DALLAS MORNING NEWS EDITORIAL CARTOONISTS:
INFLUENCES OF JOHN KNOTT ON
JACK "HERC" FICKLEN AND
WILLIAM McCLANAHAN

THESIS

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By

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This problem's investigation deals with gauging the artistic influence, if any, pioneer editorial cartoonist John Knott had on his successors, Ficklen and McClanahan. Information was gathered through interviews and the pages of the Dallas Morning News.

Organization is as follows: introduction, biography and art of Knott, biography and art of Ficklen, biography and art of McClanahan, summary and conclusion.

The study found minimal artistic influence by Knott on the cartoons of Ficklen and McClanahan. Compared to Knott, Ficklen and McClanahan had different art backgrounds, cartoon styles, personal and political beliefs. Knott's successors admired different artists, drew during a different editorial page emphasis and had more freedom in cartoon selection than Knott did. Neither Ficklen nor McClanahan listed Knott as an artistic influence.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The political cartoon originally came to the United States from Holland and Great Britain. The first American editorial cartoonist was Benjamin Franklin, who ran the now-famous "divided snake" cartoon calling for colonial unity in 1754. Although the cartoon quickly caught the public fancy, the production of artwork in early newspapers was limited by the crude printing processes at that time.

By the 1800s, only the weekly illustrated magazines in America such as Harper's Weekly, Frank Leslie's and Puck were able to run quality artwork on a regular basis. The greatest of the early editorial cartoonists, and recognized as one of the finest practitioners in American history, was Thomas Nast. At the peak of his popularity, Nast almost single-handedly defeated the enormously powerful and corrupt Tweed Ring in New York in the 1870s. Nast's cartoons once forced the group's leader, "Boss" Tweed, to demand: "Let's stop them damn pictures. I don't care so much what the

1 Frank Luther Mott, American Journalism (New York, 1962), p. 54.

papers write about me—my constituents can't read—but damn it, they can see pictures!"³

Historian William Emery said newspapers finally caught up with magazines around the year 1900, enabling even Western newspapers to run cartoons. About that time, the Dallas News hired an artist named John Knott.

In the course of his career, Knott won several national cartooning awards and honorable mention for the Pulitzer Prize. The two men who succeeded him, William McClanahan and Jack "Herc" Ficklen were both fine cartoonists but never achieved Knott's national acclaim.

In the 20th Century, the Dallas News was called the "Bible of Texas" by Governor W. P. Hobby. The News was established in Dallas by the Galveston News in 1885 and for many years had the largest circulation in the state.

As with most other newspapers, much of the power of the Dallas News came from its editorial pages. It was there that great ideas, suggestions and proposals were often born. In Ernest Sharpe's biography of the man who ran the newspaper for half a century, G. B. Dealey of the Dallas News, much of the book detailed the projects initiated for Dallas that originated as campaigns from the editorial pages of the News.⁴

³Isabel Simeral Johnson, "Cartoons," The Public Opinion Quarterly, 1, No. 3 (July, 1937), 41-42.

Yet it seems that the most powerful of the contributors to those editorial pages may have been those who wrote the least: editorial cartoonists Knott, McClanahan and Ficklen. F. Fraser Bond said:

> Here we get the newspaper's views in a graphic form. In this picture minded age, many readers who feel they lack the time to read a conventional editorial will gladly pause long enough to glance at the cartoon and catch its editorial meaning. It is claimed that more than three readers out of five take in the editorial cartoon. For years, the cartoon has proved a potent force in molding public opinion.

The impact on the *Dallas News* and its audience has probably been as great. Nathe Bagby said in 1930:

> Cartoons interpreting the spirit of the significant news of the day and pictures illustrating news events of unusual importance, especially if they are related to matters which the News, as a matter of policy emphasizes in the display of news, are two important means which the News uses to promote its policies. The cartoons of John Knott have long been recognized as among the best in the United States.

The bold strokes in dramatic black and white that illustrate a complex problem in universal pictorial terms often make the editorial cartoon the most memorable part of the page. After Ficklen, the last of the three, retired in 1976, other artists soon stepped in to take their places. But, in

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a sense, Knott, McClanahan, and Ficklen hold unique places in the annals of the *Dallas News* through their highly individualistic accomplishments and personalities.

**Statement of the Problem**

The major problem of this study was to attempt to determine the influence that nationally known editorial cartoonist John Knott's artwork and ideas for cartoons had on the work of the cartoonists who followed him, Jack "Herc" Ficklen and William McClanahan.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to chronicle the backgrounds and artwork of Knott, Ficklen and McClanahan and examine the work of the latter two to determine whether and to what extent Knott influenced Ficklen and McClanahan (1) in their artwork, and (2) in the idea selection process and content of their editorial cartoons.

**Questions**

This study was designed to answer these questions: (a) How much, if at all, did Knott influence the art of his successors Ficklen and McClanahan? (b) How much, if any, influence did Knott have over the selection and content of cartoon topics chosen by Ficklen and McClanahan?
Review of the Literature

Although no books exist on Knott, Ficklen or McClanahan, two deal directly with the institution for which all three worked, the *Dallas Morning News*: Sam Acheson's *35,000 Days in Texas* and Sharpe's *G. B. Dealey of the Dallas News.*

Acheson's book, which traced the history of the newspaper through 1938, had several paragraphs about Knott; Sharpe's book about Dealey had passing mention of cartoonists.

Four master's theses, two from North Texas State University and two from the University of Texas, contain a small number of references to one or more of the cartoonists.

The studies are James Bradley's "The *Dallas Morning News* View Toward International Relationships," written at North Texas State University in 1970; Samuel Maranto's "A History of Dallas Newspapers," written at North Texas State University in 1952; Nathe Bagby's "Editorial Policies of the Dallas*

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News," written at the University of Texas in 1930;\textsuperscript{11} and Ralph Parker's "The History of the Dallas News," written at the University of Texas in 1930.\textsuperscript{12}

For comparison with an acknowledged master, several books on Thomas Nast are available, including Albert Paine's \textit{Th. Nast, His Period and His Pictures},\textsuperscript{13} Morton Keller's \textit{The Art and Politics of Thomas Nast},\textsuperscript{14} and J. Chal Vinson's \textit{Thomas Nast, Political Cartoonist}.\textsuperscript{15}

Comprehensive articles on the history and future of cartooning are in such books as \textit{Editorial and Political Cartooning} by Syd Hoff, 1976;\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Art and Politics} by Richard Fitzgerald, 1973;\textsuperscript{17} \textit{A History of American Graphic Humor} by William Murrell, 1938;\textsuperscript{18} and \textit{The Ungentlemanly Art: A History}

\textsuperscript{11}Bagby, "Editorial Policies of the Dallas News."


\textsuperscript{13}Albert Paine, \textit{Th. Nast, His Period and His Pictures} (New York, 1904).

\textsuperscript{14}Morton Keller, \textit{The Art and Politics of Thomas Nast} (New York, 1968).

\textsuperscript{15}J. Chal Vinson, \textit{Thomas Nast, Political Cartoonist} (Athens, Georgia, 1967).


\textsuperscript{17}Richard Fitzgerald, \textit{Art and Politics} (Westport, Connecticut, 1973).

\textsuperscript{18}William Murrell, \textit{A History of American Graphic Humor} (New York, 1938).

Justification

Despite the obvious power of the Dallas Morning News over the years and evidence of the scope of its editorial page, virtually nothing has been written on the people behind it. No study has been undertaken to explore or chronicle the work of Knott, McClanahan, or Ficklen, though they are probably better known than many of their fellow newspapermen.

Readership figures for the editorial cartoons of the Dallas News are startling. In an extensive survey done in 1942 by the Advertising Research Foundation of the Association of National Advertisers and the American Association of Advertising Agencies with the Bureau of Advertising for the American Newspaper Publisher's Association, the editorial cartoon was the second most read feature of the newspaper after the front page headline. Page One had 100 percent readership in the survey, while the cartoon had 98 percent. The editorial cartoon was more than thirty percentage points higher than either the comics page or the sports pages.  


Retired editorial page director for the News, Dick West said the trend ended only recently but that the editorial cartoon remained one of the top five features in terms of continued readership. A study dealing with any aspect of newspaper journalism could possibly be incomplete if it ignored a feature with the publication's highest readership.

Even though Knott received honorable mention for the Pulitzer Prize in 1936 and won many national awards, no biography longer than a newspaper page exists. Although McClanahan and Ficklen were reprinted in some of the nation's finest publications and won many local awards, neither has a biography available.

Elsewhere across the country, volume upon volume has been written on the life and works of such editorial cartoonists as Thomas Nast, Herbert "Herblock" Block, and Bill Mauldin. Their best cartoons are compiled at regular intervals and their histories are frequently recounted to help the reader reach an understanding about the artist and his work. Such has not been the case in Texas.

Despite the apparent lack of scholarly or academic attention, interest in the three cartoonists has not flagged even after they retired. D Magazine carried a long article.

21 West interview.
on Knott's cartoons in the July 1977 issue. McClanahan's sports cartoons and characters continue to be popular items in the form of posters, book covers and even clock faces while Ficklen's editorial cartoons still sell well in several Dallas galleries.

However, McClanahan and Ficklen are in their seventies; Knott is dead. Their careers follow virtually the entire scope of journalism and cartooning in Dallas and Texas. Their first-hand experience with the changing facets of political and cultural life in Texas as seen through the work of editorial cartoonist offers a unique perspective perhaps unavailable elsewhere. Their experiences should be chronicled as no history of cartooning or journalism in Dallas or Texas would be complete without a study of the lives and influences of Knott, Ficklen, and McClanahan. The high readership of their cartoons alone is an important factor in a study of Texas journalism.

Methodology

In a study concerning the major editorial cartoonists of a large newspaper, it was natural to use that paper's pages as a primary source. Microfilmed collections of the Dallas Morning News were available in the North Texas State Library, the Morning News building in Dallas, and Dallas' Public Library, among other places.
It was fortunate that McClanahan and Ficklen, two of the principals of the study, live in the Dallas area. The bulk of the material necessarily came from these primary sources. Both McClanahan and Ficklen worked for many years under Knott, and their interviews added much to the small amount of information available on him.

Knott's daughter, Mrs. David Robb of Lake Whitney, Texas, Morning News Editorial Page Director Dick West, surviving friends, co-workers and relatives of the three artists were traced and interviewed for corroboration of data and for observations and new information.

