

GORE VS. PEPPER

The Fort Lauderdale Daily News and the Senate Election of 1944

by DONALD G. LESTER

The year 1944 was of course a memorable year in American as well as world history. World War II had reached its critical stage. Millions of Americans were serving in the armed forces, and millions more were engaged in civilian war work. Depression concerns, which had focused the entire attention of the country during the previous decade, were replaced with the overwhelming war objectives of 1941-1945. During these

years, winning the war was all that really seemed to matter.

In spite of the national obsession with war issues, American elections were held according to the regular schedule. In 1944, not only was a presidential election scheduled, but one-third of the United States Senate and all of the House of Representatives positions were at stake. Many states also had gubernatorial elections. In Florida, Senator Claude

Pepper, staunch New Dealer and ardent pre-World War II interventionist, faced a serious challenge to remain in the position he had held since 1936.¹

In 1944, Florida was part of the Democratic Solid South. The holding of an elective office depended upon success in the white Democratic primary, with participation limited to members of the Caucasian race. Until 1937, the payment of a poll tax was a prerequisite for voting. According to Democratic primary rules in effect since 1901, a majority of votes was required for election. In case no candidate received a majority of the first primary votes, a run-off election was held between the two top contenders. The reason for this rule — which predominated in the southern states, though not in the country as a whole — was that in the South the Democratic nomination was tantamount to election. The Democratic primary therefore attracted a multitude of candidates, and it was deemed improper to award the nomination, and thus the election, to the top vote-getter if a majority of voters had voted against him. The Republican party existed chiefly as a patronage organization. In case the Republicans

By the 1940s, the Fort Lauderdale Daily News, under the aggressive ownership of Governor Robert H. Gore, took an active and partisan role in politics on the local, state, and national levels. During the 1944 senate campaign, Gore used his newspaper to conduct a vigorous attack on both Senator Claude Pepper and the New Deal administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The race issue also played a significant part in the campaign, emphasizing the fact that, politically, Broward County remained part of the "Solid South." These factors combined to make the campaign one of the county's most memorable and most contentious.

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World War II affected all aspects of life in 1944. Here, servicemen and volunteers gather at the Fort Lauderdale Service Men's Center, located in a building loaned to the city by R. H. Gore (courtesy of Allan McElhiney).

were able to win a presidential election, local Republican chieftains hoped to obtain "cushy" federal jobs.²

In 1944, race consciousness was much in evidence in the southern states, including Florida. Racial segregation laws were in effect, and white supremacy was very much a viable political position. Whenever the race issue surfaced in a primary election campaign, all of the candidates usually took the same side, each claiming that he was strong and sincere on the issue, while his opponents were soft and insincere. Often the total vote in the Democratic primary was larger than the vote in the general election. Unlike many states, which have "open primaries," participation in Florida's Democratic primary was—and is—confined to registered Democrats, and in 1944, because of the racial restriction, the Democratic party was a "white person's party."

In Broward County, as in many other communities throughout the country, the local press played a leading part in the political scene. And, in 1944, the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* wielded much political influence. The history of the *Daily News* and its predecessors in many ways paralleled the political history of the

city and county, and set the stage for the memorable senatorial contest of 1944.

George G. Mathews, the founder of the paper, was born in Alabama in 1855. His parents, impoverished by the Civil War and embittered by the Confederate defeat, decided against living in a country "run by a bunch of Yankees," and moved the family to Brazil shortly after the conclusion of the war. Mathews continued to live in Brazil for many years before moving to Marion County, Florida, in 1882. He represented that county in the 1893 session of the Florida Legislature, and, later that same year, was appointed United States consul at Para (Belem), Brazil, by President Cleveland. He retained that position for five years, and then returned to Marion County. In 1907, he returned to the Florida Legislature, where he emerged as a strong supporter of Governor Napoleon B. Broward's Everglades drainage program. It was in this capacity that Mathews, in 1907, made his first trip to Fort Lauderdale as part of a legislative delegation investigating factors connected with drainage. He moved to Fort Lauderdale as a permanent resident on December 30, 1910.³

At the time Mathews arrived in Fort Lauderdale, the village boasted one local newspaper, the weekly *Fort Lauderdale Herald*, which had been established earlier that year by William Heine. However, no paper was printed locally; the *Herald* was printed in Deland and shipped to Fort Lauderdale for distribution.

A journalist by profession, having published newspapers in Bartow and Tarpon Springs, Mathews decided to start a weekly newspaper to rival the already existing *Herald*, and on March 10, 1911, published the first issue of the *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*. Nearly three months after the first issue of Mathews' newspaper appeared, the town of Fort Lauderdale was officially incorporated by the state legislature, with William H. Marshall as the first mayor.⁴

After much political skirmishing, which spanned several years, Broward County was created in 1915 from the northern part of Dade County and the southern part of Palm Beach County. The new county was named after the late Governor Broward, whose drainage program had done much to open the region for agriculture and settlement. Fort Lauderdale was designated as the county seat, even though Dania and Pompano were older corporate entities, and former Fort Lauderdale Mayor Marshall became the first Broward County representative in the state legislature.

George G. Mathews was elected mayor of Fort Lauderdale in 1913, becoming the second man to hold that position. In 1916, he made an unsuccessful effort to win election as a county judge, and two years later failed in an attempt to unseat Marshall as Broward County's representative in the legislature.⁵

By 1920, the United States census listed the population of Fort Lauderdale as about 2,000, and that of Broward County as approximately 5,000. In response to this growth, Mathews stepped up publication of the *Sentinel* to twice a week, a step also taken by the *Herald*, now published by Fort Lauderdale attorney Carl P. Weidling. Then, late in 1924, as the Florida land boom began to gather momentum, Mathews took

the big step, and the *Evening Sentinel*, as the paper had come to be known, became a daily. Mathews continued to publish the paper for several months before he sold it to the Galvin brothers of Lima, Ohio, for \$140,000. In short order, the Galvins bought out the *Herald* and renamed the combined paper the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News and Evening Sentinel*.⁶

From the beginning of his Broward County career, George G. Mathews took an aggressive stand on the political issues of the day, setting a precedent that would be followed by subsequent publishers of the newspaper. During the Napoleon Broward era, he continued his strong support for the governor, particularly concerning the Everglades drainage program. In 1916, Mathews vigorously supported the successful gubernatorial campaign of Sidney J. Catts, who, running on a strongly worded prohibitionist and anti-Catholic platform, defeated William V. Knott, the candidate of the Democratic establishment. In 1927, Mathews opposed the erection of the new Broward County courthouse. Then, late in his career, he served as president of the local Townsend Club.

From the time of his arrival in Fort Lauderdale, Mathews remained extremely thrilled over the community's prospects for the future. In 1925, he predicted that the city's population would reach 50,000 by 1930. After his retirement from his publishing enterprises, he remained deeply involved in civic affairs, and subsequently made three unsuccessful efforts to obtain elective office, as city commissioner in 1927, as county commissioner in 1928, and again as city commissioner in 1929. That final defeat, when he was seventy-four years old, ended Mathews' efforts to win elective office. Nevertheless, he continued to be active in civic enterprises and political causes, remaining a colorful and conspicuous figure in Fort Lauderdale until his death in 1944 in his eighty-ninth year.

The middle of the 1920s witnessed the height of the Florida land boom. Prices skyrocketed. The Galvin brothers took advantage of the business boom and sold the *Fort Lau-*



Robert H. Gore

derdale Daily News to Thomas and Horace Stilwell for \$480,000. The Stilwell brothers soon ran into financial trouble as the boom started to break. The downturn in business was accompanied by a devastating hurricane in 1926 which played havoc with much of south Florida and destroyed much of Fort Lauderdale. Property damage in Hollywood and Miami was also extensive, but the largest death toll was in the tiny town of Moore Haven, situated on the southwestern shore of Lake Okeechobee. Of the 392 reported Florida deaths caused by the storm, Moore Haven counted for 300.

Nineteen twenty-eight brought the failure of the Fort Lauderdale Bank and Trust Company, and, later that year, a second devastating hurricane. Thus, by the waning years of the 1920s, south Florida had entered a period of hard times which soon melted into the Great Depression, by far the longest and most severe economic disaster in American history. This was the situation when Robert H. Gore of Chicago appeared on the Fort Lauderdale scene and bought

the *Daily News* from the Stilwell brothers for \$75,000. The fact that Gore paid only one-sixth of the amount that the Stilwells had paid the Galvins three years previously indicates the tremendous drop in prices during the Depression years.⁷

Robert Hayes Gore was born in Knottsville, Kentucky, on May 24, 1886. He entered St. Mary's College in St. Mary, Kentucky, where he finished his college work and graduated in two years. After several nondescript jobs, Gore began his career in journalism as a reporter for the *Owensboro Inquirer*. After stints with several other newspapers in the Midwest, he came up with the idea of selling insurance through newspapers and having paper boys collect the premiums when they made their regular collections. The idea caught on, and Gore eventually became involved primarily in the insurance business.⁸

His newspaper work also led Gore into the political field. In 1912 he supported Theodore Roosevelt when the former president attempted a political comeback by running as

the presidential candidate of the Progressive Party. In 1920, Gore campaigned for the release of the famed Socialist leader and five-time presidential candidate Eugene V. Debs, who was languishing in a federal prison for violating the espionage laws during World War I. In a newspaper editorial, Gore called Debs a martyr and made the astonishing comparison of the Socialist leader with John Brown.⁹

In 1929, Gore was in Fort Lauderdale, and there paid a visit to the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* to sell insurance. His conversation with Tom Stilwell developed into a strange turnaround. Instead of buying Gore's insurance plan, Stilwell offered the paper to Gore for \$90,000. In return, Gore offered \$75,000, which Stilwell eventually accepted. Robert H. Gore would publish the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* for the next thirty-four years. Throughout this period, he kept a very firm grip on the operations and policies of the newspaper.

Gore was an early backer of Franklin D. Roosevelt for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1932. He had first met the future president in 1931. After Roosevelt was nominated on the fourth ballot at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Gore became active in his campaign, working closely with the Democratic National Committee. In 1932, the country was in the throes of the Great Depression, which was called by critics of the Hoover administration "the Hoover Depression." The Democrats took advantage of such popular sentiment and scored a landslide victory. Roosevelt defeated the incumbent president by a margin of 472 electoral votes to fifty-nine, and carried forty-two of the forty-eight states. The Democrats also won a substantial majority in both houses of Congress.

With this victory, the Democrats took control of the White House for the first time in twelve years. Many "deserving" and patronage-hungry party members, having been pushed away from the public trough for a dozen years, hungered for the spoils of office. Robert H. Gore got in line with other "Deserving Democrats" to wait for the spoils of office, having

his eye on the position of collector of internal revenue. Whether or not Gore had any real chance of obtaining such a powerful and prestigious position is far from certain, since he found himself in competition with genuine political and financial heavyweights, most of whom had a record of party regularity far longer than Gore's.

