, Chicago; Mrs. Henry Dooley, Omaha, Neb.; Edward R. Eastman, Ithaca, N.Y.; Lamar Fleming Jr., Houston, Tex.; H. J. Rand, Cleveland, Ohio; and Harry Woodring, Topeka, Kan.

About 18 months ago the committee had a backlog of 80,000 requests for Norton's paperback. These requests have been filled. But there had accumulated as of Oct. 8 a backlog of requests for 200,000 copies. The 80,000 books distributed since the late spring of 1962 were at a cost of \$1.50 each. The cost has risen to \$1.50. Some of this added cost is represented by increased labor and paper costs plus the need for a sturdy binding to resist rough treatment by young America.

The committee says the new edition is ready to go to 200,000 young Americans if some old Americans will come up with funds. In support of its appeal

the committee can present letters asking for the book. Typical is one from the Very Rev. Msgr. Edward M. Connors, associate superintendent of schools, the Archdiocese of New York. He wrote, in part:

"Would it be possible for us to have as many as 15,000 of these books?"

Colleges Also Ask
John T. Bernard, administrative assistant to the president of Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, wrote:

"Our previous experience with the Norton classic has been heart warming. Accordingly, we respectfully submit a request for 10,000 copies to be distributed among our students enrolling in the required American Heritage course.

"We recognize that this is a rather large order, but our total student enrollment is now over 11,000. The Norton book would be of great value to our big student body."

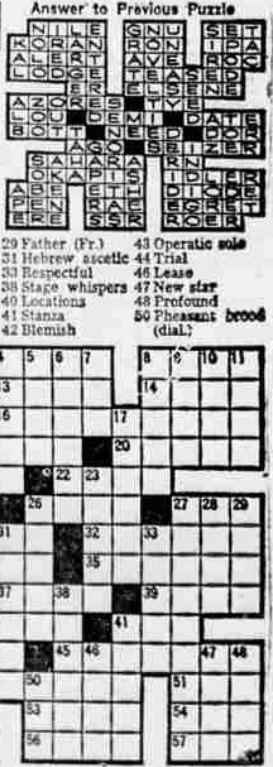
A letter from T. B. Ergle asked for copies of the book in behalf of 220 students studying U.S. history at James F. Byrnes High School, Duncan, S.C. Perhaps some admirer of the delightful Jim Byrnes would put up the funds for JFB High. Needed \$330.

This essay is an unpaid advertisement in a good cause.

This and That

- ACROSS
1 Pillar
4 Frolic merrily
8 Dill
12 Bustle
13 Malarial fever
14 Manufactured
15 Split pea
16 Fledgling
18 Comes forth
20 Worms
21 Regret
22 Japanese outcasts
24 Brazilian macaws
26 Norse god of war
27 Head covering
30 Grumble
32 Baffle
34 Uta
35 Newspaper official
36 Masculline nickname
37 Lash
39 Weathercock
40 Observe
41 Energy
42 Fabric
43 Country
44 Claimant
45 Fish eggs
46 French stream
48 Longings (idiom)
49 Hall
50 Make lace edgings
51 Italian city
52 Soothe

- DOWN
1 Charge
2 Biblical character
3 Sure
4 Slove
5 Curved molding
6 Rumbled
7 Favorite
8 Futility
9 Miss Fabray and namesakes
10 Rim
11 Hardy heroine
17 Deviated
19 Corrodes
23 Lassa is its capital
24 Prayer ending
25 Impertinent
26 Fanon
27 Surfboat
28 King of Judah (bib.)
29 Father (Fr.)
31 Hebrew ascetic
32 Respectful
38 Stage whispers
40 Locations
41 Stanza
42 Blemish
43 Operatic solo
44 Trial
46 Lease
47 New star
48 Profound
50 Phoenix brood (dial.)



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