Some information and opinion was gathered through secondary interviews such as those with retired Southern Methodist University history professor Dr. Herbert Gambrell, and the two cartoonists who followed Ficklen and McClanahan: Bill DeOre and Jim Palmer.

Interviews from magazines and newspapers were used when the information was applicable. Mrs. Robb made available scrapbooks the late Mrs. Knott kept on her husband's work through the 1930s. Otherwise, no books are available with biographies of Knott, McClanahan or Ficklen.

Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study extended from Knott's earliest art training in the late 1880s through the retirement of McClanahan in 1972 and Ficklen in 1976.
The choice of the early date was necessary since newspapers did not have the printing capabilities to run regular artwork until the 1880s. Cartoons did not become practicable as far west as Texas until the early 1900s, when Knott joined the staff of the *News*. As far as it was possible to determine, Knott was the first regular, full-time editorial cartoonist for the *Dallas News*.

The work ends with the retirement of the last of the three in 1976. Artists have been employed by the newspaper since that time, but they have not had the time to complete the voluminous amount of work of Knott, McClanahan and Ficklen.

Other cartoonists worked for short lengths of time for the newspaper during that span of seven decades, but none did so on a regular basis or achieved the stature of these three.

Organization

The thesis is organized as follows: Chapter I, introduction; Chapter II, the life and work of John Knott; Chapter III, the life and work of Jack "Herc" Ficklen; Chapter IV, the life and work of William McClanahan; and Chapter V, the influence, if any, of the cartoons and ideas of Knott upon Ficklen and McClanahan, with summary and conclusions.
CHAPTER II

JOHN FRANCIS KNOTT

John Francis Knott was born in Pilson, Austria, on December 7, 1878. His widowed mother emigrated to Sioux City, Iowa, when Knott was five, joining the rest of her family who had gone some years earlier.¹

Though none of his immediate family was interested in art, Knott later recalled his earliest encounter with artistic failure:

My penchant for drawing began, as I dimly make out, with some conspicuous but not discriminating sketches drawn on the wall paper of the parental home. My talent was so unappreciated that mother forbade, under penalty, a repetition of my efforts at interior design.²

His friend J. J. Taylor said Knott was an immediate success as a cartoonist:

Mr. Knott said that his first drawing to run the editorial gauntlet and emerge into print was when he was sixteen years old and favored one of his hometown newspapers, the Sioux City Journal, with a specimen of his art. The editor sent him an encouraging letter, but no financial encouragement.³


It is not known whether Knott graduated from high school, and he would never answer the question directly. But it appeared from the following interview that he left short of graduation:

About this time [1898], the Chicago Record began offering small prizes for cartoons on a variety of local subjects. I rose eagerly to the bait and began forwarding my handiwork by every mail. Strangely enough, my pictures got very kind consideration by the contest editor and several prizes were awarded me. As soon as I could separate myself from the schooling which my parents insisted upon, and obtain their consent to the great adventure, I shook the rich prairie soil of Sioux City off my two-dollar shoes and departed for Chicago, which represents the entire world to Iowa boys.  

Knott approached all of the newspapers in Chicago for a position as staff cartoonist. But when none seemed interested, he obtained a job as a cub draftsman in a local architect office. At that time, he enrolled in night class at the Holme School of Illustration. Knott apparently fared well at the school and received several notes of encouragement from the school's director, Frank Holme.

In 1901, Knott received a letter from Charles G. White, a former engraver from Sioux City who was opening the first

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5The Dallas Morning News, October 1, 1935, p. 935.
6Frank Holme to John Knott, April 2, 1899, Archives, Dallas Historical Collection.
engraving shop in Dallas, offering him a job. Knott accepted for reasons of health as much as any other:

The winters of Chicago, as anyone who has lived there can testify, are raw and cold, and early springs are cold and raw. Both are particularly irritating to tonsils. After fighting off several attacks of tonsilitis, I tired of the daily dozen of gargle-and-spray and decided to leave Chicago and seek a milder climate.

After several exchanges of letters as to the question of who should pay the transportation to Dallas was finally settled, White sent me a scalper's ticket. Traveling on a scalper's ticket was an inexpensive mode of transportation; however, not so cheap as hitchhiking. I came to Dallas and was not disappointed in the climate, town or the people. The salary, it's true, was a slight, though temporary, disappointment. But then good board and room was obtained in those days for $5 a week.

After four years of illustrating harness and saddlery catalogues for White, Knott was offered a job by D. Prescott Toomey, managing editor of the Dallas News. Knott accepted and did a variety of work for the newspaper.

In the winter of 1904 I entered the service of A. H. Belo & Company and have had no other working connection since. For six or seven years after joining the News, I did general illustration and lettering for advertisements, borders for special pages, pictures for stories, etc. All along I sought to improve my technique and enlarge my vision with reading. My employers encouraged me, and once in a while they used a cartoon which I handed in.

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7 Werner Renberg, "Old Man Texas Stands Up to Uncle Sam," The Quill (April, 1951), p. 17.
8 Dallas Morning News, October 1, 1935, p. 935.
His first signed artwork appeared on January 1, 1906. His first sports cartoon appeared on March 18, 1907 (see example, page 16). Later that year, Knott married Miss Carrie Bowen, a member of a pioneer Dallas family. Their first son, John Francis, Jr., was born a year later. [They had three other children, Helen, Karl, and Marjorie.]

Although Knott was content in Dallas, he was not happy with the quality of his art:

In 1910 there was in Dallas a German painter from Munich, Professor Kunz-Meyer, conducting art classes and painting portraits. He painted life in Munich to me so attractively that I was persuaded to go over with him. That was long before Hitler had ruined all the gemuthlichkeit in Germany. I spent three semesters in Munich, drawing and painting. When I went broke, not being a remittance man, I returned to Dallas and the job on the News.

Actually, the News was more than eager to have Knott return as quickly as possible. Managing Editor D. Prescott Toomey wrote him a note on June 21, 1911, saying:

I wrote you some weeks ago asking when you expected to return to the United States but have heard nothing from you. I would like to know if you will come back to Texas and, if so, would you care to come again and join the staff of the News and upon what terms?

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12 Letter from D. Prescott Toomey to John Knott, June 21, 1911, private collection of Knott's daughter, Mrs. David Robb.
But the artist remained noncommittal, and Toomey sent a second letter three weeks later:

I wish to compliment you very cordially on the marked improvement in your drawing. We will be glad to have anything that you find that you think will be interesting to our clientele, and almost everything in the way of sketches from that side of the water will be good.

I note what you say about not having made any definite plans beyond returning to America. The situation here is just this. We are not satisfied with the artwork we are getting, and would be glad to have you rejoin the staff. Everybody here likes you and admires your work, and would be glad to know what you would consider satisfactory compensation, and when you could come to Dallas if we came to terms?13

In later years, *Time* magazine said Knott may have come across another Austrian painter during his stay in Munich: Adolf Hitler.14 Knott admitted only that he "could have" known of Hitler during those days.15

Knott returned to Dallas in late 1911 and his work began to appear on the front page of the *News* beginning November 19 of that year. He soon made his impact felt as an editorial cartoonist:

In 1910 and 1911, Knott was abroad studying in art schools in Munich, Bavaria. Perhaps this is where he first learned to depict German personal characteristics, a knack that stood him in good stead during the World War. It was during this period, 1914-1918, that he really won his spurs, nationally speaking, as a political cartoonist, if

13 Letter from D. Prescott Toomey to John Knott, July 12, 1911, private collection of Mrs. David Robb.


15 Robb interview.
having his cartoons reproduced in Literary Digest, Review of Reviews and other publications, including contemporaries of the Dallas News, is the measure of national fame.\textsuperscript{16}

Knott's cartoons may have had a significant impact in Texas during the first World War. One man walked into the Dallas Federal Reserve Bank with an application for $10,000 worth of Liberty Bonds pinned to a Knott cartoon. The man said the cartoons left him "with the sense of his duty to help float a loan (see page 19)."\textsuperscript{17}

The Hillsboro Mirror was equally lavish in praise:

Those who read the Dallas News during the World War will remember just how much John Knott, that splendid cartoonist, did to win the war. How his pictures increased the purchase of Liberty Bonds, and ran up the contributions to Red Cross, Salvation Army or Y.M.C.A. No man in the United States can crowd a more complete story into one small cartoon than John Knott.\textsuperscript{18}

Late in 1918, a collection of his best war work (see page 20) was collected and put in a book entitled War Cartoons. His drawings commanded national and international attention and the book sold well. Morning News columnist Paul Crume said the war cartoons were difficult for Knott to draw:

His cartoons on the Kaiser and the German warlords had in them something of the bite of Daumier, whom Knott then admired. They were

\textsuperscript{16} Victoria Advocate, September 28, 1934.

\textsuperscript{17} Dallas Morning News, private files of Mrs. David Robb, undated clipping (ca. February, 1919).

\textsuperscript{18} Hillsboro Mirror, private files of Mrs. David Robb, undated clipping.
HAS BEEN OVERSUBSCRIBED SIX

"THANK YOU, PATRIOTS!"
PEACE CHESTNUTS.

STOCKHOLM
"SOCIALIST
PEACE
CONFERENCE"

SOCIALISTS
rather strange ones for Knott, for his cartoons generally have been goodhumored.19

After the war, his reputation assured in Dallas, Knott settled back to draw cartoons of a civilian America. Perhaps his most cherished accolade came from Baylor University in Waco. Baylor's Diamond Jubilee celebration was in 1920, and the university included Knott along with former president William Howard Taft among those who were to receive honorary doctorates. At the ceremony, Baylor President Samuel P. Brooks made the presentation:

John Francis Knott, you speak a universal language; you are an artist whose paintings are copied in probably more magazines in America and elsewhere than those of any cartoonist I know. Your paintings, sir, throughout the war have won for you the praise of your fellow citizens and I have heard it said many times, and have echoed it on many an occasion, that, in my judgment, no single man in Texas did more towards winning the war than the high and lofty cartoons you drew--never for fun, but always for a cause, the uplift of humanity--and now, by virtue of the authority committed to me as President of Baylor University and in recognition of this versatility of yours, I confer upon you the degree of Doctor of Literature and admit you all the rights and privileges that pertain to this degree.20

After the war, Knott's most famous single character began to receive considerable attention in Texas. This figure, called "Old Man Texas," actually was created in 1906,

20 Baylor Diamond Jubilee Record, prepared by Henry Trantham (Waco, Texas, 1921), p. 127.
when James A. Boyd, postmaster and farmer from Lancaster, Texas, met Knott in the News building.