Regardless of his initial prospects, any chance that Gore might have had for the position "went down the drain" as a result of an ill-advised speech in Havana, Cuba, where a group of "Deserving Democrats" went for a victory celebration. In a speech before a group of prominent Americans and Cubans, Gore told the Cubans to end the unrest then plaguing their country, or the new American president would send an army to "do the job for you." The audience, both Cuban and American, was stunned.¹⁰

During the early part of 1933, Cuba was under the grip of the Machado dictatorship, but there was much unrest throughout the island. The Platt Amendment was still in effect, and, as a result, many Cubans were very touchy, to the point of being paranoid, on the subject of American intervention. Gore's intemperate remarks destroyed any chance he may have had to become collector of internal revenue, but he could not be pushed away from the public trough so easily. He had loyally supported the party's national ticket, and, according to the rules of the political game, had "to be taken care of." So, in due time, Robert H. Gore was appointed Governor of Puerto Rico. His nomination was confirmed by the senate, and Gore and his family moved to San Juan, Puerto Rico,

where the new governor assumed the duties of office.

Governor Gore's inaugural address lasted twenty minutes, and, during that speech, he made two proposals that did not sit well with many people in the United States. First he advocated cock fighting and supported promoting that barbarous activity as a national sport to attract tourists to the island. Many Americans could not help but wonder at the caliber of tourists who would be attracted by that cruel "sport." Humanitarian organizations in the United States were outraged and complained to President Roosevelt, who referred them to the proper government agencies. Apparently the matter was eventually lost in the government bureaucracy. Gore's second proposal was that there be a vast migration of Puerto Ricans to Florida. Puerto Ricans had already been settling in New York City, and Gore commented that New York was too far away and the climate unsuitable for Caribbean emigrants. Florida, he pointed out, was much closer and had a climate similar to that of the island territory. No doubt this proposal pleased many New Yorkers, but it infuriated most Floridians, including Governor Dave Sholtz, who publicly denounced the scheme. This dispute was probably the cause of the longstanding feud between Governors Gore and Sholtz.

Upon taking office, Robert H. Gore found himself facing an impossible task. He was confronted with a no-win situation, attempting to govern a territory bitterly divided over a number of issues, the most notable being the future status of the island in relation to the United States. One faction favored complete indepen-



R. H. Gore taking the oath of office as Governor of Puerto Rico, 1933.

dence, while another favored statehood. Still another was willing to settle for commonwealth status. None of the groups were satisfied with the current situation, and this dissatisfaction led to much violence, including attempts on the governor's life.

In addition to dealing with this difficult situation, Gore had a feeling that he was losing the support of the Roosevelt administration. His relationship with James A. Farley, chairman of the Democratic National Committee and now postmaster general, had become estranged as a result of the Havana speech. Faced with mounting difficulties, Gore resigned as Governor of Puerto Rico in January 1934. He had served only six months, but he cherished the title of "Governor" for the rest of his life.¹¹

In 1935, Gore established his official residence in Fort Lauderdale, where he owned the newspaper he had purchased six years earlier. Soon after settling in the city, he also became a principal downtown property owner. At the urging of Fort Lauderdale attorney George W. English, Jr., he purchased the unfinished Will Mar Hotel, a casualty of the collapse of the Florida boom, which had remained an eyesore for over a decade. Gore completed the unsightly skeleton structure, and opened it for business as the Governor's Club Hotel in the fall of 1937. The Governor's Club became Robert H. Gore's greatest property acquisition and remained Fort Lauderdale's most famous and prestigious hotel for the next forty years.

As previously noted, Gore, in his capacity as publisher of the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, maintained firm control of the paper's policies. He took strong stands on issues, personalities, and candidates, on the national, state, and local levels. Some of his personal feuds became legendary. His rift with Franklin D. Roosevelt, for example, became deeper, and Gore eventually became an outspoken critic of Roosevelt and his policies.

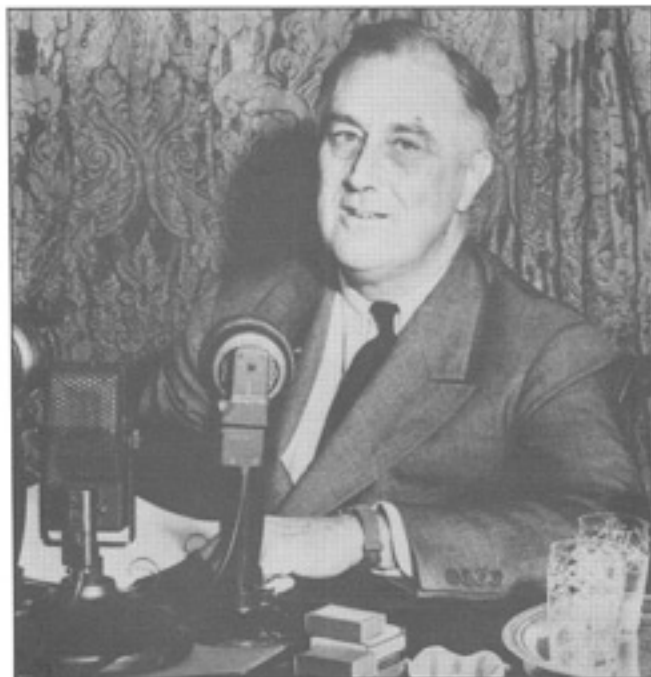
Gore flourished during the era of personal journalism. At the present time, it is close to impossible to determine the person responsible

for the editorial opinions expressed in the daily press. Responsibility is hidden behind a maze of faceless corporations and editorial boards. But during the years 1929-1963, every knowledgeable person in Fort Lauderdale knew who was responsible for the opinions expressed in the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*. He was Robert H. Gore, the publisher of the paper.¹²

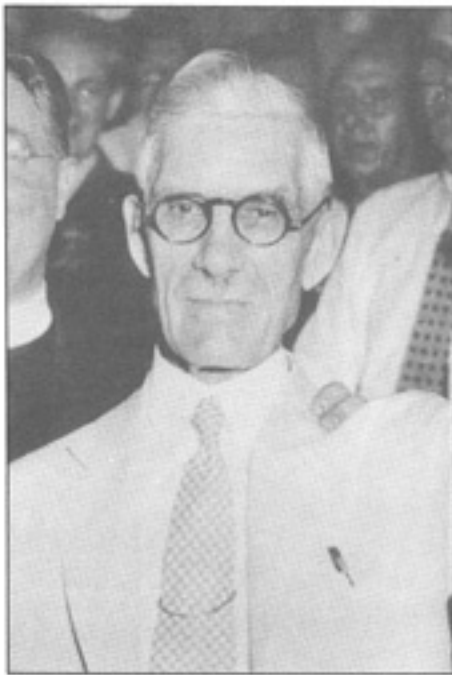
The first of Gore's open feuds with persons of political importance came in 1936, when the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* opened a torrent of abuse against the local congressman, J. Mark Wilcox of West Palm Beach. Wilcox was born in Willacoochee, Georgia, in 1890. In 1910 he had graduated from the Mercer University law school, where his classmates had included Fort Lauderdale attorneys Dwight L. Rogers and John E. Morris. He had arrived in West Palm Beach from Brunswick, Georgia, in 1925, and seven years later scored a political upset that attracted national attention when he defeated Ruth Bryan Owen, the daughter of William Jennings Bryan, in a congressional election. Wilcox, the challenger, favored repeal of the prohibition amendment, while Mrs. Owen, the incumbent and the first woman elected to Congress from the Deep South, was loyal to the political prin-

ciples of her father and favored retention of the amendment. Wilcox was reelected in 1934 against nominal opposition, and with the support of the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*.

As the Great Depression lingered on, Florida politics experienced a marked leftward drift, the movements to the left of the New Deal receiving much popular support throughout the state. Huey Long's "Share Our Wealth" program attracted many Floridians, as did the Townsend old-age pension plan. This plan, conceived by Dr. Francis E. Townsend of Long Beach, California, proposed having the United States government pay a pension of \$200 a month to every person over sixty years of age. A total of \$400 a month for a man and his wife was a tremendous sum during those lean Depression years. There was one condition attached to the proposal—the recipient would be required to spend the \$200 in the United States within one month, insuring more money in circulation. The Townsend plan pensions would be financed by a two percent national sales tax. Townsend clubs sprang up across Florida during the mid and late 1930s, and developed tremendous political clout. In 1936, and again in 1938, Florida office seekers had to be prepared to declare themselves on the Townsend



President Franklin D. Roosevelt



**Dr. Francis E. Townsend,
creator of the Townsend Plan.**

Plan, and, needless to say, most Florida politicians supported the plan. One of the few exceptions was the fourth district congressman, J. Mark Wilcox of West Palm Beach, who declared his opposition, and thus became the favorite target of the Townsend clubs during successive campaigns.

In order to understand the political climate of the time, it must be emphasized that the "leftward drift" of Florida politics during the 1930s had nothing to do with Communism or Socialism. The people were simply reacting to the cruel economic realities of the Great Depression. In fact, this "leftward drift" had very little to do with what passes for liberalism today.

Townsend strength was further indicated in the June 1936 Democratic primary, when little-known Miami attorney Pat Cannon, twice an unsuccessful candidate for the Miami City Commission, launched a serious challenge against two-term incumbent Congressman Wilcox. Cannon enjoyed the all-out support of the Townsend clubs. Robert H. Gore, through the pages of the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, also gave full support to Cannon. For some reason, Gore had had a definite falling out with Wilcox since the 1934 Demo-

cratic primary. Editorial after editorial criticized the incumbent congressman.¹³

While confronting the formidable congressman, Gore met his match in the matter of political vituperation. Wilcox was a "street fighter" and could certainly equal Gore in trading insults. In a speech at Fort Lauderdale's Stranahan Park, Wilcox denounced Gore by name, ridiculed Gore's record as Governor of Puerto Rico, made a number of unflattering references to Gore's character, and gave his side of the differences with Gore. Wilcox claimed that Gore demanded that certain people be appointed to federal patronage positions, and that he refused to comply. Wilcox won the Democratic primary contest, but the Townsend clubs' support of Cannon made the contest closer than had originally been expected.¹⁴

Fort Lauderdale attorney Thomas E. Swanson was the Republican candidate to oppose Wilcox in the November general election, and announced his all-out support of the Townsend Plan. The Townsend clubs throughout the Fourth Congressional District announced their support of Swanson. This development greatly concerned the Democratic leaders. Although the Democratic nomination was normally tantamount to election, the Townsendites were single-issue voters and felt very strongly concerning that issue. Democratic leaders were not sure that the party ranks would hold. Gore also gave his complete support to Swanson. Nevertheless, party ranks held firmly enough for Wilcox to retain his seat by a comfortable margin. Thus 1936 was a banner year for Wilcox. In June and again in November he defeated both the Townsendites and Robert H. Gore and the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*.¹⁵

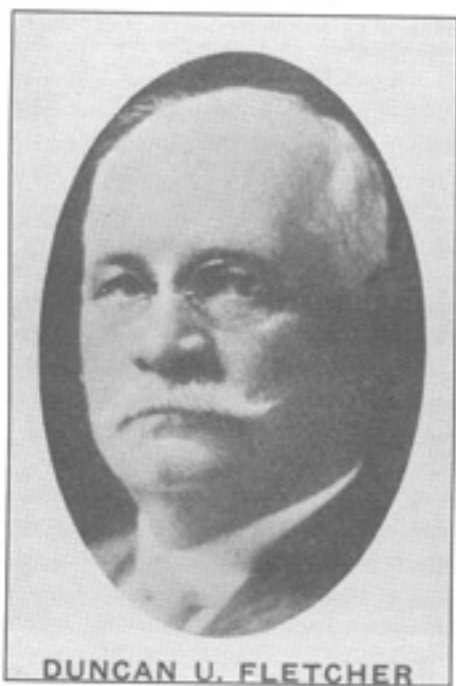
Nineteen thirty-six was also a watershed year for Gore and his newspaper. That year marked the beginning of the publisher's public controversies with state and national political figures. Fred P. Cone was elected governor with the strong support of Broward Sheriff Walter R. Clark and Fort Lauderdale attorney John D. Kennedy. Gore also sup-

ported Cone, and, as a reward, was appointed by the new governor to the Florida Board of Control.

