

Robert E. Howard Winner Of Essay Medal While In High School

Literary talent of the late Robert E. Howard was first manifested while he was a student in Brownwood High School. A medal winning essay written by the former Cross Plains author appears hereunder, exactly as it was reproduced in the Brownwood Bulletin in its issue of May 26, 1923.

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As was stated in the report of the closing exercises of High School a few days ago, Winnie Davis Chapter United Daughters of the Confederacy of Brownwood, in order to stimulate an interest in the study of Southern History, offered two medals, to students of the Senior High Class in High School graduating this year, and students of the seventh grade, on the best paper with this as the subject: "What the Nation Owes to the South." In the senior department the medal was won by Robert Howard of Cross Plains, and in the seventh grade by Maud Harris, of North Brownwood. The paper prepared by Robert Howard was as follows:

"What the Nation Owes to the South."

(By Robert Howard.)

"In order to appreciate to what extent the American union is indebted to the South, one must go back to the first settlements in America. Virginia, the Carolinas and the other Southern colonies were settled by the cavaliers of England, Scotland and Ireland, the best blood of Europe. These cavaliers preferred exile in strange lands to renouncing their allegiance to their king and conforming to Cromwell's Commonwealth. Loyalty, bravery, chivalry were their most prominent characteristics. From these cavaliers came Thomas Jefferson, George Washington and General Robert E. Lee.

"From the cavaliers and their followers are descended the Southerners of today, and as they were of the purest blood of the British Isles, so today the people of the South are the purest Americans.

"Without the Cavaliers, it is doubtful if the colonists could have gained a foothold in America as quickly as they did. Today, the Indian is forgotten and ignored but when he was the greatest problem that confronted the settlers, history proves that less trouble and fewer wars were had with the Indians in the Southern colonies than in any other part of the new world.

"There was a reason for this. The Cavalier was no oppressor, but his trade was war. He was a born fighter. The Puritan of New England was a fighter, too, but his zeal for war was always tempered with self-interest, as witness the actions of the New England state in the war of 1812. The Quaker's attitude toward the Indian was, 'All men are brothers. You are my friend. If you want to scalp my misguided countrymen, why, it is no concern of mine except that I shall preach meekness and non-resistance to them.'

"The Puritan's attitude was: 'You are a benighted heathen. I will convert you and swindle you out of your land. If you object I will drive you into the Western ocean—if I can do it without interfering with my trade.'

"But the cavalier's attitude toward the Indian and other men was: 'Come, let us understand one another. If you wish to be friends, I am glad of it and will stand by you forever. But, if you wish to be enemies, why, here are swords. Let us see who is the best man.'

"Such was the cavalier and he proved his worth in many a battle. There were few massacres and red triumphs in the South, very few compared to those in New England. And this the nation owes to those gay cavaliers, that they threw the fear of the white man into the savage and shattered the red supremacy that might have risen in its might and crushed the new nation even its birth. But for the cavaliers the nation might have been set back half a century.

"And not against Indians alone did these first Southerners direct their arms, but against all outlawry and oppression of all kinds. The torch of liberty was first lighted in America when Nathaniel Bacon led the rebellion against the tyrant Berkley, in Virginia. The rebellion failed, yet the torch was not extinguished but smoldered until exactly one hundred years later it burst into a glorious flame. May it never be extinguished.

"Maynard it was, and his Virginians who swept Blackbeard and Bonnet from the seas and thus freed the coasts from the scourge they had endured for years. The pirate trade did not prosper after the cavaliers learned to build ships.

"The people of the South have always been exporters. They have pushed westward, ever westward. Kentucky, Tennessee, Texas and half the other states of the Union were explored, settled and added to the nation by Southerners.

"Those broad and fertile states which are now some of our richest possessions, then were naught but wildernesses, the haunt of wild beast and savage. Then came the pioneers, men, of whom over three-fourths were Southerners of Virginia and the Carolinas. They drove back the savage, cleared the forests, tilled the soil and discovered the resources of the new domain.

"The whole west was really settled mainly by Southerners. In many of the Western States the Southern strain has been lost but the fairest possessions of the nation were gained by Southerners.

"The South has shown herself able to retain what she has taken and to defend herself against oppression. The Indians learned this, as did the French and the English.