With his handle-bar mustache, old Uncle Jimmy looked like the typical Texas to Knott (see page 23). Quickly he made a sketch of Boyd. Composite of a million Texans, Old Man Texas was later to become the symbol of Texas. He would be to Texas what Uncle Sam was to the United States. Knott used him hundreds of times since. Old Man Texas stood for honesty in government, low taxes and property ownership. He was the typical Texan--born Southerner, bred Westerner.21

Retired News cartoonist Bill McClanahan said Knott's fondness for the character came from his close feelings for rural Texas:

Knott would always draw cartoons about farmers. I would say, trying to help them fight their battles. Old Man Texas was strictly evolved from the rural aspect character. And so he drew the man and that character became the official symbol of the state of Texas.22

It was a rural concern that gave Knott an honorable mention for the Pulitzer Prize of 1936. The cartoon, entitled "Nature's Answer," was about the dust storms that were stripping West Texas (see page 24). He had been cited by the Pulitzer committee before the award and was to receive several more citations in the years that followed.23


DON'T YOU HANG THAT THING ON ME!
NOUCE'S Answer

DUST
STORMS

THIS LAND
IS MINE.
I CAN DO
WHAT I LIKE
WITH IT.
By this time, Knott's inherent shyness was beginning to manifest itself. Never gregarious, Knott often had trouble coping with increased public attention and acclaim:

When officials of the National Safety Council invited him to come to Chicago to receive a citation a few years back, he would not go. They came to Dallas and arranged an appropriate ceremony in the News building. When the time came, everybody was there but Knott. The Council officials hung the citation on his doorknob.24

Miss Anne Toomey, daughter of Prescott Toomey, worked in the News art department from 1922 to 1966 and was very close to Knott. Miss Toomey said he was easily embarrassed:

He never did want anybody to congratulate him or anything like that. In fact it would embarrass him. The fact is that he was such a brilliant man, and things that he did--I think they were quite easy for him--he felt a little embarrassed to be congratulated on something that in his own mind was easy. He did the same thing over and over, every day and it can't seem very big. He did have a great reputation but he was always downplaying it. He wanted to do just what he did and he was just spoiled. He'd do just what he wanted to do and everybody spoiled him because he was a delightful person.25

Dr. Herbert Gambrell, former chairman of the Southern Methodist University History Department and a scholar of Texas and Dallas history, said Knott's reticence may have denied him his rightful place among famous American Cartoonists. Knott never received the nationwide acclaim heaped on

24Renberg, "Old Man Texas Stands Up to Uncle Sam," p. 16.
many New York and Chicago cartoonists, possibly because he skipped many important engagements just to play chess or to drink beer with friends.26

Knott's disdain of self-promotion left gaps in the amount of information available about him in later years. Miss Toomey said Knott would allow unopened letters to pile up on his desk, finally sweeping them out into the hall for the janitors.27 Many of the letters contained correspondence from national political figures.

He did the same thing with old editorial cartoons, occasionally letting them spill out of his office in the News building. It was one such load that Miss Toomey salvaged and later gave to Dr. Gambrell. That group of cartoons constitutes a large part of the collection in the Archives in the Hall of State in Dallas.28

Fortunately, Mrs. Knott kept a scrapbook from the turn of the century through the late 1930s. In it are letters from such notables as Federal Bureau of Investigation Director J. Edgar Hoover, Texas Governors Dan Moody, Pat Neff, James Allred and Allan Shivers, House Speaker Sam Rayburn and New York Governor Alfred E. Smith. The scrapbook contains

26 Statement by Dr. Herbert Gambrell, former chairman of Southern Methodist University's History Department, Dallas, Texas, May 17, 1978.
27 Toomey interview.
28 Gambrell interview.
clippings of Knott's work reprinted in the Wall Street Journal, the New York Evening Post, the New York Herald Tribune, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, the Los Angeles Times, the Philadelphia Public Ledger and others. However, no comprehensive list of his awards survives.

At the onset of World War II, Knott was still drawing regular editorial cartoons for the Dallas News despite being 62 years old. Three years later, when he could have retired at 65, Knott apparently gave it little thought. His work during the war remained as incisive as ever, McClanahan said:

One of the things that amazed me about Knott . . . I have a book of his World War I cartoons. You could take those cartoons during the early part of World War II and just change the characters, from Kaiser to Hitler, and they were as easily applicable to World War II as they were to World War I. He had a very keen insight into the situation and could portray it graphically.

Time magazine noted Knott's work during the two wars (see page 28). When the war ended, the News hired Colonel Jack "Herc" Ficklen to alternate with Knott doing the daily cartoon. Up until that time, Knott had been doing five or six cartoons a week. Ficklen had drawn occasionally before the war when Knott went on vacations. His first regular

29 Mrs. David Robb, private files, scrapbook.
30 McClanahan interview.
by Japs in March

"Aren't You With Me?" — By Knott
editorial cartoon was printed June 1, 1946. When it became obvious that Ficklen could handle part of the editorial load, Knott began to take long and leisurely vacations:

For years, Knott liked to go to Colorado on vacation, there to play chess and talk with artist Maxwell Boardman. On one such trip, he got too interested to return in time. The office began sending letters urging his return, and each time got an affable reply: "Am rushing back; will be there shortly." He returned some six weeks later.32

Despite the impromptu vacations, Knott continued to do fine work. In 1950, the United States State Department gave him a citation for his work to combat Soviet aggression. Assistant Secretary Edward Barrett said Knott's pen was "a valuable weapon in telling the truth," and added that one cartoon had been reprinted in nine different countries.33 A year later, he was honored as "Best Cartoonist" by members of the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi.

His final years with the News were not as happy as were the previous fifty. His wife died in 1953, and the quality of his drawings slipped somewhat particularly during his final year.34 He retired in 1957, his last regular cartoon having appeared November 18. During the next two years Knott would

33Dallas Morning News, September 27, 1950.
34McClanahan interview.
occasionally do weekend cartoons to give his successors an extra day off.\textsuperscript{35} But poor health finally prevented him from even doing that. He died in February, 1963, at the age of 84.

Part of what set Knott apart from many editorial cartoonists was the actual art in his cartoons. Whereas others used blatantly "cartoon" figures, Knott's invariably were more realistic in depiction (see page 31). McClanahan said he was "more of an artist than a cartoonist":

Knott was brilliant, his figures were the most realistic, not slapstick at all. Knott would draw the figure in the idealized proportions: the average human is seven "heads" tall from the soles of his shoes to the top of his head. You'd measure off and most of Knott's figures were drawn along those idealized proportions. Because Knott was, first of all, a fine artist. Most of his figures were like that.

There was a period there when some of Knott's work, some of his cartoons, were absolutely works of art. I know I've seen some of his stuff where the shading and everything . . . he'd blend the shading off and fade it off from black to very light grey. And it would be just like a fine artist working on a canvas with oil. And he would be very realistic in his portrayal of things.\textsuperscript{36}

Former editorial director Dick West said Knott was a great newspaper artist who never had to compromise his art in reproduction:

John was subtle. Let me tell you why he was a genius as a cartoonist and let me tell you what a good cartoonist is: a good cartoonist, in addition to being an artist, is one who's cartoon is one you grasp the message the second you look at it.

\textsuperscript{35}Toomey interview.  
\textsuperscript{36}McClanahan interview
Knott's genius was that you got it in a second. But very, very subtle. His ideas were unbelievable, the way he transmitted. Plus the fact he was an amazing artist; he studied and taught art. His cartoons stood out, not only artistically with a message, but typographically. They reproduced perfectly because of contrast. You've got to have contrast or it won't come out. On old presses it reproduced perfectly. That was part of his genius, in addition to being a great artist and a great idea-man, he was a great technician.37


Specifically, in this exhibition by Mr. Knott, there is an interesting regular growth which continues to the present day. Beginning with his early student work, which even then, as his instructor indicates, had the "figures in proportion," "well-composed," with "clean and decisive" pen work, he develops his style to the point where he has an admirable naturalism that is yet controlled by design and composition. An analysis of this naturalism shows it to be composed of an exact feeling for pose and gesture, something which is rare amongst those who devote themselves to easel pictures, and is undoubtedly partly the result of the forces which hurry him to a deadline each day. An increasing use of accessories, too, lends the illusions of reality to these creations of the moment which are nevertheless never copies of nature but imaginary people arranged in such a manner as to point a message.38


38 Dallas Morning News, December 9, 1938.
Knott's method of composing those much-praised cartoons was as colorful as any aspect of his personality. In a magazine story, Taylor asked a secretary how Knott worked at his cartoons:

[Knott comes to work] sometimes at eight o'clock, sometimes, ten, and sometimes any old time. He leaves about the same way. Some days he makes two pictures and goes hunting or fishing for a day to recuperate from the strain. As a rule, though, Mr. Knott comes in about 9:30, walking very rapidly and strides into his office so energetically we imagine he has a picture almost popping out of his mind. But after he hangs up his coat, he finds a prop for his feet and reads the paper until noon. Then with a pencil he starts making the outlines of a picture, and after he has finished the penciled sketch, he puts on his hat and coat again, goes to the nearest cafeteria and orders his favorite brain food, which is apple pie and chili with beans in it.