In the year 1936, Florida's two longtime United States senators died within six weeks of each other. Park Trammell, in office since 1917, died on May 8, and Florida's senior senator, Duncan U. Fletcher, in office since 1909, died on June 17. In a special Democratic primary to fill Trammell's unexpired term, Charles O. Andrews of Orlando, a little-known former circuit judge who years before had presided over a panhandle circuit, scored an upset victory over the better-known former governor, Doyle E. Carlton of Tampa. Andrews' victory was largely the result of the support he received from the powerful Townsend clubs. In the contest to fill Fletcher's unexpired term, Claude Pepper, a young Tallahassee attorney who had barely missed unseating Trammell two years previously, was unopposed in the Democratic primary and had no Republican opponent in the November general election. Pepper was to be a major force in Florida politics for the next fifty-three years.¹⁶

Claude Pepper was born in Dudley, Alabama, September 8, 1900. He graduated from the University of Alabama in 1921 and the Harvard Law School in 1924.¹⁷ At Harvard he was a classmate of Fort Lauderdale attorney George W. English, Jr. Pepper taught at the University of Arkansas Law School during the 1924-25 school year, then decided to go into the private practice of law, and in 1925 moved to Perry, Florida. In 1928, he entered the Democratic primary in an effort to gain a seat in the state legislature, and managed to defeat the incumbent. While he was in the legislature, a vote took place on a house resolution which would be forgotten for more than half a century, but would be revived in the 1980s for obvious reasons.

In 1929, soon after the Hoovers moved into the White House, Mrs. Hoover gave a tea for congressional wives. It so happened that Congressman Oscar DePriest, a Chicago Republican, was a Negro. The invitations were delivered, the tea was held, and Mrs. DePriest attended.



DUNCAN U. FLETCHER

Senator Duncan U. Fletcher

That should have been the end of the matter, but it was not. On June 17, 1929, Representatives Way of Pinellas County and Getzen of Sumter County introduced a resolution in the Florida House which read:

Whereas, it has become common knowledge that at a social function held in the city of Washington at the White House, the official residence of the president of the United States, presided over by the wife of the president, a negro woman by the name of DePriest was entertained and received on terms of equality with the white ladies present;

And whereas, we believe that social intercourse between the white and black races is contrary to decency and subversive to the best interests of all parties concerned;

And whereas, there has always existed in the southern states and always shall exist, a line of demarcation between the social status of the white and negro races;

And whereas, during the presidential campaign in the year 1928 the charge was made that Herbert Hoover, then a candidate



Senator Claude D. Pepper

for president of the United States, and now president, had by order as secretary of commerce directed that no distinction, so far as segregation was concerned, should be made between the white and negro employees of said department, which charge was denied by the allies and supporters of the said Herbert Hoover;

And whereas, the electorate of the state of Florida, believing that the said Herbert Hoover would discourage social equality and deny to the negro what has always been denied, did give to the said Herbert Hoover a majority of the votes cast in the national election held on the sixth day of November, 1928, and the electoral votes of said state of Florida;

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the house of representatives of the state of Florida that the act of Mrs. Hoover in thus entertaining a negro woman on a parity with white ladies was both

shameful and disgraceful, and if persisted in will destroy the prestige of the Anglo-Saxon race and set at naught the social fabric of the country that has for ages guarded and kept sacred the purity of our Anglo-Saxon blood which stands for the highest type of Americanism.

Be it further resolved that Hon. Glenn B. Skipper, republican national committeeman for the state of Florida be requested and urged to convey to the president of the United States the earnest protest of the house of representatives and that he use his influence with the president to the end that incidents hereinbefore alluded to be discontinued.

Be it further resolved that this resolution be entered on the journal of the house of representatives that it may stand for all time as a protest against any effort to accord the negro race social equality with the white race.¹⁸

The resolution passed by a vote of seventy-one to thirteen. Claude Pepper had the good luck to vote with the opposition. That meaningless resolution had no impact in Florida at that time or in the future. It never became an issue in Pepper's six campaigns for the United States Senate. In fact, it was forgotten for more than a half century before being resurrected in the 1980s. Pepper mentioned it in his memoirs, published in 1987, referring to it as "my first civil rights vote."¹⁹ He did admit in his memoirs that, "I was not as liberal on the race issue as I later became," which was certainly an understatement. Of course the incredible resolution had nothing to do with "civil rights;" it concerned White House etiquette and good manners. At the time of Pepper's death in 1989, much was said and written concerning his negative vote on the 1929 resolution. The motive was obviously to give Pepper a civil rights record during a period in his career when none existed.

Claude Pepper was defeated for reelection in the 1930 Democratic primary. In his memoirs, he blamed the 1929 vote for his defeat, which probably was not true. Incumbents were far more apt to be defeated than they are now. Pepper himself, after only three years' residence in Perry, had defeated the incumbent in 1928. Significantly, Pepper's 1930 opponent did not make the DePriest resolution vote an issue in the campaign.

After his 1930 loss, Claude Pepper decided to look for "greener pastures," and moved to Tallahassee, where he engaged in the practice of law. In 1934 he decided to enter the Democratic primary against three-term incumbent Senator Park Trammell, who had never been defeated in any election since he had been elected mayor of Lakeland in 1899 at the age of twenty-three. It seemed as though Pepper faced an impossible task. He had only held one elective position, that of a one-term member of the Florida Legislature—certainly not an impressive record. However, in Broward County, he enjoyed the active and aggressive support of his law school classmate, George W. English, Jr., who worked

vigorously in Pepper's behalf. English would remain a loyal supporter throughout Pepper's career. In the meantime, Pepper stumped the state in behalf of his seemingly hopeless candidacy. The results were amazing. In the first primary, he trailed the invincible Trammell by only 2,000 votes. The vote was:

Park Trammell	81,321
Claude Pepper	79,396
C. A. Mitchell	30,455
James S. Sikes	14,558
Hortense Wells	8,167 ²⁰

A run-off primary election was now in order. Trammell realized that he was in serious political trouble, so he put his people to work and was able to score a narrow victory. In the run-off Trammell topped Pepper by a little more than 4,000 votes, the vote count being:

Trammell	103,078
Pepper	98,978 ²¹

Serious misgivings arose over the vote count in Hillsborough County, which Trammell carried by a surprisingly lop-sided margin. However, Pepper refused to issue a challenge to the official result, an action which paid off two years hence.

As previously stated, in 1936 Pepper was rewarded with a "free ride" to the United States Senate when he was unopposed in both the Democratic primary and the general election in the special race to fill the unexpired term of deceased Senator Duncan U. Fletcher. To a great extent, this lack of opposition can be credited to Pepper's gracious concession to Trammell two years earlier. As senator, Pepper soon stood out as an ardent champion of the New Deal, the Townsend Plan, and the Cross State Canal.²²

Claude Pepper served the remaining two years of Duncan Fletcher's term, and in 1938 faced election for a full term. This time, he faced tough competition. Fourth District Congressman J. Mark Wilcox of West Palm Beach, arch foe of the Townsend Plan, and former Governor Dave Sholtz both filed against Pepper. Two minor candidates also entered the fray. Robert H. Gore, through the pages of the *Fort Lau-*

derdale Daily News, seemed unconcerned about Pepper's candidacy. Gore had two old scores to settle. His feud with Wilcox had been rehashed during the 1936 campaign, so this time he directed his major journalistic blasts at Sholtz.

In the ensuing campaign, Pepper declared his undying devotion to the New Deal and the Townsend Plan. Dave Sholtz did the same, but criticized Pepper for not getting the Townsend Plan passed into law. Sholtz also directed his fire at Governor Cone. J. Mark Wilcox repeated his opposition to the Townsend Plan and declared that though he had voted for most of President Roosevelt's policies he was not going to be a "rubber stamp." Pepper had the support of Governor Cone, the Townsend clubs, organized labor, and many political leaders throughout the state.

In the senatorial candidacy primary, Senator Claude Pepper scored the greatest triumph of his career, receiving close to sixty percent of the entire vote and thus avoiding a run-off. Statewide the vote was: Pepper 242,350, Wilcox 110,675, Sholtz 52,785, Moore 5,417, and Merchant 4,066. In Broward the vote was Wilcox 3,064, Pepper 3,013, Sholtz 624.²³

Pepper's strength was distributed throughout the state, while Wilcox's came mainly from the Fourth Congressional District, as demonstrated by his narrow victory in Broward County. Former Governor Dave Sholtz, who had so dominated the 1933 and 1935 sessions of the Florida Legislature and became the political strongman of the state, saw his empire collapse "like a house of cards." He was completely repudiated, and the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, in a front page editorial, pronounced his political demise:

EDITORIAL

Dave Sholtz you're through. Voters of Florida wrote Finis for you politically. You've been through for a long time, but you weren't smart enough to know it. You wrote your political death warrant in Tallahassee in the governor's office. You know how

you wrote it. You know the terms in which it was penned.

Today you are repudiated. Florida has not forgotten you, Sholtz, Florida cannot forget you because the memory of you and your regime should be—and will be without doubt a constant reminder against other politicians of your type and stripe.

You're through Sholtz. Now you can go back to Brooklyn whence you came and where your particular and peculiar talents may be more appreciated than in Florida. Or you can go to North Carolina and from your spacious palace in those classic hills meditate on the strange to you phenomenon of voters at last acquiring the ability to discriminate between the real and the false.

Yes, you can go back to Brooklyn or to North Carolina or to a certain other place we could name but won't, this being a paper of large family circulation. 'We came to bury Caesar, not to praise him.' Remember that line? Politically you are as dead as the Roman emperor. We came to bury you, Sholtz, not to praise you.

And on the figurative shaft we have reared over your very real political grave on a lonely and bleak hillside we are erecting a mental monument of slot machines, and brown bags, and broken promises tinted a deep crimson by the blushes you brought to the cheeks of honest Floridians.

And on the base of this marker we are writing your epitaph: 'Sholtz, poeey!'²⁴

As the years progressed, Robert H. Gore's opposition to the Roosevelt administration grew more and more intense. In the meantime, Claude Pepper developed a national reputation as a supporter of any and all of Roosevelt's policies. With Wilcox and Sholtz out of the way, Gore finally directed his fire toward Pepper. The *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, June 7, 1941, in a front page editorial, delivered a blistering personal attack on Pepper:

PASS IN REVIEW

And even the Gods may have feet of clay.

At least that great patriot, that self-sacrificing hero of the New Deal war cabinet,...Senator Claude Pepper has fallen from the lofty heights of perfection, to which he attempted to elevate himself by glib promises of endless oration.

What a shock it must be to those who have believed that only the highest motives and finest ideals have stimulated Claude's war campaign, to discover that their shiny God is just another cheap, four-flushing, petty war profiteer, and not a knight in armor setting forth to right wrongs...in a crumbling world.

Pepper, the country lawyer from Alabama, who moved to Florida and cashed in on his unquestioning loyalty to the administration, the man who has sacrificed his honor, his state, and obligations to society, to represent only the President and England now proves to be nothing more than another contemptible politician.