"When Braddock and his regulars were defeated by the French and Indians a few miles from Fort Du Quesne, it was Virginia riflemen who beat back the savages and saved the whole army from a complete massacre. The same riflemen did much more in protecting the settlements from the Indians, and, later on in wresting Canada from the French the British soldiers ever did. And their success inspired the colonists and made them more confident. All of which was preparing them for the day when they should throw off English rule and declare themselves independent.

"When that day came, Southerners were at the front. Patrick Henry was the first to boldly declare the intention of gaining full independence. Thomas Jefferson wrote the declaration of independence, and the greatest Southerner of all, George Washington, was made general of the American army. Marion was a Southerner and it was Southerners who defeated General Ferguson in the battle of King's mountain, which battle was responsible for the evacuation of the Southern States by the British. Daniel Morgan, the hero of Saratoga, was a Virginian, and so was that gay young cavalier, 'Lighthorse' Harry Lee, father of General Robert E. Lee.

"In the war of 1812, the South did the most part of the fighting, the New England states not only refusing to fight but selling supplies to the English. The most brilliant victory of the war was the battle of New Orleans, won by Southern riflemen under 'Old Hickory' Jackson. The nation owes this to the South, that she withstood the foreign oppressor and drove the tyrant from our shores.

"And thus in every war in which America has ever engaged. The men that died in the Alamo were Southerners. The men who shattered the Mexican army at San Jacinto were Southerners.

"Most of the men who fought in the American-Mexican war were Southerners. In the Civil War it was no lack of bravery and leadership that defeated the Confederacy. What nation can boast greater generals, finer gentlemen than General Robert E. Lee, Stuart Ashby and 'Stonewall' Jackson? Yes, and scores of others whom it would take too long to name.

"Today, in West Point and in all other military schools both in America and Europe, the tactics of Lee and Jackson are taught especially those of Jackson. Stonewall's Valley campaign was 'one of the most brilliant recorded in history.'

"The South has shown herself able to govern her people. The first form of county government was in use in Virginia as early as 1619. The first representative form of government was the House of Burgesses, in Virginia. In drawing up the Constitution, the plan advocated by Randolph, representing the Virginians, was adopted. This plan called the Virginia plan, was far superior to any other plan submitted, thus proving the South's ability to make governments.

"And why should she not be famous in that respect when some of the greatest statesmen that ever lived were her sons?

"Patrick Henry, the first statesman of the South, who hurled defiance into the face of England; Thomas Jefferson, who drew up the Declaration of Independence. Randolph, John C. Calhoun, Henry Clay, the great peace-maker, and a score of others who have built this nation to what it is today.

"Men of the South supported the Declaration from the first more strongly than any others. The first to sign it were Southerners.

"Of the makers of the Constitution over half were Southerners and I have already told of their part in the framing of the Constitution. Virginia has well been called, 'The Home of the Presidents' Her greatest son was our first president. The third president was Thomas Jefferson. Virginia has given the nation many of her presidents: James Madison, James Monroe, Benjamin Harrison, William Henry Harrison, Andrew Jackson, 'Old Hickory,' the hero of 1812, was from South Carolina. Woodrow Wilson is a Southerner, of the 'Old Dominion.' Who can scan the annals of the nation's greatness and deny the extent to which the American nation is indebted to the South?

"And not alone has the the South proved her worth in war and in government, but in all the arts of peace. Some of the finest literature of the nation has come from the South. The literature of worth was produced in the South. The South has given to the world, poets, historians, prose writers of romance, humor and every other subject, which they had but to touch to make famous. Some of the poets are Edgar Allen Poe, Sidney Lan-

ier, Henry Timrod, Paul Hamilton Hayne. Prose writers are. Joel Chandler Harris, Thomas Nelson Page, John Esten Cooke, Mary Johnston and F. Hapkinson Smith.

"Mark Twain was a Southerner and so was O. Henry, the great humorists, Bill Nye and Bill Arp, were Southerners. Who can read the works of these men and women of the South and deny the South's place in the forefront of literary accomplishment?

"As for orators, I quote Professor Payne, 'Such names as Richard Henry Lee, Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, James Madison, John Marshall and John Randolph, all of Virginia; Charles Pinckney, Henry Laurens and John Rutledge of South Carolina; and William Pinckney of Maryland are synonymous with the best of early American oratorical and forensic power and achievement.'