When he comes out from his lunch, he reads a magazine until about one o'clock, then he turns in and draws the picture with pen and ink, sending it up to the engravers about three p.m. They have to have it by two-thirty and he usually gets it to them later.39

Knott switched from India ink and a crow quill (see page 34) pen to a grease pencil on pebble board (see page 35) in the middle 1930s because the latter was quicker.40 Miss Toomey said that, in later years, even though the engraving deadlines were pushed further and further back in the day, Knott would still procrastinate until the last minute before drawing the editorial cartoon.41

40 McClanahan interview.
41 Toomey interview.
HE WANTS TO STOP THE HOLD-UP.

HAND ME THAT CLUB, RIGHT QUICK!
In ideas and general cartoon emphasis, Knott differed from the artists who came after him. West said the differences were due to the News' editorial outlook in the first half of the 20th century:

You see, John came up in an era when editorially the News campaigned harder for things than they did for people. Issues and things. When I took over, we still did that, but we also began to concentrate more on individuals themselves. Now they don't do that. John's cartoons, if you'll go back and look at them, reflect movements in Texas: "Better Highways," "Soil Conservation," "Better Methods of Agriculture" and the "Cow, Sow and Hen Program" (see page 37).42

Dr. Gambrell said that in concentrating on the issues and movements of the day, Knott could sometimes actually see visible effects of his work:

See, the News was, under old Mr. Dealey's direction, a great exponent of civic improvements for the community: physically, mentally or morally. His cartoons reinforced—and I suppose all cartoons do—editorial policy. One I can remember in particular: for many years I was in charge of the Hall of State in Fair Park. It was built during the Centennial and there was a great popular movement on to extend Grand Avenue through Fair Park in front of the Hall of State. And he did some cartoons that did the most to kill that movement, I think. He had a whole bunch of heavily loaded trucks just obscuring the Hall of State on Grand Avenue. With this caption: "Wouldn't it be Grand?" So everybody laughed and gave it up. He was greatly concerned—as the News was—with state politics, too. And during the News' very courageous attack on the Ku Klux Klan, many of his cartoons determined the plans.43

42 West interview.
43 Gambrell interview.
Despite frequent reprinting of his editorial cartoons across America, major awards and acknowledgments from local and national political figures and his impact on civic life in Dallas, Knott remains largely unrecognized today. A Dallas resident since 1904, Dr. Gambrell said Knott's relative obscurity is unfair to the artist:

Well, actually he had an impact all over the state. As you know from studying the history of journalism, the News had a statewide distribution in South Texas. So, his cartoons were widely read out of the Dallas area, too. He was probably the most acute cartoonist of his period. That is, he had a knack for capturing the gist of a public question.

His cartoons, I think, were more frequently reproduced in Literary Digest and old magazines of opinion, than any other. I don't think any other newspaper--of course, I don't know the newspaper field well--had a staff cartoonist who could do as much.

I don't know of any other widely recognized newspaper cartoonist in Texas.

With the wide distribution of the News, and the excellence of Knott's cartoons that hit points, I think he unquestionably had a considerable impact.44

Taylor was perhaps Knott's closest friend during his days as editorial cartoonist for the Dallas Morning News. He ended a long story about the artist with the following paragraph:

I turned John Knott over in my mind to the extent of half a dozen revolutions and said to myself, that I had just seen a man in Dallas, Texas, whose work is known and praised by the best men in his field, his

44 Gambrell interview.
fellow artists; and whose pictures are reprinted perhaps oftener than those of any other cartoonist by those metropolitan publications which make a regular feature of such reproductions. This man John Knott makes pictorial editorials which are significant for their depth of expression, for their instantaneous appeal, for their unmistakable art, and for their outstanding, though nonobtrusive humor. Then I wondered if an artist is like a prophet, in that he is most honored out of his own country.45

CHAPTER III

JACK "HERC" FICKLEN

Jack "Herc" Ficklen was born in Waco, Texas, in 1911. He was nicknamed "Herc" at an early age because of the ease with which he destroyed sandcastles and the name stuck.\(^1\) He attended grammar school in Waco and junior high school in Houston after his family moved there in the 1920s. A final family move was to Dallas, where he attended North Dallas High School and Peacock Military Academy. He was graduated from Peacock in 1930 and made permanent residence in Dallas since that time.\(^2\)

Ficklen said his first introduction to newspaper cartooning came while attending North Dallas High:

One of the few subjects I was interested in in high school and passed without any trouble was art. They had it in high school then. I illustrated newspaper and magazine articles in school and for the annual and did programs for minstrels and things like that. That's where I first saw anything I'd done in print.\(^3\)

The high school experience interested him in reporting as a career, and he got a job as a copy boy for the Dallas

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\(^3\)Ficklen interview.
News on September 15, 1928, making $15 a week. He later attended Sothern Methodist University for two semesters, majoring in art. But the Depression soon deepened and he was forced to withdraw from the university.

During his six years as a copy boy for the News, Ficklen met most of the newspaper's staff, including the famed editorial cartoonist John Knott. His hours spent working for the newspaper increased his fascination with the business:

All during the copy boy days, the copy boy has to go around to each department and each floor and take stories down to the press room. Generally, it is a good education on how a paper works. I was a copy boy six years because during the Depression there was no place to go, no openings. My secret ambition was to have been a reporter. I got chances to take stories over the telephone and one or two or three obituaries from places like Sherman, Waco, Waxahachie, Gainesville. I found out real quick that you had to know how to spell and spell correctly, which I didn't know. At any rate, it looked like I was never going to make a reporter and I began doing a lot of freelancing in those days to magazines.

Ficklen began to send cartoons he had drawn at home to the various popular magazines of the day. He took a correspondence course in cartooning and suffered through five years of rejection slips. He got serious about freelance cartooning after Startling Detective Magazine bought two of his drawings:

4 Ficklen interview
5 Ficklen interview.
I guess the disease bit at that point. I was so simple-minded, I was sending finished drawings to them, great big stacks. You don't do that in freelance, you make them rough. The editor will change them around, make marginal notes and send them back saying, "Finish them up." I didn't know that till they finally told me how and I began to save a lot of postage. For about four or five years there, I was strictly a cops-and-robbers cartoonist. I knew I could sell to detective magazines (see page 43). 6

Meanwhile, Ficklen began to spend as much time as possible with the art department at the News. Eventually he was able to do small illustrations and photography retouching for the newspaper. After he got his courage up from a few magazine sales, he began to submit sports and editorial cartoons to the art department editor. 7

Ficklen was promoted to the art department in 1934 and had a regular sports cartoon by 1937. About the same time, his gag cartoons began to sell regularly. Before World War II, he had been published in The New Yorker, The Saturday Evening Post, Boy's Life and Collier's (see page 44). 8

When Ficklen, an army reservist, was called up in October, 1940, he had just contracted with the Register and Tribune Syndicate to do a regular army-oriented cartoon strip entitled "You're in the Army Now." The strip recorded the

6 Ficklen interview.
8 "Drawn and Quartered," p. 9.
"So, only saps work for a living, eh?"

"We must have scared her!"
Somehow I can always express myself better over the phone!
humorous trials and tribulations of army "dog faces" as they fought the Nazis overseas (see page 46).

I did that just prior to leaving the Dallas News to enter the war. Of course, when I did go into the service, I drew this thing under all kinds of conditions and it helped me immensely in the Army. It was popular and most division commanders always wanted their outfit in it and I learned quickly to use a lot of names and put them in. This came out in 1940, the day the Secretary of Defense reached down into that capsule and pulled out the first draft pick. We were in 75 papers before anybody else for about two years. 9

After five campaigns in Europe and North Africa, Ficklen returned from the war a lieutenant colonel. Sadly, he could not switch "You're in the Army Now" to a civilian role as easily as his own transition, and the strip died "a very timely death." He traveled around the United States for six months after the war and was offered several editorial cartooning jobs. But News Editorial Page Director Bill Ruggles hired him back to the newspaper after one afternoon of heated conversation. 10 He began a Saturday editorial cartoon on April 20, 1946, and began to alternate daily with Knott on June 1 of that same year. It was a position he was to hold until he retired in 1976.

He married Mary Brown of Desdemona, Texas, on October 21, 1950. They had three children, Mollie, Jack Jr., and Robert.

9Ficklen interview.

10"Drawn and Quartered," p. 9.
"Oh yes, the army's still with us—and K company needs two permanent KP's!"

Supplied By The Register and Tribune Syndicate

"Hey, Sergeant, look what I liberated!"

Supplied By The Register and Tribune Syndicate
Ficklen was a popular and successful cartoonist during the thirty years he drew for the News. He received twelve Freedoms Foundation Awards, an award from the National Physicians Committee for the Extension of Medical Services, five "Katy" awards from the Dallas Press Club and a Southwest Journalism Forum certificate of recognition for contributions to the art of political cartooning from Southern Methodist University. He was listed in Who's Who in America and Who's Who in the Southwest. More than 95 of his cartoons hang in the Presidential Museum in Odessa.

Dallas Morning News cartoonist Bill DeOre said Ficklen was always highly regarded among editorial cartoonists:

I think, by and large, Herc is considered one of the art's forefathers. I know in the National Association of Editorial Cartoonists, Herc is highly emulated. He is really considered a top dog. And that's from your own peers and there isn't anything shabby about that.

During his career as an artist, Ficklen received the acclaim of the people he drew. His files are full of notes from the famous and not-so-famous, requesting a certain piece or complimenting him on a cartoon they enjoyed. Texas politicians, including Senators John Tower, Lloyd Bentsen and

11 The San Angelo Standard, January 17, 197-7, p. 3A.
12 Ficklen interview.
Ralph Yarborough, and Governor Allan Shivers, Preston Smith (who called himself Ficklen's "number one fan"), and John Connally, all corresponded regularly with him.

National political figures, including Presidents Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, often wrote Ficklen. But the most representative message came in the form of an open letter from President Gerald Ford to the Dallas News:

Nothing is more lasting than humor or the enjoyment of laughter. Despite the passing of time since I met with the members of the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists, the outstanding collection of caricatures continues to be source of tremendous pleasure to all the Fords.

I appreciate the time Herc Ficklen took to contribute his talent to his special memento. And I hope I will have an opportunity to thank him personally some day. Until then, may his hand be steady, his mind creative and his perspective sharp.

The art Ficklen used to depict President Ford and the other figures in his editorial cartoons has been described in various ways. DeOre said the style "evolved between the new and old style of cartooning."

Herc, I think, was more classical in his drawings. He took after the newer trends of artists, the Mad magazine type of stuff. Ficklen would work on his cartoons and try and get some gimmicks for them and a little

14 Private correspondence files of Ficklen.
15 Dallas Morning News, May 26, 1975, p. 22A.
16 DeOre interview.
exaggeration and things like that... that, I think, is the order of the day (see page 50).  

Bill McClanahan, a Dallas Morning News cartoonist who worked with Ficklen from 1946 to 1972, said he thought similar influences appeared in both their cartoons:

We both admired Vaughn Shoemaker a lot. I'm sure Shoemaker influenced Herc's style as well as he did mine, to some extent, in our editorial cartooning. As a result, Herc and I used the same tools and techniques of shading. As a result, our drawings were similar, not exactly alike, but similar. He'd be blamed sometimes for a cartoon I'd draw, and I'd be blamed sometimes for a cartoon he'd draw. 

