

CAPSULES... Election of 1844

by Carolyn Patterson

An item in a box of papers from the late Walter VanSant provided a timely story for our fall issue. In the presidential election of 1844 Democrat John Tyler ran against the Whig candidate Henry Clay. State elections had been held in October and Thomson, the democratic candidate had lost the election for governor

The democrats had lost control of the assembly by 104 votes. Democratic leaders were determined that this shortfall could be overcome and that they could deliver the presidential election to John Tyler. Robert B. Risley of Maple Avenue was among the party faithful who received a letter urging all democrats to come out and work for Tyler's success. The letter is too long to print in its entirety but the tone of these excerpts delivers an interesting look at politics in action.

Trenton, NJ October 26, 1844

Dear Sir,

Although we have lost Thomson, it is clearly in our power to carry the State for Polk & Dallas. Eager for the spoils within the gift of the executive, our adversaries made every possible exertion, drained their pockets of money and their heads of all the arts they could invent to secure the election of Stratton.

They succeeded and now lie like a gorged constrictor, spent by exertion and overcome by the very glut of the prey. The fierce activity which met us in the field is now either quieted by having secured its share of the pillage or is busily engaged in rival contests with its fellow to grasp something before all is disposed of. Flushed with success, our opponents are wrapped in the strong man's slumber—we have only to march forward quietly, quickly

and unitedly to strip him—if not of his plunder—at least of his laurels.

We beseech you then, to go immediately to *work*—not to talk—not to make a noise—but to *work—work—work* with this truth to cheer you on—a democratic gain of six votes in each county will overcome the federal majority of 104 votes and give the election of the Jersey Blues to Polk & Dallas—perhaps elect them. What a glorious prize to battle for!

TO THE WORK THEN

1. Let your poll committee immediately make out a list of the doubtful voters—let good and true men *at once* take them in charge, and see that they vote the democratic ticket!

2. Be sure to call on every democrat who did not vote in October, and urge them to come now to the polls... get his pledge to come and vote and see that he performs it.

3. Many a poor mechanic or laborer would vote the democratic ticket if he could do so without the knowledge of his federal employer, and thus escape the tyrant's pleasure.

4. Have vehicles ready on the first morning of the election to bring in the sick, aged, and doubtful voters. The sick may grow worse and be unable to come out. The doubtful are never certain until their votes are in—the enemy will struggle for them, and the most diligent will get them. *In this contest, the party that, by superior exertion and skill, secure the doubtful, will carry the state.* Mark that!

5. Urge every active democrat to leave his field, close his shop, stop his daily work, and give the entire two days of election to his country. It is not asking much of a freeman, if he loves peace, prosperity, low taxes, and the honor of his country.

Immediately upon receiving this, call

privately together all the active democrats in your town and read it to them—and before you part put everything in train for the fight. Send an active man into the adjoining townships where you suspect lukewarmness or depression, to rouse them to the great work.

Your exertions may turn the scale! Will you do all you can?

Democrat's State Central Committee.



Reflections

Atlantic City
Daily Press
Monday, March 10,
1924

Buy Linwood Property

A large lot of land has exchanged hands in Linwood the past few months totaling several thousand dollars.

John Ingersoll of English Creek, has purchased the old picnic grove from George Smith. Mr. Ingersoll has had one house erected. The homestead and 20 acres of Colonel Bryant's estate has been purchased by [?] G. Busby, of the Hotel Dennis. George Smith has purchased the home of Mayor Scull and Charles Stuber is erecting a house on Oak Lane. Mr. and Mrs. Blakley expect to be in their new home on Oak Lane soon.

Ed. Comments: Colonel Lewis T. Bryant owned the Hotel Dennis in Atlantic City and the Dennis Farm on Oak Avenue in Linwood. The old picnic grove located at the farm was a very popular place for church picnics and Bryant's hotel guests were often brought over to enjoy a day at the grove. Mainland Regional High School now occupies the site. I'm not sure where Oak Lane was or is.