We have never approved of the brand of alleged representation given by Pepper, but in a way we have always been able to excuse to some degree his actions, because we did believe that he was motivated by a sincere, even though fanatical belief that the President could do no wrong.

...Pepper, the man whose lust for blood, for death, for destruction, has driven him to preach a doctrine of hate and of the glories of war with the zeal of a fanatic from the Senate, now has exposed his reason for worshipping the God of War.

Elgin Field, one of the army air corps' new bases, and Camp Blanding, north Florida's new multi-million dollar selective service training center, both offer mute testimony as to the stupid, blundering, inefficient meddling of Pepper, the patriot.

Yesterday, WPA officials admitted to a Congressional com-

mittee that the cost of paving runways at Elgin Field was prohibitive, but excused their criminal waste of tax money by charging that the material agreement was forced upon them by Claude Pepper.

When bids were sought on asphalt purchases for the air base, Allied Materials, Inc., of Atlanta offered the best price and was to receive the contract, WPA officials asserted, when Claude Pepper took it upon himself to direct awarding of the "fat" defense contracts.

It was an agreement, drafted by Pepper, which the WPA was forced to approve, that resulted in the purchase of 1,800,000 gallons of asphalt from Pan American (not the air line) at a prohibitive price, leading to the current investigation of profiteering.

Meantime the mounting charges of corruption and profiteering in the construction of Camp Blanding, now threatening to burst out of the capitol building in Washington, also threatens to implicate Claude.

Estimated to cost \$9,000,000, Camp Blanding will represent an investment of more than \$30,000,000 in tax money when it is completed, a condition which has been partially brought on because of the high cost of filling the swamp selected for the camp site, officials charge.

That site was selected by Claude Pepper, who demanded its approval before he consented to construction of the vital [sic] needed army training base.

...But one fact stands out, Pepper...should be removed from the Senate of the United States, should be branded forever as the "rotten little rat" that he has proved himself to be, by all free and decent Americans.

...Yes, Claude, you have been in Washington for a long time, and until now, have successfully hidden the rotten personal motives that govern your brand of representation, but now that the

truth has come out, and we know you for what you are, just another insignificant, petty, rotten political rat, we believe that the time has come when you should be removed forever from official circles and condemned to eternal disgrace among free, decent, and honest men.

w.g.w.²⁵

"W. G. W." was William G. Warnock, the editor of the paper.

Two days later a startling event took place. An apology appeared in Gore's paper. On June 9, 1941, in the "Pass in Review" editorial, Warnock wrote that he had been out of line and that he had not cleared the editorial with the publisher. Since most people assumed that nothing appeared in the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* without the prior permission of Gore, the apology was in itself a news story.²⁶

Claude Pepper continued his all-out support of Roosevelt's policies, both foreign and domestic. He favored all-out aid to England, and during the pre-Pearl Harbor era was probably the most extreme interventionist in the United States Senate. After the Pearl Harbor attack, Pepper favored all-out prosecution of the war. In the meantime, Robert H. Gore continued his newspaper assault on Pepper, criticizing the senator's support of the cross state canal, as well as his voting record in its entirety.

During the crucial war year of 1944, Claude Pepper had to face the voters in a bid for another term in the United States Senate. While the Depression decade of the 1930s had witnessed a marked leftward drift in Florida politics, the wartime decade of the 1940s saw a marked rightward drift. This change in the political climate insured that Pepper would face stiff opposition in his bid for reelection.

Millard B. Conklin, a young Daytona Beach attorney who had once served as Florida assistant attorney general and who had in 1940 made an unsuccessful bid for attorney general in the Democratic primary, was the first candidate to file against Pepper. Conklin based his

Pass In REVIEW

In the nearly two years that we have conducted this corner, we have talked of many things, of governments and men, of world affairs and wars, and local, state, and national issues.

But today, our writings shall be along another line, a line that we are taking for the first time, one that is as new to us, as to the readers who may sometime scan this column.

What we are trying to say is that today we are dedicating this corner to Florida's most prominent statesman, Senator Claude Pepper, who we unfairly wronged Saturday.

In other words Mr. Pepper, we wish to extend our apology for the opinions that we made the mistake of putting down on paper.

Although you probably are far too busy with the multitude of vitally important national duties that you have been called upon to fulfill, to give more than passing thought to the mouthings of the alleged commentator whose opinions fill this corner, it is only right that we give some expression to our sorrow over the mistake we made.

Rather, they were opinions, expressed in type without the knowledge of the person who owns this newspaper, and lacking the approval of those who are charged with directing this paper's policy.

It's a funny thing Mr. Senator, but apparently the weakness that marks all men, can not be always hidden. It seemingly is in conformity with the laws of nature, that everyone must err, must make mistakes that unnecessarily hurt others. And that is what we did Saturday.

Call it a mistake in judgment if you wish, or the failure of a writer to live up to the confidence and trust that has been placed in him by his employer. Perhaps that is the answer.

Apology to Senator Pepper which appeared in the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, June 9, 1941.

candidacy mainly on the issue of white supremacy. He attacked Pepper, Roosevelt, and the New Deal for undermining white supremacy and states rights.

The 1944 Broward County political campaign "kicked off" with the annual Jackson Day dinner held at the Broward Hotel on February 17. Mrs. Christine Edenfield, a longtime member of the Broward County Democratic Executive Committee, made most of the arrangements. It was a gala occasion, with Senator Harry S. Truman of Missouri as the main speaker. Judge Boyd H. Anderson served as toastmaster, and those present included Senator Claude Pepper and his only announced opponent to date, Millard Conklin. Also present was State Senator Frank D. Upchurch, a candidate for governor, and the Broward Democratic hierarchy, which included Fort Lauderdale attorney Dwight L. Rogers, a candidate for congress, his partner John E. Morris, Sheriff Walter R. Clark, Judge George W. Tedder, Sr., School Superintendent U. J. Bennett, Prosecuting Attorney W. Gerry Miller, Assistant State Attorney Louis F. Maire, Supervisor of Registration Easter L. Gates, County Commissioners C. B. Smith and Luther Remsburg, Tax Collector W. O. Berryhill, Clerk of Court E. R. Bennett, school board member A. J. Musselman, and members of the Broward County Democratic Executive Committee. In addition, the party faithful from all parts of the county attended. The proceeds were used to fill the party coffers. Also present was one man who could no longer be considered part of the "party faithful"—Robert H. Gore, publisher of the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*.²⁷

Senator Harry S. Truman had a busy schedule. On his way to Broward County, he stopped at Clewiston to make a speech at the Clewiston Inn. He then proceeded to Fort Lauderdale, not realizing the verbal fireworks that were going to erupt at the Jackson Day Dinner.²⁸

Dwight L. Rogers and Representative John W. Burwell thanked the Democrats for their patronage, and Frank D. Upchurch made a plea



Senator Harry S. Truman



Millard B. Conklin

for party unity. Then Millard Conklin made a memorable speech, delivering a bitter and scathing attack on Claude Pepper, President Roosevelt, the New Deal, and the federal bureaucracy. Conklin said in part, "Pepper has made the issue. There can be but one dominant race in the South and in the nation. The colored race has its capacities and its limitations, but there can be no middle ground. I intend to go to Washington to fight for white supremacy. I am opposed to centralization of government and I will fight for the businessmen who have received a death sentence at the hands of bureaucracy and the state of national socialism bordering on Communism that now exists."

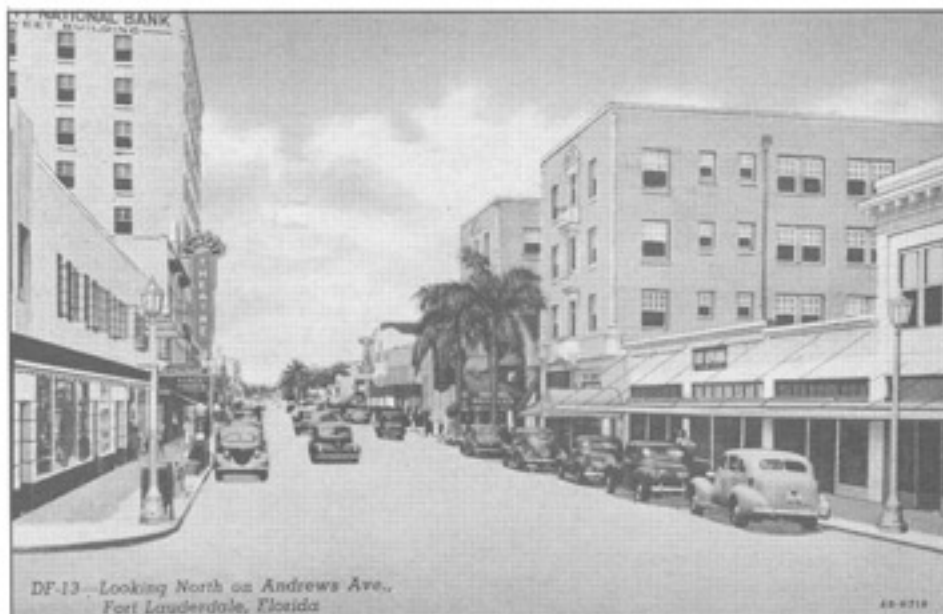
Senator Claude Pepper spoke only briefly. He ignored Conklin and praised Senator Truman, President Roosevelt, and the New Deal. Finally Senator Truman delivered the main address. He started by commenting on Conklin's outburst, saying, "I never expected to hear a Republican speech at a Jackson Day Dinner." He added that he hoped that both President Roosevelt and Senator Pepper would be reelected. Truman said, in part, "Yes, there are bureaucrats in Washington, but most of them are Republicans. Republicans hope this war is a chance to win the election, how-

ever, it is by the efforts of the Truman Investigating Committee that errors in the prosecution of the war have been brought to light and remedied, corrective action unique in the annals of government." Truman's speech pleased most of the people present, but there was one notable exception. He was Robert H. Gore, publisher of the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*.²⁹

Senator Harry S. Truman, who had previously received only scant attention from Gore, now suddenly

found himself, in Gore's estimation, a major player in the political process. In a front page editorial, Gore charged that "Truman has grown senile in the service of the New Deal," and remarked that Truman's defense of the Roosevelt administration "was as silly a statement as could have been thought up in any one of the insane asylums of the country."³⁰

Two political nonentities then entered the primary against Senator Pepper. They were Finley Moore of



DF-13—Looking North on Andrews Ave., Fort Lauderdale, Florida

The Broward Hotel (on right) in downtown Fort Lauderdale, where the memorable 1944 Jackson Day dinner took place.

Lake City, who had been one of Pepper's opponents in 1938, and Alston Cockrell of Jacksonville, who had the same last name as a family very prominent in Jacksonville and Gainesville though he was unrelated to any of them. At this point it appeared that Pepper was "home free." Then a new candidate entered the fray—Judge J. Ollie Edmunds of Jacksonville.