The two cartoonists used two different boards with rough patterns for shading purposes: a "Coquille Board" or a "Garko Number Twelve." The shading effects were at first done by special pencils, either a "Blazer Number 152T" or a "Prism Color 930." Ficklen later used a commercially prepared "Benday background." He did most of his heavy black lines in pen, and McClanahan used a "Number Three Winsor Newton" camel hair brush. Both drew twice "life" size for reproduction purposes. 

But if the two artists had similar art styles, their methods of arriving at ideas for cartoons differed radically. 

17 DeOre interview.  
19 McClanahan interview.
DeOre said Ficklen would do extensive research on each germ of an editorial idea. He would then make a list of cartoon possibilities before choosing one to complete. McClanahan would sit for up to an hour and "rack his brain and then he'd have this thing all worked out in his head and just pop it on paper."20

Ficklen said his artwork was influenced most by members of his immediate family:

My background? Well, my mother was a decorative artist. She worked all through the Dallas area for people in their homes. I was exposed to drawing and painting and turpentine --I knew what it was. Along about fourteen, fifteen, I seriously tried to study art under some local teachers. I couldn't afford the lessons, but I hung around anyway. I wanted to be a painter, but I was quick to find out that I was never going to make a living if I didn't get into newspaper work. It always seemed very, very comforting to me to know that someone out there in the big, cold world would pay for a doggone cartoon.21

One of the most noticeable aspects of art in a Ficklen cartoon was the inevitable appearance of a little longhorn figure in the bottom right corner of his drawings (see page 52). He first used the character before the 1971 Cotton Bowl football game between the University of Texas and Notre Dame:

Remember that year Texas was going great guns and they were number one and everyone ran

20DeOre interview.

21Ficklen interview.
around hollering, "We're number one." On the
day of the game, I had a little steer saying,
"We're number one." Then Notre Dame came along
and knocked the socks off Texas and I left that
steer out. I began to get telephone calls,
cards, saying, "put that donkey back in," or
"put that billy goat in and have him saying
something."

This is not a new trick in cartooning;
many cartoonists had it. I was aware of it
and often wanted to have a little "dingbat." So I jumped on it and I began putting the
dingbat in there with something funny--that
I thought was funny--and in cases where I
thought my cartoon didn't explain itself, I
let the little dingbat explain it.\footnote{Ficklen interview.}

Ficklen considered himself apart from \textit{Dallas Morning}
\textit{News} cartoonists in his personal political philosophy. He
delighted in calling himself a "liberal" on a traditionally
conservative newspaper.\footnote{Ficklen interview.} He said, however, that only four
of his cartoons were withdrawn by the management for
editorial differences.\footnote{The \textit{San Angelo Standard}, January 17, 1977.}

But \textit{News} editorial page director Dick West disagreed
with Ficklen's estimate of editorial differences with the
newspaper. West said Ficklen reported to him for cartoon
approval during the final sixteen years of the artist's stay
with the \textit{News}:

\begin{quote}
Herc's more of a liberal. Herc never agreed with the \textit{Dallas News}, he never did.
We'd have an editorial conference and towards
\end{quote}
the end he'd get kind of cynical when we'd talk about certain things. And he'd make sarcastic remarks. He never liked our policy on city politics.

Now Herc would come in with art for approval and because he was kind of convexwise, he'd come in with something and I'd look at it, and I'd say, "Now Herc, that's a little out of line with how we feel." He'd understand and he'd be very sweet and I didn't want to be in a position of killing his work. What I tried to do was work with him and say, "Let's change this around a little." 25

During his years as editorial cartoonist for the News, Ficklen branched into other facets of the cartooning business. His success with "You're in the Army Now" prompted him to try syndicated material again. One strip, "Out of Orbit" (see page 55), ran for three years in the 1950s. Another, "Key Peek" (see page 56), lasted two years during the 1960s. He drew a syndicated editorial cartoon for smaller Texas newspapers under the one-man syndicate he formed, called "Avalon Features" (see page 57). He still does the cartoon on a weekly basis for the nearly sixty-five newspapers in his personal chain. 26

Ficklen retired from the Morning News in 1976; his last cartoon appeared December 31 of that year. He resumed the landscape painting he had abandoned as a teen-ager and has exhibits in the Williamson Art Gallery, Dallas, Texas, The

26 Ficklen interview.
THE POSE THAT CURES

PEACE EFFORT

NUCLEAR ARMS RACE

HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

VICTIM OF AGGRESSION

THE LAST MILE

TOMBSTONES
TEXAS SCHOOLBOY SEASON

COMING OUT OF CHUTE '68
Dawley Gallery, Cranford, New Jersey and The Bahi Mar Gallery, South Padre Island, Texas.  

DeOre, Ficklen's replacement at the News, expressed high regard for him as an artist and a person:

I don't think anybody can deny the fact that over a period of forty years, Herc's stuff got better and better. Maybe the last year he slid a little bit, but he was ready to retire. His best stuff was back during LBJ. He's a folksy type guy; he's a sharp old man, too. He really thinks and acts young and he could be alive a hundred years from now and still be young--that's the kind of person he is. He can relate to a lot of different things. And that's half of it in this business.  

27 Ficklen interview.  

28 DeOre interview.
CHAPTER IV

WILLIAM J. McCLANAHAN

William J. (Bill) McClanahan was born in Greenville, Texas, on December 2, 1907. His family moved to San Angelo, Texas, in January 1919 and stayed until June when they moved to Dallas where he has since resided.  

McClanahan attended Highland Park High School and won varsity letters in football and track. He later described his first brush with newspaper work during those years:

I belonged to what was then called "The Journalism Club" in high school. That was the sort of thing where English students would write up activities in their high school. The Dallas Journal—which was the evening edition of the Dallas News—devoted a full page every Friday to carry those reports from high schools.

He entered Southern Methodist University as an engineering student. His father owned a large cotton farm in North Texas and wanted his son to be a textile engineer. McClanahan said he agreed so he could stay in Dallas close to his girlfriend, Eloise Dungan. But he discovered he was not actually interested in engineering:

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2McClanahan outline.
I used to spend all my time doing cartoons in classes of the professors. Dean Flaith of the engineering school stopped me one day on campus and said, "McClanahan, you ought to give up the idea of becoming an engineer and start studying art."  

During his second year at Southern Methodist University, McClanahan decided to give up pursuing the engineering degree. He quit school and worked for a year. During this time he married Miss Dunagan. McClanahan later quit his job.

But I didn't go back to SMU, I went to the Dallas Art Institute instead. I studied art and I didn't have any intention to go into newspaper art or cartooning--I wanted to be a commercial artist. My interest was commercial: in doing theatre display and that was what I studied toward. My overall plan was to go about a year at the Dallas Art Institute, then follow it with study at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts.  

At the Institute, McClanahan studied under Rubye Stone and Owen and Katherine Travis. Classes included life drawing in the mornings and design or composition in the afternoons.

During that time, the Dallas News was short-handed and was operating with a three-man sports staff. Then the weekend would come around and they had about five or six football games they wanted to staff. Well, I had a friend from high school named Bill Singleton who was working on the Dallas News at that time and he suggested that I come down and do some part-time work for them and cover football games on Friday and Saturday. And that was how I got my foot in the door at the Dallas News.  

6 McClanahan interview.  
7 McClanahan interview.
The Depression ended his plans of further art training, and McClanahan went to work as a trainee for the Dallas Journal's Oak Cliff edition. From there, he went to the Journal as a general writer, specializing in sports. In 1937, the Dallas News sold the Journal to the rival Dallas Dispatch. McClanahan left that newspaper to rejoin the News a year later as a sports writer.8

During World War II, McClanahan enlisted in the Army Air Corps at the age of 35. After serving in Dallas as a physical training instructor, he was sent to Officer's Candidate School in Maryland where he received his commission. While he was stationed at Romulous Field in Michigan, McClanahan's commanding officer voiced concern that the accident reports were not being read and asked him to illustrate a few.

I said, "I'll try," and sure enough, the readership of the flying safety reports increased incredibly in no time at all. That was when I first seriously began to think about being a cartoonist instead of a writer in civilian life.9

McClanahan was discharged in 1946 as a captain; he remained in the Air Force Reserve and ultimately retired as a lieutenant colonel in 1967. After the war, he returned to the News and divided his time between writing, editing, and drawing cartoons on the sports staff. It was not until

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8 McClanahan interview.
9 McClanahan interview.
his sixth month of work that the newspaper was able to fill the vacancies in the sports department and enable him to draw full-time.\textsuperscript{10} His first regular sports cartoon appeared August 4, 1946 (see example page 63).

In the early 1950s, McClanahan began a feature called "Grid Grams" (see page 64) that became popular in Texas:

I drew up a grid chart of the playing field and we used symbols to chart the game. Where there was room in the little chart, I'd draw a little cartoon. Say, "Doak Walker took off here for a touchdown," and I'd draw a little cartoon character running with the football to illustrate it. The sports editor at that time was Bill Reeves and he said the cartoons were more interesting than the charting of the games. So he said, "Let's just drop the charts and do a Monday cartoon in which you cartoon one or two or three games and what happened." It did prove popular and the "Grid Predictions" (see page 65) came out on a Friday and then on Monday there would be a follow-up and I'd have to do a cartoon on Sunday morning before noon so we could get it to the engraver.\textsuperscript{11}

Because of his involvement with sports cartoons, McClanahan was known as "the father of Southwest Conference cartoon mascots."\textsuperscript{12} While doing the cartoons, he received requests for originals and compliments from national sports figures Frank Leahy of Notre Dame, Bud Wilkinson of Oklahoma, Joe Paterno of Penn State, and Dutch Meyer of Texas Christian University and from most major college coaches and athletic directors in Texas.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{10} Black, "The End of an Era," p. 3.
\textsuperscript{11} McClanahan interview.
\textsuperscript{12} Black, "The End of an Era," p. 3.
\textsuperscript{13} Personal correspondence file, McClanahan.
SOMWHERE OUT HERE.

THEY IS A LAND O' MILK N' HONEY... AN' I'M GONNA FIND IT.

...THERE'S NO PART OF COAST TO COAST WHERE THE BENGALS ONCE HAD IT...


...AND MARSHALL HAS THE BEST TARGET IN THE LEAGUE IN LAWRENCE ELIOTT, TOP BCN RECEIVER LAST YEAR.
SOME PHILOSOPHER ONCE SAID: "A HURRICANE IS JUST A LOT OF AIR GOING NO PARTICULAR PLACE IN A HURRY."

