

Southerner Scans 'Dear Old Dixie' and Denounces What He Sees

(Reprinted from the Los Angeles Times)
BY WILLIAM S. MURPHY

As a newspaperman, Ralph McGill has undoubtedly become more familiar with the social and economic problems of the southern states than any other writer. It is the land where he was raised, and a region which he loves deeply.

This is clearly evident when you read **THE SOUTH AND THE SOUTHERNER** (Atlantic-Little, Brown: \$1.95), an autobiographical account of his life, and an eloquent denunciation of those forces which seek to slow the process of desegregation in the schools, and continue a policy of discrimination against Negroes.

Today, as editor and publisher of the Atlanta Constitution, McGill has been the target of extremist groups in his own city. Refuse has been thrown on his lawn, and on one occasion someone fired a shot through his window.

He has not wavered in his course, which is to aid in the obliteration of a system that has deprived vast areas of the South of economic progress and kept educational standards at a level that is lower than any region in the nation. Scatter the seeds of bigotry and intolerance across a land and they will have a strange harvest.

The transformation, according to the author, began during World War II, when men were sent overseas to fight side by side. Race distinction had little place in foxholes.

"The better-educated Southerners, white and colored, knew that never again would there be a slipping back into the old restraints, and an acceptance of the cynical fiction of the separate but equal status."

And yet, when the time did come, it was met with violent resistance.

In January of 1962 the State Democratic Committee of Alabama adopted a resolution condemning the attorney general of the United States for interfering with

the historic rights of white Southern Democrats, and for interfering with the voting laws of the state.

"Here again was the angrily asserted belief that Southerners have special rights not shared by other Americans... race discrimination—and the local 'right' to practice it, was implicit in the anger in Mississippi, Alabama, and in other areas where, for the first time, the Constitution of the United States was beginning to be felt in protection of the most basic right—that of participating in the choosing of one's representatives in government.

"The men whom the civil rights cases stirred to angry, vulgar and childish slurs made themselves thereby more naked than they knew. The events in Asia, Africa and Latin America were without meaning to them. But the winds of history were blowing harder and colder, and it seemed that perhaps those whose perspectives were so limited might, very soon, discover their nakedness.

"The conscience of even those Southerners whose identity has been with the old landmarks is beginning to show signs of uneasiness. Southernism, or 'The South,' increasingly is being equated with the mobs burning busses and rioting over the effort of Negro passengers to be accepted as other travelers. Southernism suddenly has become the screaming, cursing mothers in the New Orleans school troubles; or the dynamiters of schools and churches, all of whom defiantly shout their loyalty to 'The South' and their determination to protect 'Southern traditions'...

"History reminds us of the aftermath of the hanging of John Brown. When the trap was sprung on that violent man, the defenders of slavery were very sure their position was strengthened. They were confident that the attack on the United States arsenal, the killing

of the citizens and federal soldiers, 'would bring the North to its senses' and 'cause the abolitionists to lose face.' They did not, or would not, understand



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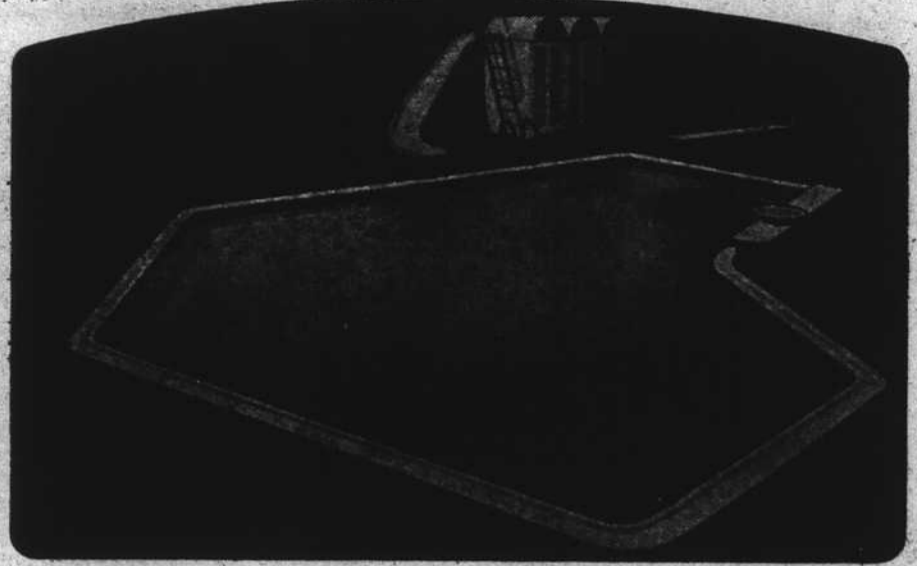
that the conscience of the world had condemned slavery. So it is with segregation. Civilization and morality are bored with it."

For related reading on the same issues, look for these new paperbacks:

BROTHERS UNDER THE SKIN by Carey McWilliams (Little, Brown: \$1.95). The following titles are all Harper Torchbooks: **DEMO-**

CRACY IN JONESVILLE: A STUDY IN QUALITY AND INEQUALITY by W. Lloyd Warner and Associates (\$1.95); **CHILDREN OF BONDAGE** by Allison Davis and John Dollard (\$1.95); **THE EIGHTH GENERATION GROWS UP** by John H. Rohrer and Munro S. Edmonson (\$1.75), and **THE NEGRO IN AMERICA** (\$1.95).

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