J. Ollie Edmunds was born in Higgston, Georgia, March 1, 1903. At an early age, he moved with his family to Jacksonville, Florida. He worked his way through Stetson University, earning his bachelor's, master's, and law degrees. Later, while working as a field representative for the university and as a director of the Stetson alumni organization, he met and became good friends with Doyle E. Carlton, who was also a Stetson graduate. In 1928, he worked on Carlton's successful campaign for governor. Edmunds then returned to Jacksonville, where he practiced law, and in 1931 Carlton appointed him to fill the remainder of the term of County Judge John W. DuBose, who had resigned. The following year Edmunds was elected by a two to one margin against two opponents. He was reelected in 1936 and again in 1940 without opposition. While on the bench he began purchasing land and eventually became a millionaire from his lumber and land investments.³¹

Even though he had been successful in three Duval County election campaigns, Edmunds was practically a political unknown in the rest of Florida. He had actually voted for Claude Pepper in the 1934 senatorial primary, but the only statewide election in which he had taken an active part was Doyle E. Carlton's successful 1928 campaign for governor. Except for Stetson University and the Baptist church, Edmunds lacked political contacts throughout the state. And while he had been encouraged to enter the race by his friends and neighbors, he had little money other than his own for the formidable task of unseating a well-entrenched incumbent senator. Fortunately for Edmunds, waging a statewide campaign did not require an excessive



Judge J. Ollie Edmunds

amount of money then as it does now. Edmunds also lacked newspaper support, the vast majority of the press favoring Pepper. Pepper also displayed considerable skill in obtaining many government projects for the state, an accomplishment which would prove a tremendous aid in his many voter appeals.³²

One newspaper that supported Edmunds to the limit was Robert H. Gore's *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*. Throughout the campaign, Gore let loose with one editorial blast after another against Pepper. Gore denounced the senator for supporting a federal anti-poll tax law, writing that Pepper was acting under Roosevelt's orders. Pepper was also denounced for a 1942 speech delivered at a Negro church in Los Angeles. The *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* displayed a picture of Pepper at the church, surrounded by black people, and included remarks concerning the racial situation. Millard Conklin, the most extreme white supremacy candidate in the race, pounced on the issue and claimed that the Los Angeles appearance was proof in hand that Pepper was not true to the principles of white supremacy. Pepper answered, "The only speech I have ever

given in California is a patriotic one I made in the pulpit of a Baptist Negro Church on a Sunday afternoon at the expressed request of the members of the church. I said nothing indicating that I believe in social equality because, of course, I do not."³³

Again the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* demanded that Pepper resign, stating that the senator was out of step with most of the Florida voters. As the campaign, and the paper's assaults, progressed, it became increasingly difficult to separate the news items from editorial opinion. One news item accused Pepper of neglecting Port Everglades and favoring port facilities in Miami, "because Dade county casts many more votes than are cast in Broward."³⁴

Although participation in the Democratic primary had been limited to members of the Caucasian race ever since Florida's primary system was created in 1901, Florida Democrats received a "shocker" in 1944. As the result of a Texas case, the United States Supreme Court reversed itself and, by an eight to one vote, declared the white primary unconstitutional.³⁵ Throughout the South the opposition to the court decision was solid. From

the Potomac to the Rio Grande, when it came to the question of white supremacy—that is the right of the white race to rule—not a single major southern politician raised a dissenting voice. Liberals as well as conservatives, labor-oriented as well as business-oriented, Roosevelt supporters as well as Roosevelt detractors, social reformers as well as supporters of the status quo all united on this issue.³⁶

Conservative Senator Ellison D. (Cotton Ed) Smith of South Carolina, chairman of the Senate Agricultural Committee, said, "I am for white supremacy and whoever does not like it can go to hell." South Carolina's moderate junior senator, Burnett Maybank, stated, "The white people of the South will not permit Negroes to take over our election system or attend our white schools. Regardless of any act of Congress or any decision of the Supreme Court, we will continue to conduct our affairs as we believe to be in the best interest of our people. The white people of the South will not accept these interferences. We are proud of our section. We know what is best for the white people and the colored people. We are going to treat the Negro fairly, but in doing so we do not intend for him to take over our election system or attend our white schools." Liberal Senator Claude Pepper of Florida said, "The South will allow nothing to impair white supremacy." Pepper went on to say that it was his opinion that, despite the Supreme Court decision, the Florida Democratic primaries can be "kept white." He emphasized that "the people of the South will not allow matters peculiar to us to be decided by those who do not know or understand our problems. We will work matters out, so as to save the South. We always have and always will." Pepper also remarked that he believed the Florida law on voting in the primaries differed from the Texas law, since, under the Florida election statute, the party and not the state determined the qualifications of party members.³⁷

Tom Conely, chairman of the Florida Democratic Executive Committee, also expressed the hope that the United States Supreme Court

opinion giving Negroes the right to vote in Texas Democratic primaries would have no effect on Florida primaries that year. Conely said, "I am afraid that an attempt will be made to force us to allow Negroes to vote. However, it is getting so close to the time for the May primaries that I don't believe a case could be brought and carried through the State Supreme Court early enough to apply to the voting this year."

In Florida, as in other states throughout the South, the white primary system had, since the turn of the century, effectively disenfranchised Negroes. A few blacks did vote, mainly for the Republican party ticket, in larger cities like Miami, Tampa, and Jacksonville, but they were so few in number that they had little effect on election results. In most Florida counties in the 1940s, there were no Negroes at all registered to vote. That was the political situation when Senator Claude Pepper said, "The South will allow nothing to impair white supremacy." While the liberal Senator Pepper declared his complete support for white supremacy, so did his conservative opponent, J. Ollie Edmunds. Edmunds' political advertisements stated that "the party principle of white supremacy must be maintained." Thus, although white supremacy became a major issue in the

1944 Democratic senatorial primary, all five candidates lined up on the same side.³⁸

In spite of this fact, the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* accused Pepper of political hypocrisy. The paper repeated the accounts of Pepper's appearance at the Negro church in 1942, and made the amazing charge that Pepper was under White House orders when he made the speech. In reference to Pepper's declaration that "the South would permit nothing to impair white supremacy," the *Daily News* demanded to know what right the senator had to make such a statement. Playing the race issue to the hilt, the paper accused Pepper of associating with Negroes on a basis of equality, then incongruously added, "We question the Senator's right to question a decision of the Supreme Court."³⁹ At the same time, the paper was supporting Edmunds, who was saying much the same thing as Pepper. The fact that throughout American history, people both important and unimportant have questioned the decisions of the United States Supreme Court was never addressed. The editorial concluded by sarcastically wondering what Mrs. Roosevelt would say concerning Pepper's declaration of undying loyalty to white supremacy.⁴⁰

Senator Claude Pepper was not the only target for the wrath of the



R. H. Gore's twin targets, President Roosevelt and Claude Pepper, as they appeared in Miami in 1937.

Fort Lauderdale Daily News. The other major target, of course, was Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal administration. By this time, Gore's hostility to Roosevelt knew no bounds. Charge after charge directed against Roosevelt appeared in the pages of the paper. The president was accused of various shortcomings ranging from incompetence to being a dictator. Since 1944 was a presidential election year, the May Democratic primary would decide the make-up of the delegation that would represent Florida at the national convention. In 1944, the names of presidential candidates did not appear on the primary ballot; the names of the delegate candidates were listed instead. Some were pledged to a particular presidential candidate, and some were unpledged, but the ballot did not list the delegates' presidential choices.

A group of conservative Democrats decided to field a slate of delegate candidates in the Florida Democratic primary pledged to Senator Harry F. Byrd, the ultraconservative Democratic senator from Virginia. Byrd was not a candidate, but that fact did not lessen the enthusiasm of his supporters. In Broward, the chief Byrd supporters included former Fort Lauderdale mayor Lewis E. Moore; Fort Lauderdale attorney, former legislator, and Broward pioneer Carl P. Weidling; the managing editor of the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, J. W. Dickey; and Fort Lauderdale businessman Russell Frizzell. Statewide, the most important Byrd backers were former Fourth District Congressman J. Mark Wilcox, now residing in Dade County, and Joe C. Jenkins of Gainesville, a member of the state legislature. Robert H. Gore also endorsed Byrd, and the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* promoted Byrd's cause in editorials and also in news articles. Throughout the paper, the words, "Byrd for President" appeared under the last line of news articles, even if the preceding article had nothing to do with the presidential election.

Another group of dissident Democrats formed an organization called the American Democratic Com-

mittee. The leaders of this group included John J. O'Connor, former Democratic congressman from New York; Harry Woodring, former Democratic governor of Kansas and former secretary of war; and Gleason L. Archer, president of Suffolk University. This group also denounced the Roosevelt administration and called on the Democratic party to reject the fourth term and return to the principles of Thomas Jefferson. What political influence the American Democratic Committee had is highly questionable. O'Connor and Woodring were political has-beens, while Archer was never a major player in the political process. However, in spite of the rather obvious political weakness of the new organization, the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* exalted the American Democratic Committee "to the skies." The formation of the organization appeared in the paper's headlines, and the leaders, who would be considered "political lightweights" by most observers, were transformed by Gore's paper into impressive "political heavyweights" of national stature. Pictures of O'Connor, Woodring, and Archer appeared prominently in the pages of the *Daily News*.⁴¹

A rally in behalf of Senator Harry F. Byrd was held in Stranahan Park on April 16. The group, calling itself "Jeffersonian Democrats," heard from a vast array of speakers. The chairman of the rally, Fort Lauderdale businessman Russell Frizzell, gave a colorful speech and drew heavy applause when he blasted the New Deal. He charged that the 1936 Chicago convention was prearranged and mocked "the voice from the sewer which drowned out the warning cry of America's historic patriots." Vilifying the Washington bureaucracy, Frizzell said, "Senator Harry F. Byrd is a leading statesman with guts, like Martin Dies and a few others. He is one of the few left in the land." Frizzell, a Sixth Congressional District candidate, spoke of the office that he was seeking and drew tremendous cheers when he said, "You can't go to the convention with a quart of whiskey, and you can't send a delegate who doesn't know a horse collar from a

picture frame. Conventions have been taken too lightly for the last fifty years. I pledge myself to Harry Byrd. I'll call the sergeant-at-arms to have the first howling drunk who gets on the floor thrown out!" With these comments, Frizzell strongly implied that past Democratic National Convention delegates were "a bunch of drunks." Candidate for the office of Delegate to the Convention for the State at Large, State Representative Joe C. Jenkins of Gainesville, took off his coat and made the park echo with the cry, "The future of America is in the hands of militant Americans. Santa Claus has been throwing out federal funds under the guise of producing prosperity and has only produced a lethargy." Jenkins went on to charge that "the Felix Frankfurters have carried us to the brink of communistic totalitarianism. Rise from your lethargy to save American democracy!" Then Jenkins delivered his final blast: "This administration has aimed at the abolition of state lines to establish one totalitarian state. Its bureaucrats make the laws, sit in judgment, and act as their own judge and jury; private enterprise and individual effort are stifled..."⁴²

The *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* continued to ridicule both Roosevelt and Pepper throughout the campaign. When Pepper spoke at Stranahan Park, the paper's headline stated:

**SMALL CROWD HEARS
SENATOR PEPPER PLEAD
FOR UNIFIED FDR SUPPORT**
by Lawson E. Parker

The article read in part:

Senator Claude Pepper last night brought to Ft. Lauderdale a plea for re-nomination in the Democratic primaries and for united support of the New Deal administration in the war effort.

Speaking before a small crowd at Stranahan Park, Florida's junior Senator defended his eight year record in the Senate, outlined his platform for supporting the war effort and for effecting a 'just peace' and a stabilized economic order after the war...