TEXAS WILL BREAK UP THE MIAMI HURRICANE

WIND-BAG HOLDER

HERE HOLD THIS. HO-BOY PEPPERMIN!

Oklahoma State's Cowboys Will Steam Up Will Brand Arkansas

Pitt's Panthers Will Play Mean Tricks on Baylor

SMU WILL SPOIL 'TH OREGON STATE BEAVERS' DREAM....

MARCH ON BROTHER--MARCH ON 'TH OIL RED CARPET IS OUT;

FeED BOX OF Sure Things

Texas Tech over Nithieco

TCU to blast UTA

Mile to bust Montana

DALLAS WILL DUMP NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

Bill McElhanan
Dallas Morning News editorial and sports cartoonist

Bill DeOre said McClanahan was a highly influential sports cartoonist:

Just for starters, Bill had a bigger background in sports. He always was a sports writer, he was interested in sports. He knew everything there was to know, I mean he was really into it. He was not fanatical, but he would draw those "Grid Grams" for years. He kept running lists of everything that was happening. Not only stuff that would go into the paper, but stuff that would go into his own files. He kept files on everything, almost to the point of being fanatical. Anybody that interested is going to take a lot more time than they normally would on anything else. Consequently, with his style of drawing, it became kind of a legend in the South, because of his sports cartoons. He was the first real big, well-known sports cartoonist, I like to think. If not in the South, then in Texas. Because of the way he approached things and his action. And also by bringing the Southwest Conference figures to life.\(^\text{14}\)

McClanahan's mostly humorous sports cartoons drew extensively from his own knowledge of sports. The actual artwork was the result of several influences:

I would say that there were two cartoonists who influenced my style more than any others: that would be Jack Patton and Willard Mullin. Mullin was the guy that every kid that wanted to be a sports cartoonist copied. He was their idol. I would sit down and copy him. I know that during my army days, after I decided that I wanted to return as a cartoonist, every time I got my hands on a Mullin cartoon--I kept a scrapbook of it--I would sit down and study Mullin's style.\(^\text{15}\)

\(^{14}\)Statement by Bill DeOre, editorial cartoonist, Dallas Morning News, Dallas, Texas, February 3, 1978.

\(^{15}\)McClanahan interview.
In 1957, John Knott retired after more than 50 years of cartooning for the News. Jack "Herc" Ficklen had joined the staff as an editorial cartoonist in 1946 and had alternated with Knott since that time. Retired News editorial director Dick West recalled that there was little hesitation about hiring a replacement:

Bill, as I recall, was doing sports cartoons and I think had maybe substituted during periods of vacations. Ted Dealey liked Bill's stuff very much and Ted called me down and said, "Add him to your staff. Take him off the sports department and put him on to take Knott's place." That's how Bill got down there. We've always had two, we're the only paper in this part of the world with two cartoonists.\(^{16}\)

McClanahan's first regular editorial cartoon ran November 19, 1957, the day following Knott's final regular effort. The transition from doing sports cartoons to editorial cartoons apparently was easily made:

After I was on the News, and I began to think about the business of maybe going into editorial cartooning permanently, I thought to myself, "Well, why in the world can't you use the same technique Willard Mullin uses for sports cartoons and use it for editorial cartoons?" And so I began to experiment with it for a little bit (see page 68).\(^{17}\)

DeOre, who has been doing sports cartoons for the News since 1976, said he was influenced by McClanahan's work because of the art's direct nature:

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\(^{16}\)Statement by Dick West, retired editorial director, Dallas Morning News, Dallas, Texas, February 12, 1978.

\(^{17}\)McClanahan interview.
The byword of a McClanahan cartoon is action. He was so hard-line. He was very conservative, almost ultra-right and had a lot of action. It carried over from his sports cartoons, it had to, because he always had something moving or hopping or buzzing in his cartoons. He believed in that and it made him kind of unique. Some of his editorial stuff was so hard-hitting it would smack you right between the eyes. Which is good; that's very positive in any kind of editorial cartoon because a quick reaction is what you want. It got really good, he drew with even a finer line than even Mullins did. He had a lot of really good whiz-bang ideas as far as action went.18

McClanahan's overall concept of the editorial cartoon kept the idea and action simple and his personal beliefs were relatively right of center. His favorite character was a paunchy politician with an effete cigarette holder and beret called Lefty Q. Liberal (see page 70).19 McClanahan used Lefty whenever he thought that conservative elements needed a symbol to ridicule.

McClanahan's fellow cartoonist Ficklen sometimes was at odds with him over just such politics.

It was funny, I was a Kennedy man and Bill was not and this caused some friction between us. Not personal friction, we're best of friends. But I found--and I don't know whether Bill knows this or not--when he'd draw Lefty Q. Liberal and everything, he'd make me pretty doggone mad. I found, in many cases, I would be answering him with another type of cartoon. This was not too hot for the paper. But they never seemed to notice it. He was the conservative and I was the liberal in that particular sense. It was good for us and

18 DeOre interview.
19 West interview.
WEIRD PHILOSOPHY.

LAY THAT PISTOL DOWN, SAM.
GET IN A WHEEL CHAIR.
WHOD' ATTACK A POORE,
HELPLESS OL' MAN?

LEFTY Q.LIBERAL'S
PLAN FOR
AMERICA
I kind of have the reputation of being a little liberal up there and had a lot of fun tearing holes in their theories.\textsuperscript{20}

McClanahan had a different view of his personal editorial cartooning beliefs. He said he was only conservative on a national level (see page 72).

Now, on a local level, I didn't always draw the way I felt. Lots of times I disagreed. You see, our paper was a conservative paper on all levels. I agreed with their conservative policies 100 percent. In fact, I was more conservative than they were on some national issues. But on a local level, I didn't always see eye-to-eye. Sometimes I would pass up a local cartoon simply because I didn't agree with their policy or the man they were backing at that time, or for a particular office at that time. No, I considered myself on some issues--particularly on a state or local level--leaning towards the liberal side.\textsuperscript{21}

McClanahan's cartoons became a fixture on the News' editorial page, nearly as much as his work on the sports pages. And although some artists said his sports cartoons would have a longer-lasting impact than his editorial work,\textsuperscript{22} McClanahan's career on the editorial page was long and distinguished.

He later said the high point of his newspaper career was the Southwest Journalism Award he received in 1970 for "continued excellence in sports and editorial cartooning." The award was made jointly by Southern Methodist University

\textsuperscript{20}Ficklen interview.

\textsuperscript{21}McClanahan interview.

\textsuperscript{22}DeOre interview.
LOOK BACK HOME, PAUL

PUNISH THAT CHILD!

ILL. SEN. PAUL DOUGLAS

APR. 17 CHICAGO RACE VIOLENCE
and the Dallas Press Club. 23 He won twelve National Liberty Awards, the 1967 Dallas Press Club Award for Cartooning, the Dallas Chamber of Commerce Sportsman Award, the National Foundation for Highway Safety Award, the Lincoln National Life Foundation Award and the 1972 Hella Temple Award (Shriners). 24

Just as he was recognized by figures in the sports field, McClanahan received voluminous amounts of correspondence from figures in the political arena. Texas political powers, such as Governor Allan Shivers, House Speaker Sam Rayburn, Governor Preston Smith, and national politicians such as Senators Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota, Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, and Barry Goldwater of Arizona, all wrote the cartoonist. 25 But it was Senator Lyndon Johnson who best summed up the letter-writers:

You were always two steps, at least, ahead of all the rest of us.

Many, many thanks for the cartoons. Allen sent them to me a few days ago and they are already incorporated into a book I keep in my office to look at when my morale needs a boost. I am grateful to you for the gift and I have a high regard and appreciation for your artistic gift for expressing your keen political insights. 26

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24 McClanahan outline, p. 1.
25 McClanahan personal correspondence file.
McClanahan was widely reprinted in national magazines and newspapers during his more than 20 years as a cartoonist:

I made Time with an editorial cartoon, U.S. News and World Report, and Newsweek, and on some occasions, the overseas editions of those magazines, especially U.S. News. Then I was reprinted quite often in the Los Angeles Times, back when the Times was more conservative than it is today. 27

McClanahan retired in 1972, his last regular cartoon appearing on December 29; fittingly, a humorous look at previous Cotton Bowl games. A few days later his friend, noted columnist for the News, Frank X. Tolbert, wrote a column entitled, "Curmudgeon's Cartoons Will Be Keenly Missed."

This column is composed because The McClanahan, my compadre since I too was a goatish young sports writer, is retiring today. That is, he is retiring as a resident Dallas News curmudgeon, and with the laurels of a nationally-renowned editorial and sports cartoonist. 28

After his retirement, West recalled McClanahan's work as a news cartoonist:

Bill wasn't subtle, nothing subtle about him. Nothing subtle about him as a person; he says what he thinks. He had a great way of putting over a message. It wasn't as subtle as Knott's but he was a good artist.

But it's good, it's good cartoon art and Bill was the best informed cartoonist of all. Bill read: he would read U.S. News and World Report from cover to cover every damn week. He'd go up and study the New York Times, he'd read Time and Newsweek. And, of course, the

27 McClanahan interview.
28 The Dallas Morning News, January 1, 1973, p. 23A.
Dallas News--Bill read more than anybody. Bill was great, old Bill was great.29

After McClanahan retired, he came back the next fall to revive his sports prediction cartoons, and quit when the football season was over. Over the years, he authored one book on his hobby, Scenery for Model Railroads and illustrated several others. A collection of the panels he drew during the 1950s was published under the title, Texas, The Way It Used To Be. He became an avid painter and his work has appeared in several Dallas area exhibits.30

29 West interview
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, COMPARISON AND CONCLUSION

Of the three major editorial cartoonists employed by the Dallas Morning News from 1905 through 1976, Jack "Herc" Ficklen and William McClanahan appear to have more in common with each other than with their predecessor John Knott. Both of the younger men worked with Knott, both served during World War II and both became regular editorial cartoonists in the years following Knott's retirement. Both Ficklen and McClanahan said they held Knott in awe. But did the legend of John Knott rub off on Herc Ficklen or Bill McClanahan? Were they influenced to any great degree by a cartoonist of his stature so close at hand for so long?