"But it is in industry, invention and the arts of peace and contentment in which the South has made her greatest achievements. The great product of the South, is, of course, cotton. A few statistics will serve to show how much the nation, and not only the nation but the whole world is indebted to the South. The cotton crop of the United States for 1915 amounted to 11,191,820 bales. Texas alone produced 3,22,760 bales, or one-fourth of the entire crop. Georgia, 1,908,673 bales or one-sixth of the entire crop; South Carolina, 1,133,91; Alabama, 1,020,839; Mississippi, 953,965; Arkansas, 816,002; North Carolina, 699,494; Oklahoma 628,629.

"Without the cotton crop of the South the world would have a cloth famine. And not only in cotton does the South excel. The lands of the Southern states are fertile and with a perfect climate, it is natural that the main industry should be agriculture. Virginia produces the best tobacco to be found anywhere in the world. The only coffee to be found growing in the United States is in Virginia.

"Mississippi ranks first in the combined production of forestry, husbandry, animal husbandry and agriculture. South Carolina ranks second and Arkansas third. Then comes Alabama, North Carolina, Georgia, North Dakota and Texas. Thus, out of the eight states ranking highest in production, seven of these are Southern States.

"That is, more people are engaged in the production of the above named articles, in these states than in any others. Were the crops of those states to fail entirely, one-third of the people in the world would feel starvation. If it were not for the great cane fields of Louisiana, Tennessee and the other Southern States, several thousand business men of the United States and elsewhere would have to eat their buckwheat cakes without molasses.

"And the Southern States provide the world with other necessities than food and clothing. Let the coal mines of the North be closed by strikes if they will, the people of the South are little affected. Why should they be when their states lead in the production of pine and cypress and rank high in the production of hardwood? Texas alone lacks the thick forests of the South, in some parts, but that lack is more than made up by the abundance of oil and natural gas.

"The nation owes a great deal to the South for her lumber industry.

"In the production of minerals, also, the South ranks high. Texas leads all in the production of oil

and gas. West Virginia produces much of the nation's coal supply. The South may be compared to a vast store house whose wealth has scarcely been tapped. In 1914-1915, West Virginia, ranking second of all states in the production of minerals, produced \$133,333,829 in coal, natural gas, petroleum and clay products.

"Missouri produced \$48,597,593 in coal, zinc, etc. Kentucky produced \$26,668,484 in minerals.

"It is almost impossible to fix the mineral product of Texas at a definite point, for her production is increasing all the time.

"Naturally with all these natural resources, the nation must have machinery to handle them. To the South must be credited with the invention of the cotton gin, for, although it was a Southerner who invented it; yet had not the South created the demand there would have been no invention and indeed the South has perfected the invention. It was invented in Georgia.

"To the South the nation owes the invention of the reaping machine, for it was invented by Cyrus Hall McCormick of Virginia. I quote the Hon. Reverend Johnson, 'McCormick's invention is equal to an income to the whole country of fifty-five million dollars at least, which must increase through all time.'

"That was in 1859. His words have since been more than proved.

"William H. Seward said that 'McCormick's invention had advanced the line of civilization westward thirty miles each year.' What would the great growers of the North and West do without that invention

"Over half the nation's foreign trade income is made by the South, for in Europe and Asia the demand for cotton is as great as here and in Europe greater than the demand for America's wheat.

"It is not a long step from industry to education, as industry must depend to some extent at least on education. The South does not perhaps, stand as high in the scale of education as New England, but that is due more to the fact that New England is older, with a great population, than to any lack of zeal and energy on the part of the South. That New England ranks higher in this one thing is no discredit to the South, but rather is a great credit to New England. And the South is improving fast. Already the public school system is nearing perfection in the Southern States. There are, in the states south of the Mason-Dixon line, two hundred and four colleges and universities. The South specializes in agricultural and all kinds of practical education and is fast drawing toward perfection.

"I have given but a few facts, a few statistics; even from these one may see what a nation the South is. Yes, nation! But I have scarcely dipped into the great store house, the South's history. To record her greatness in full would be to write a great book. Her glorious annals would fill many volumes. I have but tried to show the great extent to which not only the American nation, but the whole world is indebted to the South.

"Her past is golden, set with the sparkling jewels of heroic deeds and glorious achievements. But the best lies ahead. No nation may stand still. It must go forward or backward and the South has gone ever forward. No nation may point with more pride to her past than the South yet her future shall transcend her past in prosperity, glory and great achievement."