The junior Senator said he

was disappointed that he had to leave his duties to defend himself in this campaign against the attacks of 'those lined up against me last December by privileged and selfish interests.'

He said he regretted the Supreme Court decision giving Negroes the right to vote in Texas Democratic primaries. He said he did not believe the decision applied to Florida, but that if it did the law could be altered to leave the 'Party to the white voters.' He said he promised Governor Holland and Tom Conely, chairman of the state Democratic Executive Committee, any help that he might give.

He said that he believed in Democracy and the supremacy of the white race, but wanted to see that 'white and black races live together, but each in his own sphere....'

There were only 100 persons in the audience when Pepper began his speech, but late comers more than doubled the number.

A survey of the small crowd revealed many were tourists, with time on their hands and interested in free entertainment, and not voters in the state of Florida.⁴³

While the Fort Lauderdale Daily News was unimpressed with Pepper's performance, the paper was positively thrilled when Judge J. Ollie Edmunds held his rally in Stranahan Park on April 13. The news article reported that there were 300 people in attendance, but did not mention any survey to determine how many were tourists "with time on their hands and interested in free entertainment, and not voters of the state of Florida." The news article went on to say:

Edmunds demonstrated his ability to represent the people in the next election by pointing out that Florida needed a senator who could become fast friends with the other members of congress, so that when his state needed federal attention this senator would have the confidence of his cohorts. He went on to say that Senator Pepper had

Planes In Italy Bomb Genoa Port

ALLIED HEADQUARTERS, Naples, May 1. (AP) — Allied bombers blasted the big port of Genoa for the third straight night last night after a fleet of more than 500 heavy bombers rained explosives on the Milan rail yards and other targets in northern Italy, headquarters announced today.

Topping off 72 hours of blows on shipping and communications in Italy, the night bombers also jammed the much-bombed west coast port of Livorno and struck Monfalcone, near the Adriatic port of Trieste.

Heavy bombers hit a plane factory at Milan and others at Brescia and Varese, struck rail targets at Castelnuovo and Alghero and dug up an airfield at Reggio Emilia.

Ground action was limited to patrol activity and artillery duels, with the Germans firing propaganda leaflets in one area.

BRITISH SYMPATHY

WASHINGTON, May 1. (AP) — President Roosevelt transmitted to Mrs. Frank Knox today a message of sympathy from Prime Minister Churchill and the British War Cabinet upon the death of the Secretary of Navy.

point an appraisal board of no less than three men to value the City Hall, priced at \$325,000 by the Commission last week. The property will be advertised for bids.

MILITARY LOSES 498 WHEN U. S. SHIP SINKS

WASHINGTON, May 1. (AP) — The sinking of an American ship with loss of 498 military personnel in the Mediterranean was announced today by the War Department.

The date of the sinking was not given, except that it was "recent." Nor was it disclosed whether the enemy action was by submarine or aircraft.

"The vessel sank swiftly and 498 military personnel are missing," said the brief announcement. "The next of kin of the personnel have been notified."

Seven Army Fliers Die In Georgia Plane Crash

MACON, Ga., May 1. (AP) — An Army B-24 bomber based at Chatham Field, Savannah, Ga., crashed just before it reached Herbert Smart Airfield here today, killing seven men and injuring two.

The plane, approaching for a landing, crashed 100 feet from the field, public relations officers at nearby Camp Wheeler said. The ship did not burn.

to China.

Headquarters reported progress in the clean-up of Japanese around Kohima, farthest point of the Japanese invasion of India, and a spokesman said the enemy is massing for an all-out drive for the important Allied base of Imphal.

Chinese headquarters at Chungking reported a new enemy offensive in northern China apparently aimed at helping other Japanese columns break the Chinese hold on a 10-mile segment of the north-south Peiping-Hankow railroad. This new drive, Chinese headquarters said, has reached the vicinity of Yingshang, 120 miles east of the railroad and 150 miles northeast of Hankow.

Ground fighting, meager as it was subsided in the southwest Pacific with the capture of the big Dutch New Guinea base of Hollandia and the battle there was passed to airmen who smacked enemy targets far to the northwest.

Postwar Hotel Site Purchased By Company

Announcement of a large property purchased today by the North American Company, Inc., R. H. Gore, trustee, was made today by R. R. Saunders, attorney. The land encompasses a wide frontage on SE River Drive and continues to the depth of a block, a short distance west of the Federal Highway.

The company plans use of the property as a postwar hotel site.

INVASION SHIPS

ster Flails FDR Policies

difficulties has been even more Military conduct of the war, he

Section of the Fort Lauderdale Daily News for May 1, 1944, with "Byrd for President" notices.

done just the opposite by offending other members with his weak appeal of loyalty to the President and not the people during his denouncement of the Congress override of the President's veto of the tax bill . . .

'If Senator Pepper's platform is to Win the War and Then the Peace, why is it that the Junior Senator from Florida has been absent from his seat more days than he has been present during the present session of Congress while this country is fighting for its very existence?'

The paper reported that Edmunds' last remark drew applause: "It is our sacred duty to preserve the freedom our fighting men left behind them so that when they return they will still find the government they left—government of the people, by the people, and for the people." Edmunds then concluded his speech, "I want to fill the vacancy



State Representative Joe C. Jenkins of Gainesville.

that now exists in the Florida delegation of the United States Senate. I want to represent the people of Florida."⁴⁴

Judge Edmunds frequently charged that Senator Pepper had delayed the start of Elgin Field. The Jacksonville jurist quoted a report for the Military Affairs Committee which "deplored the fact that a member of Congress had, at a crucial time in the nation's history, through political activity," delayed construction of the field for one month because of interest in an asphalt contract.⁴⁵

In Edmunds' words:

*Senator Claude Pepper is running on a platform which calls for winning the war, yet this report discloses that Senator Pepper's interest in a particular bidder for an asphalt contract obscured for the time his interest in national defense. The Military Affairs Committee of the House also deplored the fact that Senator Pepper threatened two government officials with loss of promotions, which had to be ratified by the Senate if his particular firm failed to receive the asphalt award. Such usurpation of power is not consistent with the purposes for which the people of Florida sent Claude Pepper to the United States Senate.*⁴⁶

On May 1, the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, in a front page editorial, advised the voters:

VOTE FOR PEPPER

IF

IF—You feel Claude Pepper has done you a personal favor in the past and you wish to sacrifice the principles of the Constitution of your country.

IF—You are a believer that the Constitution of the United States has outlived its usefulness, the thing for you to do is to vote for Claude Pepper and the New Dealings he stands for.

1) The making of an election issue of the Army's decision to return Ream Hospital to the owners when it was no longer needed. Demanding that his boss—

FDR—investigate the Army men who knew what they were doing all the time.

2) Portraying the role of savior of the people of Tampa and St. Petersburg by asking for the seizure of Gandy Bridge during election year.

All of these things were vote fodder served for Pepper's benefit by the White House.

IF—You condone such methods as perpetrated upon the American businessman as the government's seizure of the Montgomery Ward Company then you had best vote for Pepper, because he approves of such things and would applaud any that took place here in the Southland.

IF—You believe that Senator Pepper was only fooling the people of Dade County when he promised to promote the \$6,000,000 for the building of Virginia Key as competition to your own Port Everglades.

IF—You can surmise the Senator fighting FDR and Mrs. Roosevelt for white supremacy in the South after recent Supreme Court decisions on Democratic Primary rules, then put that cross beside the name of that man who at the dictates of his boss visited California and made personal appearance tours that brought forth all of the racial infringements of southern States' Rights.

IF—You hope to live to see the day when the South and the North are once again at dagger-points that will eventually lead to the extinction of the Democratic Party in this country, vote for Pepper, the man who has done more in the past two months to further this procedure than any Republican alive today.

*IF—You are foolish enough to believe these things, then vote for Pepper and Heaven help the America of Tomorrow.*⁴⁷

Many of the newspaper's charges could not be substantiated, including the claim that Claude Pepper had been ordered by President Roosevelt to make his speech at the Negro church in Los Angeles. Why

Roosevelt would order Pepper to make a speech to a Negro church in Los Angeles, or anywhere else, does not square with common sense. Neither did questioning whether Senator Pepper was prepared to fight with President and Mrs. Roosevelt over white supremacy, since it is common knowledge that Roosevelt did his best to avoid involvement in the racial issue. Nevertheless, throughout the 1944 campaign, the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* continued to hammer at the point. The paper seemed determined to convince the voters that Claude Pepper was an unreliable defender of white supremacy, but Pepper, the political survivor, was equally determined not to be placed on the unpopular side of the race issue.

In an April 3 editorial, the *Daily News* blamed President Roosevelt for the eight-to-one Supreme Court decision which had declared the Texas white primary law unconstitutional. Gore's paper pointed out that most of the justices who voted with the majority were Roosevelt appointees, while the lone dissenter, Owen J. Roberts, was a Hoover appointee. In another editorial, the *Daily News* criticized the decision by stating that most Negroes were Republicans and therefore had no place in a Democratic primary. The paper added, however, that there was nothing to prevent Negroes from having their own black primary.⁴⁸

Judge J. Ollie Edmunds, in an April statement, again attacked Pepper's record on the war, charging that he lacked the expertise to hold a responsible position in the government:

Senator Claude Pepper has claimed that he is the father of preparedness and the apostle of victory. The truth is that it was Senator Pepper, in a speech in the United States Senate six months before Pearl Harbor, who made the statement that we would sink the entire Japanese fleet in two weeks and make a shambles of Tokyo in the twinkling of an eye. Our admirals did not say this, but it made good publicity for Mr. Pepper. He was urging that we attack the Japanese fleet and



**Re-elect
CLAUDE
PEPPER**

TO A SECOND FULL TERM AS A HARD
WORKING MEMBER OF THE
U. S. SENATE

Hear Senator Pepper in Person
on Station W.F.T.L. 7:30 P. M.
Monday May 5th at 10:30 P. M.
over Station W.Q.A.M. Monday
May 5th.

The people of Florida will not permit their
attention to be diverted from the vital
and fundamental National issues of the
day by smokescreens of a smear cam-
paign.

Claude Pepper will not discredit the high
office of United States Senator by mud
slinging. He has based his campaign for
re-election on performance—real ac-
complishments for Florida—on experience
and seniority and membership on impor-
tant Senate Committees.

Claude Pepper will uphold the hands of the
Commander-in-Chief and back our
fighting forces in winning the war. As a Member of the Foreign Relations Com-
mittee we will have the benefit of his foresight, vision and experience in writing a
sound peace. He will protect Florida sons against being called to fight a World
War Number III.

As a member of the Special Senate Committee on Postwar Planning, he will protect
the Florida farmer, businessman, worker, clerk, and housewife, and our returning vet-
erans from becoming the victims of another depression.

In the eyes of the Nation, our brave soldiers and Allies, as well as the Nation's en-
emies, a vote of confidence for Claude Pepper will be a vote of confidence in our
great Commander-in-Chief, and will encourage our Allies and our fighting men with
the knowledge that on the home front we are backing them up on the battle front,
and will see them through to a speedy victory and a sound and lasting peace.