Perhaps it is possible to compare the backgrounds, work and ideas of the three cartoonists for obvious indications of influence. From a historical perspective, it is possible to determine influences and similarities in the cartoonists' art training, art styles, personal beliefs, influences, occupational restrictions and statements by the surviving artists, Ficklen and McClanahan.

Miss Anne Toomey, who was employed by the News art department, worked with all three cartoonists during her forty-four year career. Miss Toomey said Knott's artistic background separated him from Ficklen and McClanahan:
He had an unusual education for a young man starting out drawing in Texas. He'd lived over in Europe and been there to school. And he had a mind full of the classic stories, the classic characters.

That is one thing that amazes me about putting these three men together; they needn't be alike. Mr. Knott was the greatest artist.¹

Knott studied art and fine art most of his life. He went to night school during his early years in Chicago. He studied at the Royal Academy in Munich for three semesters. In Dallas, he taught painting in the public evening schools for more than twenty years. And he studied with the Boardman School of Art in Colorado during his almost yearly vacations to the area.²

The fine art backgrounds of Ficklen and McClanahan were somewhat erratic. McClanahan spent three semesters at the Dallas Art Institute and studied painting under Knott at various times when Knott taught night school.³ Ficklen took a correspondence course in cartooning and completed two semesters of art at Southern Methodist University before dropping out.⁴

As a result of their limited fine art training, both men learned much about editorial cartooning while actually

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²Werner Renberg, "Old Man Texas Stands Up to Uncle Sam," The Quill (April, 1951), p. 17


working as cartoonists. Dallas News editorial cartoonist Bill DeOre said the two men's styles resembled each other more than they did Knott's:

After a while, Bill came upon his style and stayed with it for twenty years. And I'd say during that time, his style changed very little at all.

As for Herc's style, like I say, they're cast in the same mold. Herc's tended to be a little more subtle.

I think what happened was not so much that Herc was copying Bill or Bill was copying Herc. They both just kind of taught themselves by looking at the same kind of people.  

What other artists the three cartoonists looked at also varied greatly. The artists Knott admired were not those that Ficklen and McClanahan admired.

Knott, who preferred not to talk about his art, once said he was grateful to two of the artists he studied under while attending night school in Chicago: Joseph Leyendecker and Frederick Mulhaupt.

In an interview in 1923, Knott selected his favorite American cartoonists:

J. N. Darling, in my unauthoritative judgment, stands first for the originality of ideas.

Rollin Kirby of the New York World, I regard as the best artist. His work is graphic and proportioned most adequately.

John T. McCutcheon of the Chicago Tribune

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is the most famous newspaper cartoonist. He is the dean of the class, but he doesn't have to work so hard as he used to. He has done some pictures which will remain as cartoon classics in all traditions of the art. His work is characterized first by humor and next by a style, which is entire absence of style, that is peculiarly his, therefore not successfully imitated. 7

Knott's daughter, Mrs. David Robb, said her father was "very, very good friends" with both Darling and McCutcheon. 8 Later interviews never revealed whether Knott ever named other editorial cartoonists he admired.

Dallas News editorial cartoonist Jim Palmer said McClanahan's art appeared to be most influenced by Jack Patton and Ficklen. 9 McClanahan said his earliest influences were Vaughan Shoemaker and Jack Patton. Later, after working for the newspaper a time, he added Ficklen and Willard Mullin to his list of influences:

I was influenced more by Ficklen than Knott because of the style of drawing. Knott was brilliant. I always considered Knott more of an artist than a cartoonist. And I was not a fine artist, I was a cartoonist. Ficklen was a fine cartoonist and was patterning some of his work after Vaughan Shoemaker. And I, too, admired Shoemaker's work. So, as a result, I was probably influenced more by Ficklen's style of drawing than Knott's style of drawing.

In my younger days, before I turned professional, I was influenced by Jack Patton because Patton was the popular cartoonist of the day when I was growing up. Then later on I began to admire Will Mullins' work. Later I began to experiment a little bit. I was studying Shoemaker's techniques. So it was kind of a mixture of those three cartoonists: Patton, Mullins, and Shoemaker, all more so than Knott.10

McClanahan said he purposely avoided drawing in any manner that would resemble Knott's style when he was a beginning cartoonist:

I know for myself, I shied away from trying to draw like Knott because I didn't want people to think I was trying to copy Knott and I was striving to develop my own style and my own technique of cartooning. As a result, the technique of drawing was not influenced too much by Knott because I was trying to shy away from that because I didn't want to appear to be trying to copy Knott.

On one or two occasions, just to satisfy my own curiosity, I made an attempt to draw in Knott's technique. I just could not do it. So I never seriously tried to be influenced by Knott's style of drawing.11

Ficklen was very close to Knott as a friend. Mrs. Robb said her father looked fondly on the younger man.12 Miss Toomey said Knott called Ficklen his own child and that their styles were sometimes very similar.13 But Ficklen said he was much closer to Patton than Knott, artwise.14

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12 Mrs. David Robb interview.
13 Miss Anne Toomey interview
14 Ficklen interview.
To an untrained eye, the drawing styles of Knott, Ficklen and McClanahan might appear similar. Actually, there were many artistic differences.\textsuperscript{15}

Knott began drawing on Coquille paper and India ink with heavy cross-hatching and fine lines (see page 82). But as more sophisticated printing processes became available before World War I, he began a gradual switch to a grease pencil on a rough surface.\textsuperscript{16} With the grease pencil, Knott was able to do such realistic work that McClanahan called them "absolutely works of art" with their detailed, painstaking realism and shading.\textsuperscript{17}

Ficklen started with grease pencil on rough pebbleboard, but during the 1960s, changed to a rigid pen and India ink, using a commercially prepared, adjustable shading sheet called "Benday" for tones and backgrounds.\textsuperscript{18} The Benday could be cut into any shape, and pieces frequently ended up being accidentally stuck throughout his office (see page 84).\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{15}DeOre interview.

\textsuperscript{16}McClanahan interview, March 31, 1978.

\textsuperscript{17}McClanahan interview, March 31, 1978.

\textsuperscript{18}Ficklen interview.

McClanahan also changed media during his thirty years as an editorial and sports cartoonist for the newspaper:

I switched back and forth a little bit. Sometimes I would mix them up, particularly in sports cartoons. Grease pencil was my main, particularly with editorial cartoons. With sports cartoons, sometimes I would draw the cartoons where you'd have the portraits of an athlete that would be done with a mixture of grease pencil and brush. Surrounding that, I would draw some little action figures strictly with lines.\(^{20}\)

McClanahan eventually went strictly to the pen and ink style. He reserved the grease pencil for shading effects to give the pieces more depth (see page 85).

Occasionally through their art, personal beliefs surfaced. Ficklen recalled the continual battles he had with the conservative McClanahan, using the editorial page of the News as a private battleground.\(^{21}\) Despite the difficulties in placing three artists with such varied interests in narrow ideological categories, retired News editorial page director Dick West said the differences were obvious: "Bill was very well informed, and he's by far the most right-wing. John's in the center and Herc's more of a liberal."\(^{22}\)


\(^{21}\)Ficklen interview.

\(^{22}\)Statement by Dick West, retired editorial page director Dallas Morning News, Dallas, Texas, February 12, 1978.
Since cartoonists are human, there may be times that their prejudices show through their work. Even in this respect, Knott differed from Ficklen and McClanahan. West said Knott had several primary targets:

John's favorite target was Russia. He never was much of a lampooner, he was subtle. He didn't slam-bang anybody too much, he was a moderate.

Well, there was one: "Pappy O'Daniel" [Governor W. D. O'Daniel]. I guess if I look back, if he lampooned anybody, it was him. I don't know why. Knott never understood him with his cornball and hillbilly stuff, the Light Crust Doughboys. John never quite understood it and was sort of repulsed by it all. Especially in the '30s with his cartoons about O'Daniel.

He would also get rough with Stalin and Hitler and the Russian bear.\(^2\)

Dr. Gambrell agreed that Knott singled out O'Daniel as a special target:

W. D. O'Daniel was a target. He had no sense of politics at all, he was just a flour salesman. He was just a surprising figure and had no notion about anything except getting votes--which he was very successful at.\(^2\)

But Ficklen and McClanahan had other targets during their careers as cartoonists. Ficklen said, "Bill and I both have some targets we like to work on part of the time, that would be City Hall or the County Commissioners."

Ficklen said McClanahan was always fighting with the Dallas

\(^2\)West interview.

\(^2\)Statement by Dr. Herbert Gambrell, retired Chairman of Southern Methodist University's History Department, Dallas, Texas, May 17, 1978.
City Hall (see page 88).²⁵ West said he remembered Ficklen as having the Citizen's Charter Association of Dallas as his favorite target (see page 89).²⁶

The task of determining a subject and drawing the cartoon varied among the three artists. Knott was much more restricted in his work than either Ficklen or McClanahan. Consequently, he had little influence in the method in which his successors chose topics to illustrate with cartoons.

During the years Knott drew for the Dallas News, editorial page content was rigidly controlled. West said the rules were the idea of the Dealeys (the Dallas-based family who owned and ran the News):

Artists are such individualists that G. B. Dealey made a rule—or it might have been his brother James—and this rule was adhered to for years: we had to make a carbon and take it to the cartoonists. They would study them over and get their ideas and they had to draw on some subject that was being written on.

There used to be a line under it, "See editorial so-and-so." For that reason, when Knott was a top cartoonist, all editorial writers had to make extra carbons and give them to the cartoonist. If I would write an editorial—and I was just starting in the '40s—I had to make an extra carbon and go in there and lay it on his drawing board. And John would read all of the editorials very carefully with an eye-shade, sit there and pore over them very carefully. He'd get up and walk around, and suddenly he'd have an idea out of one of those and he would do it.

²⁵ Ficklen interview.
²⁶ West interview.
GIVE HIM AIR COVER, EARLE

By BILL McCLANAHAN
Dallas News Staff Cartoonist

AW, CHOW EARLE, LET ME tabindex=0

BUS FARE INCREASE

TRANSIT

BILL McCLANAHAN
COMEBACK HOTROD

By HERC FICKLEN
Dallas News Staff Cartoonist
And about eight times out of ten, it was the top editorial. His cartoon was based on the lead editorial and G. B. Dealey liked that.27

West said the rule did not change until after Knott retired and Ficklen and McClanahan had become the main editorial cartoonists:

Ficklen and McClanahan despised that rule, so much so, that I felt it was unfair to them. In those days when Knott was a cartoonist, you had no editorial conferences. We started the editorial conferences during the war, or right afterwards. And even then, you didn't have them every day. Not until I became editor in 1960 did we have them every day. And it was imperative that the cartoonists attend. Herc didn't like them and never wanted to be restricted in any way.

