

The Atlanta Journal

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THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION

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EDITORIALS

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NOVEMBER 24, 1963

The President's Legacy

THE ASSASSINATION of President Kennedy ended the career of a brave man who had fought well for his country in war and in peace. It did not end this country's forward motion, its leadership or its determination.

He had called upon us not to ask what our country could do for us but what we could do for our country.

What we can do for our country now, of course, is go on, without being deterred by the incredibly stark and somber tragedy that has taken place in the streets of Dallas, without being fearful of perils that we had grown accustomed to long before we knew this man, without breaking that mutual pledge we made with him three years ago to move this country on.

He was not himself a man of easy and unmeaning sentimentality, but one of sinew and purpose. We did not see him playing upon our emotions like some of our great political virtuosi of past and present; usually he spoke of the issues, calmly, ignoring that part of us which asks for fatherly indulgence. He made us think.

That is what we should do now, with strong feelings for the memory of this good man who served us; with distress, but not with despair.

When he came to the presidency it was with a challenge, not to rest as we sometimes do between crises, but to strive and to be resolute. When the country answered this particular call in 1961, it demonstrated that it, too, was ready to be led and ready to be resolute.

The country wanted to move again, and it is moving. There will be pauses in the days immediately to come, but we are not ready to halt.

Our act of horror, whether the sinking of a fleet, the death of a great wartime leader, or the assassination of a brave peacetime president cannot change that.

The Atlanta Journal

"Covers Dixie Like the Dew"

Since 1883

Jack Torrey, President • Jack Spalding, Editor

EDITORIALS

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NOVEMBER 25, 1963

Echoes of a Weekend Sound the Requiem

HAUNTING ECHOES linger from a weekend like no other the nation or the world has seen. It was a weekend etched at times with the unknown, unsettling with the strangeness of what was known, and yet resonant with reassurance because of the strength of an American shot down and Americas we saw, heard or heard about.

Sen. Mansfield intoned these words in admiration of a dead president's widow: "She took a ring from her finger and put it in his hand. . . . And so. . . ." And so we all watched Jacqueline Kennedy, many of us seeing for the first time a nobility and strength of person which we had not seen before back there in the shadow of the one whose strength we knew. We watched her lead her two beautiful children to the flag-draped bier of their father, where she knelt and kissed the casket; then we saw her walk with firm step and grief-glazed eyes to her next place of duty.

David Brinkley, in a tired moment, quietly slipping into the solemnness of this unforgettable thing: "And so it seems that all this horror and all this grief was caused by a punk with a \$12 mail-order rifle."

Leverett Saltonstall, aristocratic New Englander of the Senate, talking calmly with other senators about the new president, suddenly became embarrassed and drawing himself up sharply in self-rebuke: "I shouldn't be saying Lyndon. I should say 'the President' now. . . ."

(How many others savored the strangeness of saying "President Johnson" and "the assassination of President Kennedy?") President Johnson was a man who lived in the White House a hundred years ago; assassinations are events in history books; caissons

and corteges and catalogues are things we hear of on documentaries about FDR.)

Bob Snodgrass, Georgia Republicanism's national committeeman, his face etched with weariness and care, he wails almost breaking as he said: "All this hatred. . . . all this hatred."

(Here, you thought, was more than careful words put together by some of the careful Democrats; here was feeling, from a man not of the President's party and view. His, you thought, has been seen in both parties in Georgia; we have been bipartisan in hate, and sometimes bipartisan in spreading the taints of anarchy.)

The people of England singing massively, to the strains of an organ in Westminster Abbey, a song we did not know they knew, about a "terrible swift sword": ". . . He is tramping out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored. . . ." And a young English dramatist stretching our flag across oceans when he sold, after praising Lyndon Johnson: "We, the citizens of an alliance he now leads"

Then, Willy Brandt, symbol of Free Berlin, soberly describing the loyalty which a city of Germans felt toward an Irish-American president, speaking near the Wall that embraces grapes of wrath.

These were some of the echoes of this weekend.

In all the uncertainties, we still heard voices that conveyed something of the greatness of a country. Glimpses of the shimmering floor of ballrooms and momentary glimpses of profound understanding on the part of people all around the world, revealed it best.

This, rather than all the madness seen in Dallas, was the real reason for John F. Kennedy.