WIN THE WAR — WIN THE PEACE

©1944 Political Advertisement

**HERE'S THE REASON
LAST MINUTE ATTACKS ARE BEING CENTERED ON
JUDGE EDMUNDS**



**EDMUNDS is
"Sweeping the State"
..... to VICTORY!**

Twelve years of fairness to all people as Judge—
Life long refusal to be aligned with any special
group or interests—

**THE COMPLETE ANSWER TO FALSEHOODS
(born in the desperation of certain defeat)
AND ALL LAST MINUTE ATTACKS**

Vote for *Our* next UNITED STATES SENATOR
JUDGE J. OLLIE EDMUNDS

©1944 Political Advertisement for the 12th District of a Blue State

**FRIDAY WQAM
APRIL 28, 7:15 P. M.**



Hear
**JUDGE J. OLLIE
EDMUNDS**
Candidate for
**UNITED STATES
SENATE**

POLITICAL ADV. PAID FOR BY FRIENDS OF J. OLLIE EDMUNDS

**ROOSEVELT
For
PRESIDENT**

These are the
Delegates,
to vote for:

State At Large

MEN

Walter P. Fuller
Ernest Overstreet
Bill Shoyne

WOMEN

Mrs. Walter Clerk
Mrs. Beulah Hooks
Hannah
Mrs. Hayden McK.
Harris

*Sixth
Congressional
District*

W. F. Finch
Christina Edenfield

CLIP THIS LIST —
Memorize It
Election Day
©1944 Political Advertisement

*** DEMOCRATS ***

The New Deal Government, and the wobbly alliance
of Chicago's Kelly, New Jersey's Hague and other corrupt
and political machines are interested in a Fourth Term
only in order to perpetuate their jobs by re-electing
"The Man"—Roosevelt.

**SENATOR HARRY F. BYRD
OF VIRGINIA**

When you go to the polls vote for the candidate for
Delegete to the Democratic National Convention marked
"X" on the ballot below. They are pledged to support
SENATOR BYRD for President.

**FOR DELEGATE
- NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION**

Ballot-Targe
BYRD (Vote for Three)

MORRIS C. STEVEN	X
WALTER F. FULLER	X
PAUL WICKEN	X
THE CARROLLS	X
C. L. BLOOM	X
MILTON MCGIBBEN	X
KENNETH OVERSTREET	X
WYLLIEN	X
BILL MOYNE	X
EMILIE WILSON	X

BYRD (Vote for Three)

WILL C. F. B. ANDREWS	X
WILL O. M. THOMAS CARTER	X
MRS. WALTER CLARK	X
WILLIAM HOOKS WOODH	X
MRS. WALTER B. C. WELLS	X
MRS. W. C. WILSON	X
MRS. JOE H. GILLEN	X

Sixth Congress District
BYRD (Vote for One)

W. F. FINCH	X
CHRISTINA EDENFIELD	X
TONY EDWARDS	X

BYRD (Vote for One)

WILL CHRISTINE EDENFIELD	X
MICHAEL WOODMAN	X
RUTH S. WOODWORTH	X

TEAR OUT THIS AS A REFERENCE AND REMEMBER
BYRD for PRESIDENT

©1944 Political Advertisement for the 12th District of a Blue State

Let's Get On with the War!

Establish A Lasting Peace!

BY

Replacing BUREAUCRATIC CHAOS with Orderly CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT

Cut the Manpower Shortage by Sending Half or More of the 3,300,000 Non-Military Bureaucratic Employees Into the Armed Forces or Essential Private Industry and Help the War Effort and the Taxpayer by Diverting the \$522,000,000.00 Per Month Now Used To Pay Their Salaries.

On May 2nd Vote For Delegates to the Democratic Convention

Who Are Pledged To Nominale and Support

SENATOR HARRY F. BYRD FOR PRESIDENT

DELEGATES

State at Large—
 Hon. C. Avery
 E. Allen Wilcox
 Joe C. Jackson
 Mrs. E. F. B. Anthony
 Mrs. O. M. (Phoebe) Carter
 Mrs. Joe S. Doyle

At Large—
 Russell F. Wood
 Bob W. Johnson

ELECT ALSTON COCKRELL U. S. SENATOR

A FLORIDIAN Who Knows FLORIDA'S PROBLEMS

(Paid Political Advertisement)

FLORIDA'S MAN OF THE HOUR



Claude Pepper

He has the "Know How" to get things done for Florida.

He has already served his apprenticeship, and with "flaming colors" as a DOER.

He has served the time necessary to secure Seniority on Important Senate Committees which are a growing asset to Florida NOW and to the FUTURE.

He has the courage to fight things through for Florida.

HE HAS PROVEN HIS CAPACITY TO PROPERLY AND ADEQUATELY HANDLE FLORIDA'S CASE FOR BUSINESS, FOR INDUSTRY, FOR AGRICULTURE, FOR MARITIME MATTERS, FOR OUR CITIES, TOWNS, COUNTIES AND THE STATE.

He will be even more able to accomplish in the future if given a second full term.

Your vote and support will be appreciated.

(Political advertisement paid for by Friends of Claude Pepper)

A sample of the numerous political advertisements which appeared in the Fort Lauderdale Daily News in May, 1944.

send it to the bottom, of the ocean. The Japanese did to us what Senator Pepper was threatening to do to them. Thus at Pearl Harbor we lost seven of this nation's nine battleships.⁴⁹

The old adage "politics makes strange bedfellows" came true in 1944, when Gore "buried the hatchet" with his old enemy, former Fourth District Congressman J. Mark Wilcox. The reason is obvious. Gore was strongly committed to the candidacy of the delegates pledged to

Senator Harry F. Byrd of Virginia, and Wilcox was a candidate for the position of delegate-at-large pledged to Byrd. So, when the paper listed the fine qualities of the various Byrd delegates, Wilcox was included.⁵⁰

Also in April, the Fort Lauderdale Daily News conducted a "readers poll," and the results gave Judge J. Ollie Edmunds a two-to-one lead over all other candidates. Millard Conklin finished in second position, many votes in front of Senator Claude Pepper. Alston Cockrell, Jacksonville

attorney, and Finley Moore, Lake City real estate man, trailed throughout the balloting. The paper reported that an outstanding feature of the poll was the return of many unmarked ballots with an attached note of "anyone but Pepper," and added, "Edmunds, apparently, has earned a good deal of his following through the forthright lambasting of New Deal policies and the things Pepper failed to do for the state while in Congress."⁵¹

History classes at Fort Lauderdale

dale High School were also involved in a poll. The tenth grade world history and the eleventh grade American history classes gave J. Ollie Edmunds forty-three percent and Claude Pepper forty-one percent of the vote. Finley Moore received eight percent, Alston Cockrell five percent, and Millard Conklin three percent. Students in Miss Ernestine Freiday's world history class favored Edmunds, while students in Miss Opal Atwater's American history class favored Pepper.⁵²

In a poll conducted at Fern Hall, a private school, Senator Pepper came out ahead with forty-two percent of the vote, with Judge Edmunds, the second place finisher, receiving thirty-six percent. Millard Conklin received twenty-two percent. Alston Cockrell and Finley Moore received no votes from the Fern Hall students.⁵³

One blistering editorial in the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* denounced Pepper for introducing a poll tax repeal bill in the United States Senate as a "Roosevelt measure." The editorial continued:

This was introduced for the purpose of permitting every irresponsible resident of the South to vote without any qualifications or any definite purposes or interests. The idiots in the insane asylum would be the equal of any thoughtful person on election day. It was designed by the Roosevelt crowd of which Pepper is a leader to break up the Democratic party in the South and create thereby a New Deal party of irresponsibles who would do whatever was demanded by the administration.

... He [Pepper] is only supported by Southerners who are not thinking things through. He is a devotee of Felix Frankfurter of the Supreme Court, in fact one of his bright young lawyer graduates of Harvard law school who are trying to lead this country away from the solid, substantial democracy which has been tried and has proven the salvation of free men. His laws would make it another fascist state. Felix Frankfurter has schooled Claude

Pepper and had Pepper been on the Supreme Court it is not conceivable that he would have deserted his old teacher.

In all of the states now the most important issue is the defeat of Claude Pepper in Florida. If Pepper should be defeated, and we think he will, Roosevelt will not stand for a fourth term. The handwriting on the wall will be too unmistakable, and Roosevelt does not want to be defeated. If Pepper is renominated it will give heart to the administration, because Roosevelt will feel that the South is safely pocketed. He must, if he is re-elected, carry the South because the Middle West is against him, as he now well knows.⁵⁴

Although Pepper and Edmunds stood together on the race issue and the need to maintain white supremacy, they greatly differed on other issues. Pepper declared his undying devotion to the New Deal and pledged his continued support of Roosevelt's policies. Edmunds, on the other hand, was critical of the New Deal, though he never criticized Roosevelt personally. Edmunds said, "President Roosevelt is not an issue in this campaign." He also said that although he had been an early Roosevelt supporter, he now was opposed to a fourth term.⁵⁵ In denouncing New Deal bureaucracy, Edmunds said in a Miami speech, "The daily life of every one of us has been affected by petty tyrants and bureaucratic dictators who are wasting billions of precious dollars. ... Our great middle classes are aroused over the bondage in which they are held by a bureau which does not permit an employer to grant raises to which they are entitled."⁵⁶

Throughout the campaign, Edmunds charged that Pepper's support came mainly from war profiteers. He also criticized the senator's out-of-state speaking engagements, charging, "Senator Pepper employed a booking agent to make speeches, provided that he received a price, a fee, compensation. Senator Pepper made his patriotism pay dividends."⁵⁷

Washington columnist Drew Pearson, a staunch Pepper supporter,

wrote, "The GOP is pouring piles of money into the race. Actually, they are not concerned about who the Democrat is, so long that it is not Claude Pepper." Pepper himself charged that his old enemy Ed Ball, the brother-in-law of Alfred I. DuPont and head of the DuPont interests in Florida, was behind the Edmunds campaign. Despite these allegations, there is no evidence that the Republicans put "piles" of money into Edmunds' campaign, since the campaign was so poorly financed. Nor is there any evidence that Ball contributed any money to Edmunds.⁵⁸

Although Claude Pepper, throughout his senatorial career, had been a strong promoter and supporter of the Cross State Canal, the canal did not become an issue during the 1944 Democratic primary. The reason seems obvious; it was not to any candidate's advantage to bring up the issue. The project was very unpopular in south Florida, and Pepper did not want to alienate that section. Edmunds, too, was cautious about angering the southern part of the state, but, as a resident of Jacksonville, which would be the chief beneficiary of the canal, he naturally was not opposed to the project. Faced with these same conflicts in their attempt to gain the statewide support necessary to be elected, none of the remaining three candidates saw any advantage in talking about the canal project.

As the campaign entered its final days, Robert H. Gore, by means of editorials and news articles in the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, continued his favorite pastime of "Pepper bashing." The overall theme of these wide-ranging attacks was that every action Pepper took was taken under orders from President Roosevelt. Gore seemed unwilling to concede that Pepper had any ideas of his own. By portraying the senator as a mere puppet, Gore linked his attacks on Pepper to his journalistic assaults on the Roosevelt administration. Up to primary day, the paper printed "Byrd for President" below numerous news articles, even articles having nothing to do with the political situation.

Five days before the primary, President Roosevelt announced the

lifting of the toll on the Gandy Bridge connecting Tampa and St. Petersburg. Claude Pepper made the official announcement. Many observers believed this action enabled Pepper to carry Hillsborough and Pinellas counties by a wide margin.

