

[1930?]

NORTH CAROLINA LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

HEADQUARTERS, 1017 DACIAN AVENUE

DURHAM, N. C.



*OBJECT: To Promote Education in Citizenship, Efficiency in Government,
Needed Legislation, and International Co-operation to Prevent War.*

This skit " Voting in North Carolina" was prepared to be not only a demonstration of voting by the new law, but also a demonstration of the chief faults of the system. These weaknesses are:

1. The registration system which causes great delay in looking up names and is likely to cause mistakes. A card catalog system would be much more efficient and accurate.
2. The great number of ballots instead of one "blanket" ballot causes confusion and slowness.
3. The lack of stubs with the numbers printed on them and the necessity of the Judge numbering each ballot causes delay.
4. Again the number of ballots causes delay in depositing them.
5. The "marker" or "helper" system, is conducive to fraud, and would make people think that North Carolina voters are less intelligent and more illiterate than those in any other state.

Voting in North Carolina

by Mrs. Mary O. Cowper
1017 Dacian Ave. Durham, N.C.

Time - Nov. 4th, 1930

Place - Any precinct in North Carolina

Cast

Registrar
The Judge who gives out ballots
The Judge who receives ballots
The Republican marker
The Democratic marker
Policeman
Challenger
1st Voter, Emma Brown
2nd Voter, Sue Jenkins
3rd Voter, Mary Long
4th Voter, Mrs. Ralph Black
Ralph Black
Messenger with absentee vote

Setting

As the curtain goes up, the stage is set with an enclosure within which are 9 ballot boxes, chair and table for Registrar, the table with ballots. The first Judge is standing behind the table with ballots. The second Judge is behind the table containing the ballot boxes, scissors in his hand. The Registrar is seated with the table with the registration book and the voter's book in front of him. The challenger and the two markers are seated outside the enclosure facing the Registrar. The policeman is at the entrance to the stage and the Voters are heard just outside. Booths at back.

Policeman - No loitering or electioneering within 50 feet of the polls. Step lively now, only ten minutes before the polls close.

(He lines up people who stop talking. 1st voter enters and stands before 1st judge.)

1st Voter (to judge) Emma Brown, 19 Main St.

Judge (loudly to Registrar) Emma Brown, 19 Main St.

Registrar (slowly running his finger along page, turns pages)
Just a minute - Brown, Jacob, Brown, L.B. Here it is, Emma Brown, duly registered.

(Judge prepares ballots by folding and marking number and his initials on them and gives them to the voter.

Judge (to Registrar) No 301

(Registrar writes name and number in Voter's book. The voter retires to booth at back of stage
2nd Voters crosses stage and stands in front of 1st Judge)

2nd Voter - Sue Jenkins, 17 Chestnut St.

Judge - Sue Jenkins, 17 Chestnut St.

Registrar (looks a long time in book) No such person registered.

Judge to voter - When did you register?

Voter - Why, a year ago, up in Asheville. We've moved here since then. Isn't that good here?

Judge - Everyone must be registered in the precinct in which he intends to vote. Sorry, you can't vote here.

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Voter - But it's the same state. Can't I even vote here for Senator?

Judge - Sorry, you can't vote at all. please pass on.

(Policeman makes gesture urging her forward)

voter - Well, I don't think much of that law. (Goes out.)

(1st voter comes out of booth, offers ballots to 2nd judge who looks at number)

1st Voter Emma Brown

2nd Judge - Emma Brown, No 301

Registrar - Correct

(2nd Judge takes ballots, cuts off numbers, deposits in ballots boxes. Voter goes out.)

3rd. Voter (walks in and in front of 1st judge while 1st Voter is watching 2nd judge deposit ballots.)

3rd Voter - Mary Long

1st judge - Address?

voter - 716 N. Henry St.

1st Judge (to registrar) Mary Long, 716 N. Henry St.

Registrar - Duly registered.

3rd. voter - Why yes, my husband took me to register

1st judge - No 302. Here's your ballots.

Voter - Why I don't want all of these. (Drops one and picks it up.)
My husband told me just to vote for Mr - (starts to unfold ballots as she talks.)

judge - (interrupts her quickly) Don't unfold those.

Voter - well, what ~~do~~ I do?

Judge - Go to that booth and mark the names for which you wish to vote

Voter - But I can't read. I wouldn't have come, but my husband had to leave town and he said I must come to vote for Mr-

judge (interrupting quickly) You can't read them? Do you want help? what legal reason do you give for requesting assistance?

voter - Well, I suppost it is legal. I broke my glasses this morning. And it was inconvenient to come but times are hard and my husband said -

Judge - (interrupts) Which marker do you want to help you?

voter (turns to look at markers) Oh, I haven't been introduced to either of those gentlemen. I don't know which I want. My hus -

Judge (interrupts) Do you want a democrat or a Republican?

voter - Do I have to say which? I hadn't thought about it -

Judge - your husband is a Democrat. Do you want the Democratic marker? (Judge points to marker. Voter looks at him, then smiles politely)

voter - Oh, yes, thank you.

(Voter and marker go into booth. Helper comes out in short time smiling. Voter follows

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3rd voter (standing in front of booth, looking around)
What do I do now?

2nd Judge - Come here. Name? (Looks at number on voter's ballots)

voter - Mary Long.

2nd judge - Mary Long, No. 303

Registrar - Correst

(2nd judge takes ballots, cuts off number and deposits them)

Voter (speaks to all on stage smiling at all politely)

Is that all? Thank you so much. Now my husband will get that job promised him if we voted for M -

Judges (interrupting quickly) No talking in election precinct.
(policeman makes threatening gesture)

Voter (offended) Oh! well, goodbye. I don't like so much to vote. It doesn't seem so sociable. (Goes off as she talks)

4th Voter and husband at entrance talking. Policeman goes to them frowning. Very tall wife. Very small and pompous husband.

Policeman - What's this?

husband - This is my wife! (to wife) Now remember, first thing you do, say you want your husband to help you.

wife - to 1st Judge - I want my husband to help me.

Judge - Name and address?

wife (shows impatience with husband.) Oh, of course - Mrs. Ralph Black, 405 Long St.

Judge -Mrs. Ralph Black, 405 Long st.

Registrar - Correct (Husband starts to pull wife to booth, wife resists)

Judge - wait for your ballots, please. No. 303
(Gives ballots to wife who retires to booth with husband)

Messenger (swaggers in chewing gum, looks very tough)

I've brought my neighbor's absentee vote, Mrs. Robert Green.

Challenger (jumps up looking angry) Mrs. Robert Green is dead.

Messenger - Well, but there's a new Mrs. Robert Green.

Challenger - yes, but is that the one that is registered? The new one was married only yesterday, too late to register. The one that is registered is dead.

Messenger - Well, if she is dead, she's absent, isn't she (Flings down ballots before Judge)

Judge - Order! (policeman comes forward threateningly) Absentee votes are challenged after polls close. Offer your challenge then.

(Mr. Black come out of booth, walks slowly towards exit. Mrs. Black come out goes to 2nd Judge. Offer s ballots.)

2nd Judge - Mrs. Black, these won't do. They aren't folded properly. They must go into the spoiled ballots box.

Mrs. Black - I told my husband that wasn't folded right. (Glares at husband, who goes off crestfallen)

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1st judge - Come here for your ballots.

Voter - Well, I'm not going to let my husband touch them this time.
I knew how to vote. I saw the demonstration at the
Convention of the League of Women Voters. They had sample
ballots and cards of instruction and told us just how to do
everything.

1st judge - Polls are closed

voter - There, if it hadn't been for that law allowing husbands to
help, I could have voted.