Now they draw on whatever idea comes to mind, they don't even have to relate to anything. They like it better that way.28

When Ficklen joined the staff in 1946, the editorial cartoon was still being chosen from the editorials. Restrictions were lifted from the cartoonists during the latter part of his career, a change Ficklen applauded:

We went to the meetings, the daily editorial conferences. We sat there and listened to what they were going to write about. If it so happened by coincidence that we thought it would make a cartoon, we would do it. But never did they ever come out and tell us what to draw. Truthfully, they do not tell us what to draw.29

27 West interview.
28 West interview.
29 Ficklen interview.
McClanahan also caught the end of the "assigned editorial" era. He said a cartoonist could avoid drawing something he did not agree with:

The way cartoonists work on that is that every day—that is Monday through Friday—at nine o'clock we would have a staff meeting of the Dallas News writers and cartoonists. We would spend about thirty minutes discussing topics and problems of the day and where the paper stood on them. For instance, was the paper for giving away the Panama Canal or was it against it? The publisher informed the editor and he informed us what stand he thought we should take on certain things. So the cartoonist knew in advance what subjects were important for the day and we knew what stand to take to express his opinion in the paper and, as a result, we never differed in opinion.

Sometimes we disagreed on a local issue. I know one time it was my turn to do the cartoon on a Wednesday and the editor wanted the cartoon drawn about the mayor's race or something to do with local politics which I disagreed with. He didn't say what to draw, but he wanted us to draw on that subject, and I said, "If you don't mind, I'd rather Herc drew the cartoon tomorrow and I'll draw on another subject." So we just switched days. 30

Besides the ideas for individual cartoons, the entire outlook of the Morning News changed between the Knott era and the Ficklen and McClanahan era. During most of Knott's tenure, the newspaper had a different orientation than in later years. West said the Morning News differed in overall scope:

Knott came up when goals were the big things editorially. He came up under the G. B. Dealey regime, where editorially, while we didn't lay off of personalities, we didn't emphasize them as much as we did movements. 31

McClanahan said by the time he and Ficklen were drawing full-time, the editorial outlook of the News had altered dramatically:

The News was more rurally oriented than it is today. It paid a heck of a lot more attention to the problems of the farmers and the people who lived in the small towns and the people who lived out in the country. It paid a lot more attention to their needs, wants, problems, than to the people who lived in the cities. 32

It was this rural emphasis, McClanahan said, that gave Knott's Old Man Texas figure such popularity. But as the newspaper switched more to a Dallas emphasis, with a corresponding switch to "personalities" instead of "ideas," the cartoonists changed accordingly. 33 In his final years as a cartoonist in the late 1950s, even Knott began concentrating on political figures instead of movements and goals.

At least one of the employees of the newspaper suggested that not only were Ficklen and McClanahan not influenced by Knott, but that they were more influential than he was in his prime. DeOre said Knott may have been overrated and Ficklen and McClanahan underrated:

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31 West interview.
33 Gambrell interview.
I may be sticking my neck out a little bit, but this is from my point of view, and I don't think there is anybody who looked at more of their stuff--although I sure didn't look at as much of Knott's stuff as Herc and Bill did. But I will say this: I feel like that maybe John Knott was considered a genius and a master because of the times in which he worked. I am really not impressed when I see other artists that drew in his times. I think that the guy is really built up way too much. I just see too many artists back then that just had to be considered a lot better.

Here's the thing: you've got to figure back when this guy was drawing, the communication system was half of what it is now. The person's whole realm was virtually the city. You were almost cut off. Each little circulation was an entity in itself. So you really had nothing to compare it with. It's a sure different story now and you can look at a thousand cartoonists a day if you want to. There may not be that many alive, but they are there if you want to find out what they are doing.

But I think he hung the moon when he was down here because nobody else was doing stuff like that, very few people were doing cartoons in those days. If you want to compare him to some of the really old, old style guys who were back East, to some of the New York cartoonists, Knott was second rate. At best he was second rate.

I don't want to take anything away from the man because, like I say, he was really kind of fascinating the way he came up with his ideas, from what Bill and Herc say. But I don't hold him in the awe that they do.

I think, as far as direct impact, on the public and the nation, that McClanahan's sports cartoons had more effect than the Knott period. I would put those two above Knott any day of the week.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{34}DeOre interview.
Finally, the cartoonists themselves and most of the observers during their careers said Knott exerted little influence upon the work of Ficklen and McClanahan. Gambrell said, "I knew Bill and Herc. Bill didn't follow Knott's school of cartooning. Neither did Herc." West said he did not believe Knott influenced the other two artists: "I just don't much think so. All artists are individuals. I think, on the contrary, they did the opposite. I think they worked awfully hard to be their own persons."

Ficklen never listed Knott as an influence when he talked about cartooning. Later he said he even tried to copy Knott's style once and had failed.

McClanahan denied emphatically that Knott had a measurable influence on his work:

As far as the cartooning itself, no, I wasn't influenced too much by Knott. Again, I'll repeat for you, I don't think I was influenced by Knott. Of course, I can remember when I was just a kid in Greenville, in grade school, we got the Dallas News and my father was a great admirer of Knott. He used to show me Knott's cartoons every day. And that, naturally, had a subconscious influence on me to eventually someday be a newspaper cartoonist or artist. That possibly had some effect, but as far as actually drawing, no. Because Knott had such a well-developed, artistic talent that I knew I could never draw like that. And so I never attempted to draw in his style.

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35 Gambrell interview.
36 West interview.
37 Ficklen interview.
Summary

The histories of modern Dallas and Texas can quickly and easily be followed in the editorial cartoons of the *Dallas Morning News*. The newspaper has had three major cartoonists since the turn of the century: John Knott, Jack "Herc" Ficklen, and William McClanahan.

The educational and artistic backgrounds and influences of the three men varied greatly. Knott had classical art training, while Ficklen and McClanahan were self-taught. Knott was influenced by different artists than the two younger men. Knott used different drawing equipment in different art styles than either McClanahan or Ficklen. The three cartoonists had different personal political beliefs. Ficklen and McClanahan had considerably more freedom in selecting cartoon topics than Knott. Knott drew when the newspaper was rurally oriented, while his successors drew when the *News* was more urban-oriented. Neither Ficklen nor McClanahan claimed Knott as an influence on their cartooning styles.

The evidence indicates that neither Ficklen nor McClanahan were influenced by Knott.

Conclusion

The *Quill* magazine, the official publication of the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi, called John Knott "easily one of the best cartoonists in the nation."\(^3^9\)

\(^3^9\)Renberg, "Old Man Texas Stands Up to Uncle Sam," p. 16.
He drew from 1906 through 1957 for a newspaper once called "the Bible of Texas" because of its statewide impact. He received honorable mention for the Pulitzer Prize in 1936 and numerous other national awards for his art.

Two cartoonists followed him: Jack "Herc" Ficklen as a full-time cartoonist in 1946 and William McClanahan in 1957 after eleven years of drawing sports cartoons exclusively for the News. Lesser editorial cartoonists might have been completely covered in the shadow of one of the major lights in Texas journalism.

But the two apparently were not influenced by Knott and went on to be highly individualistic cartoonists and establish reputations of their own. All of the evidence indicates that the two, Ficklen and McClanahan, were not influenced much, if at all, by Knott. Based upon the evidence, the following conclusions can be drawn.

1. Knott had more classical art training than McClanahan and Ficklen. The younger men were virtually self-taught.

3. The drawing styles of the three men differed greatly. Knott began with a crow quill pen and India ink and later used a grease pencil on pebbleboard exclusively. Ficklen began with the grease pencil and later went to a stiff pen and India ink, usually with commercially prepared rub-on backgrounds. McClanahan used India ink and either a pen or brush with the grease pencil for shading effects.

4. The three cartoonists had different personal beliefs and targets that frequently appeared in their work. Knott was "in the center" and often attacked Governor W. D. O'Daniel on the state level and Hitler and Stalin on the international level. Ficklen was a self-professed "liberal" and would rarely let a chance pass to lampoon the Citizen's Charter Association, City Hall, or County Commissioners of Dallas. McClanahan was termed "right-wing" and often cartooned City Hall on a local level and "liberals" at any political level.

5. Knott differed from Ficklen and McClanahan in the subjects he depicted in editorial cartoons. During most of his career, Knott was required to illustrate an editorial scheduled to appear on the page that same day. While both younger artists labored under this rule during the early part of their careers, it was later done away with and both cartoonists were given freedom to draw on any subject at any time.
6. The editorial emphasis of the newspaper changed over the years. During Knott's tenure, the editorial page of the Dallas News was primarily concerned with issues, broad movements and the rural reader. When Ficklen and McClanahan joined the staff on a regular basis, the newspaper had a more urban outlook and the editorial page concentrated on individuals.

7. Ficklen and McClanahan, as well as several of their contemporaries, said Knott had no influence on their work. Because of the older man's stature as an editorial cartoonist, both Ficklen and McClanahan said they strived constantly to be separate, distinguishable artists.

Both seem to have succeeded.

Suggestions for Future Study

This study was limited to the three major editorial cartoonists of one Texas newspaper. Gambrell said that although Knott may have been the most important editorial cartoonist in the state, the study of editorial cartoonists and their impact in a certain area is a much-neglected and valid field of study. Additional study on a related subject is possible in several areas.

1. In correlation with this study, a biography could be made of the major cartoonist for the News' sister newspaper, the Dallas Journal's Jack Patton. Patton had an

40 Gambrell interview.
influence on the work of both Ficklen and McClanahan and illustrated the best-selling book, *Texas History in Movies*.

2. A statistical study could be made on the measurable influence of editorial cartoonists. It is possible to discover their influences on other artists, perhaps it is possible to determine to what extent, if any, an editorial cartoon could alter a reader's opinion on a subject. From there, it could be possible to establish the impact of Knott, Ficklen, or McClanahan in Dallas or Texas as a whole.

3. An investigation could be attempted into the origins of the now-pervasive mascot cartoons in Texas. Several sources list McClanahan as the original artist of the Texas A & M University and Texas Tech University mascots. The characters have grown into a lucrative business for the different schools. Was McClanahan an originator or did he draw on existing artwork?
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