Senator Claude Pepper, with the support of the Roosevelt administration, most of the newspapers in the state, organized labor, a majority of Florida political leaders, and what was left of the Townsend clubs, scored a first primary victory on May 2, 1944. Significantly, Pepper received approximately fifty-one percent of the vote compared to the almost sixty percent that he had received against much more formidable opposition six years previously. Statewide, the vote was:

Claude Pepper	194,445
J. Ollie Edmunds	127,158
Millard Conklin	33,317
Finley Moore	14,445
Alston Cockrell	9,551 ⁶⁰

Claude Pepper carried fifty-four counties, Edmunds twelve, and Moore carried his own county of Columbia. Of Edmunds' twelve counties, ten were in north Florida, including his home county of Duval. Edmunds' two south Florida counties were Palm Beach and Broward. The vote in Broward County was:

J. Ollie Edmunds	3,343
Claude Pepper	2,860
Millard Conklin	856
Finley Moore	236
Alston Cockrell	199 ⁶⁰

If there was a surprise in the

primary, it would be that Senator Claude Pepper did not receive a higher percentage of the vote. President Roosevelt was very popular throughout Florida, the New Deal had many supporters in the state, most Floridians probably agreed with the Roosevelt-Pepper pre-war interventionist policies, and above all, Claude Pepper had a remarkable ability to land federal jobs in Florida. Pepper successfully protected himself on the racial front by climbing aboard the white supremacy bandwagon. Nevertheless, close to forty-nine percent of the 1944 Florida Democratic primary voters voted against him, when in reality he had only nominal opposition. This outcome should have given Pepper warning that there would be tough political battles facing him in the future.

Politically, J. Ollie Edmunds took "No" for an answer, and never again sought public office. After the completion of his judicial term, he engaged in his profitable lumber business. In 1948, he accepted the call to become president of Stetson University and held that position until his retirement in 1967. He died in 1984.

Robert H. Gore continued his aggressive editorial policies. His personal feuds with public figures became legendary, and his numerous investments in Broward County real estate continued to increase his already substantial fortune. Gore sold the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* to the *Chicago Tribune* interests in 1963, but remained a powerful and controversial figure in Broward

County until his death in 1972.

If Claude Pepper had not played the racial card he would not have survived the 1944 Democratic primary. But survive he did, and he remained a power in Florida politics for another forty-five years. As stated previously, the 1940s and 1950s saw a definite rightward drift in Florida politics. The fact that Pepper barely missed a runoff in 1944, indicates that by that time a more conservative trend had already arrived. While Florida turned increasingly to the right during Pepper's 1945-1951 term, Pepper turned to the left. He abandoned the cause of white supremacy, and he apparently took the government's wartime position of the Soviet Union as a "noble ally" too seriously. As a result, he failed to jump aboard the anti-Communist bandwagon which was in full force by 1947. On these two issues he seemed to lose contact with a majority of Florida voters, and so he was defeated by George Smathers in 1950.

Pepper, however, remained a political survivor. When he had lost his legislative seat in 1930, he had moved from Perry to Tallahassee. When he lost his Senate seat in 1950, he moved from Tallahassee to Dade County. He made an unsuccessful effort to unseat Senator Spessard Holland in 1958, but his move to Dade County paid political dividends when a new congressional district was created in that county in 1962. Claude Pepper was elected to that position, and retained it until his death in 1989.

DWIGHT ROGERS, EDMUNDS WIN COUNTY ELECTION; GREEN, CALDWELL LEAD IN RACE FOR GOVERNOR

FORT LAUDERDALE DAILY NEWS

1944 YEAR, NO. 199

AND EVENING SENTINEL

PRICE: FIVE CENTS

FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA, WEDNESDAY, MAY 3, 1944

PRICE: FIVE CENTS

STIRLING WINS; PEPPER LEADS

Byrd Delegates Garner Big Vote Throughout Area

Senator's Total 8,292 Votes More Than All Others

Thousands of Broward voters...
JACKSONVILLE, May 2 (AP)—
Senator Claude Pepper, outdistanced by his
opponent after losing some ground,
led in the primary of County...

MEAT RATION BAN REMOVED

Headlines announcing the May 2nd election results emphasized Edmunds' carrying Broward County over Pepper's leading the statewide race.

Notes

1. The author depended on the appropriate issues of the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* for much of this material. The author also consulted Claude Pepper's memoirs published in 1987, and considers them disappointing and unreliable. Pepper projected his contemporary (1987) stands back into the distant past to a time when the country, the state, public opinion, and Claude Pepper were different. Pepper claimed to have a consistently "liberal" record, and professed to have a civil rights record during a period in his career when none existed. For the hectic events that took place during the Jackson Day Dinner at the Broward Hotel on February 17, 1944, the author depended on the observations of his father, Fort Lauderdale attorney Hugh Lester (1884-1957), a member of the Broward County Democratic Executive Committee, who attended the dinner. Some of the material is also based on the author's personal knowledge.
2. For an account of Florida Democratic primary rules, see Donald G. Lester, "Broward Politics 1928-1938: Political Influence in Depression Era Broward," *Broward Legacy*, vol. 13, nos. 3-4 (Summer-Fall 1990), 2ff.
3. For a more detailed account of Col. George G. Mathews and the founding of the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, see Donald G. Lester, "The *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* and the City Election of 1937," *Broward Legacy*, vol. 15, nos. 3-4 (Summer-Fall 1992), 12ff.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, 13.
8. Paul A. Gore, *Past the Edge of Poverty. A Biography of Robert Hayes Gore, Sr.* (Fort Lauderdale: R. H. Gore Co., 1990), 5.
9. Gore later developed a reputation as a conservative, but his efforts on Debs' behalf seem to indicate that he had radical notions in 1920.
10. Gore, *Past the Edge of Poverty*, 116.
11. *Ibid.*, 144ff.
12. As an example of the anonymity which surrounds current editorial policy, the author has heard members of editorial boards of various newspapers express opinions on issues that were entirely different than editorials which appeared in their papers.
13. For a more detailed account of Florida politics during the Great Depression, see Lester, "Broward Politics," 14ff.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1971* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1971), 1528.
18. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, June 17, 1929; Ric A. Kabat, "The Early Years of Claude D. Pepper," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, vol. LXXII, no. 2 (October 1993), 179.
19. Claude Denson Pepper with Hays Gorey, *Pepper: Eyewitness to a Century* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987), 41ff.
20. Allen Morris, ed., *The Florida Handbook* 1981-1982 (Tallahassee: Peninsular Publishing Co., 1982), 505.
21. *Ibid.*
22. The Florida Cross State Canal has been proposed at various times since 1826. In this century, it was strongly championed by Senator Duncan U. Fletcher. After Fletcher's death the cause was picked up by Claude Pepper. The proposal called for the canal to begin at Yankeetown on the Gulf and cross Florida to Palatka, where boats could enter the St. Johns River and sail past Jacksonville and into the Atlantic Ocean. Most people in south Florida strongly opposed the canal.
23. Morris, *Florida Handbook*, 505; *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, May 4, 1938. In the November general election, Pepper trounced his Republican opponent, Fort Lauderdale attorney Thomas E. Swanson, by an almost five to one margin, the vote being Pepper 145,757, Swanson 31,035.
24. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, May 4, 1938.
25. *Ibid.*, June 7, 1941.
26. The author thinks that Gore was concerned over a possible libel suit by Pepper. In 1941, it was much easier for a public official to sue for libel than it is today.
27. Most of the material concerning the Jackson Day Dinner was furnished to the author by his father, Fort Lauderdale attorney Hugh Lester, a member of the Broward County Democratic Committee, who attended the dinner.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, February 18, 1944.
31. James C. Clark, "The 1944 Florida Democratic Senate Primary," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, vol. LXVI, No. 4 (April 1988), 371.
32. *Ibid.*
33. For the Pepper quotation, see *Ibid.*, 376.
34. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, April 6, 1944.
35. *Smith v. Allwright*, 1944. The precedent had been, in general, that Democratic primaries were private affairs, and therefore the party could set its own rules for participation. In 1944, the Supreme Court reversed itself by an eight-to-one vote. Justice Stanley Reed, writing for the majority, stated that since the Democratic primary in Texas was the real election, it must allow voters to participate regardless of race. Justice Owen J. Roberts in a vigorous dissent wrote that the precedent should be upheld. He said, in effect, that court decisions are meaningless if they are constantly reversed.
36. In 1944, there was no correlation between a politician's view of the New Deal and his ideas on race relations. Senator Theodore G. Bilbo of Mississippi, who developed a reputation as the most extreme anti-Negro member of the United States Senate, was an ardent Roosevelt supporter. John Rankin of Mississippi, who built a like reputation in the House, was to the left of the New Deal on many domestic issues. Congressman Robert Alexis (Lex) Green of Starke was the staunchest Roosevelt supporter among Florida's House members, but he was the most outspoken advocate of white supremacy among Florida's congressional delegation. On the other hand, Senator E. D. Smith of South Carolina, also a staunch supporter of white supremacy, was a bitter foe of Roosevelt's New Deal.
37. For the Smith quotation, the author is relying on his memory; for the Maybank quotation, see *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, April 13, 1944; for the Pepper quotation, see the *Miami Herald*, April 25, 1944.
38. Clark, "1944 Florida Democratic Senate Primary," 376.
39. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, April 5, 1944.
40. *Ibid.*
41. John J. O'Connor (1885-1960) was Democratic congressman from New York City 1923-1939. He was defeated in the 1938 Democratic primary. Harry Woodring (1890-1967) was Democratic Governor of Kansas 1931-1933. He was defeated by Alf Landon in 1932. He served as assistant secretary of war 1933-1936 and secretary of war 1936-1940. He resigned in a dispute over Roosevelt's policy of aid to the British prior to the United States' entry into World War II.
42. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, April 20, 1944.
43. *Ibid.*, April 6, 1944.
44. *Ibid.*, April 14, 1944.
45. *Ibid.*, April 18, 1944.
46. *Ibid.*, April 18, 19, 1944.
47. *Ibid.*, May 1, 1944.
48. *Ibid.*, April 3, 1944. President Roosevelt, who described himself as a "practical man," would have had no reason to "plot" the demise of the white primary. Since every state which had a white primary was strongly Democratic, Roosevelt was sure of winning all of them by a wide margin, so he would not want to "upset the apple cart." However, since many northern New Dealers were pressing the Negro cause, Gore and other conservative Roosevelt critics assumed that abolition of the white primary and the poll tax were official Roosevelt positions.
49. *Ibid.*, April 24, 1944.
50. *Ibid.*, April 17, 1944.
51. *Ibid.*, April 24, 1944.
52. *Ibid.*, April 17, 1944.
53. *Ibid.*, April 13, 1944.
54. *Ibid.*, April 7, 1944; Florida abolished its poll tax in 1937, but most Floridians opposed a national anti-poll tax law. The prevailing opinion in Florida was that voting regulations were a state concern, so therefore were not the business of the federal government. Contrary to the opinions expressed in Gore's paper, President Roosevelt never endorsed the proposed federal anti-poll tax law.
55. Clark, "1944 Florida Democratic Senate Primary," 376.
56. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, April 15, 1944.
57. Clark, "1944 Florida Democratic Senate Primary," 377.
58. *Ibid.*, 378.
59. Morris, *Florida Handbook*, 506. In the November general election, Pepper defeated his Republican opponent, Tampa attorney Miles Draper, by a substantial margin, the vote being Pepper 335,685, Draper 135,258.
60. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, May 8, 1944.