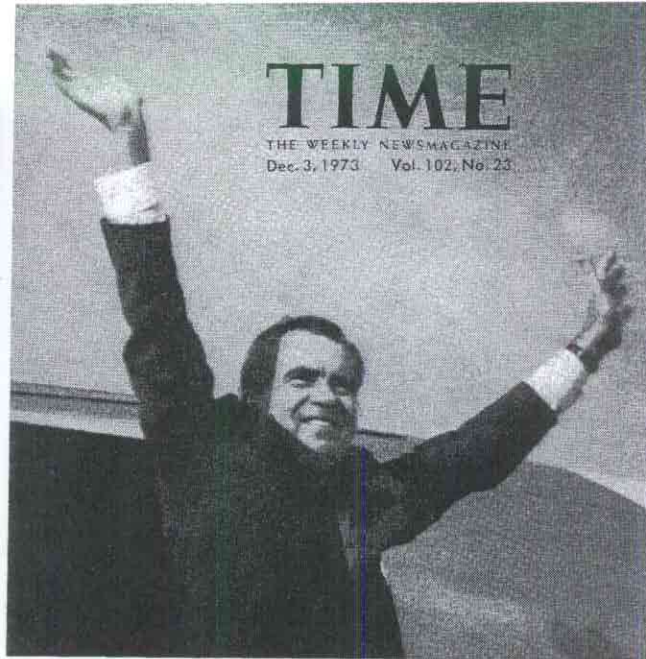


BILLBOARD SIGN IN GEORGIA EQUATES PRESIDENTS NIXON & LINCOLN



NIXON ARRIVING AT GEORGIA'S ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE

TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE
Dec. 3, 1973 Vol. 102, No. 23

AMERICAN NOTES

Misgivings

The traditional holiday had its ambiguities. A Thanksgiving meal for a family of four, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, cost 31% more than last year's. An expanding energy crisis presaged a problematical winter (see cover story page 29). In two New England states, Thanksgiving took particular lumps.

In Plymouth, Mass., where the holiday has been observed since 1621, disgruntled Indians insisted that this year's traditional, Pilgrim-dominated celebration take long-overdue notice of who taught the English intruders to plant corn in the first place. The city's religious sermon was delivered by an Indian, and the town pageant did not feature the usual costumed Pilgrims carrying muskets—a historical falsification, say the Indians, since the 17th century Chief Massasoit by keeping his peaceful pledge to the Pilgrim settlers all his life never gave them reason to carry guns.

In Rhode Island, where the winning high school student essay is traditionally adopted as the Governor's official Thanksgiving proclamation, 17-year-old Mary Moran composed a sharp attack on "the absurdity of this holiday. Thanksgiving seems to be pretended, a farce, little more than an outdated tradition no one has yet found time to discard." Said a dismayed Governor Philip Noel: "I could not sign that as an expression of my thinking. Everyone in this country has something to be thankful for." He should not have been quite so dismayed, since Mary Moran's essay went on to express the wish that people would relearn "the art of thankfulness," by balancing their hopes against what they can realistically attain.

Free Speech?

In the matter of rude receptions, Stanford University Professor William Shockley seems to be getting more than his share. Shockley, a 1956 Nobel Prize co-winner in physics, has over the past decade ventured into the fields of biology and genetics, disciplines in which he is not an acknowledged expert, to propound a theory he labels dysgenics. He defines it as "retrogressive evolution through the disproportionate reproduction of the genetically disadvantaged." One of its controversial contentions is that blacks are genetically inferior to whites in intellectual capacity. Another is that bonuses should be paid to persons with less than an average IQ who are voluntarily sterilized.

When Shockley tried to present his views at Harvard last month in a scheduled debate with Roy Innis, national director of the Congress of Racial Equality, vigorous protests from the school's black law students' association caused the meeting to be canceled. An academic forum held recently at New York University condemned Shockley's views and denied him participation. Finally last week, a talk that Shockley was set to deliver at New York's Staten Island Community College had to be canceled when his appearance onstage brought prolonged clapping, shouting and whistling from a vociferous minority of the racially mixed audience. Shockley was forced to leave without speaking.

Shockley's views have been open to serious question all along, and other scientists have taken pains to discredit both the quality of his scholarship and the validity of his conclusions (TIME May 15). Under the First Amendment, however, not only does Shockley have the right to propound his notions, but those who would like to hear them are entitled to.

The irony of the Shockley case is that a questionable, perhaps even pernicious doctrine is probably receiving more publicity by not being heard than open debate would give it.

Kingly Thought for the Day

In the wake of Watergate, all sorts of cures, old and new, are being offered for the ills of the republic. While not quite a prescription, one arresting thought was put forth by the London *Economist*, inspired by the soothing pageantry of Princess Anne's wedding amid Britain's own current economic travails and by the disarray afflicting the U.S. The journal rightly divines that both the incumbent in the office and a good many Americans seem to identify the presidency with the country itself. When "we cloak a head of government also with the dignity of a head of state," that person will face "steadily greater temptations to breach the rights of ordinary men."

The *Economist* seems to suggest that if the U.S. only had a constitutional king who symbolized the nation, it would be a lot easier to dismiss Richard Nixon from the White House since the nation's image of itself would not suffer so grievously in the process. In other words, let politicians govern—and come and go if need be—but let kings embody the dignity of the state.

The idea is perhaps politically valid in a quaint sort of way, but was pretty well rendered moot for the U.S. by the unpleasantness at Concord and Valley Forge in the 1770s. All things considered, Americans prefer the stability of a system combining the functions of real and symbolic leader in one person and one office. It is part of the scale of the original American experiment, asking much of its citizens and those they elect.