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**THE BATTLE OF ATHENS, TENNESSEE — FROM MY OWN RESEARCH —**

I have done my own research into the Battle of Athens, Tennessee, 1946, and even traveled to Athens, Tennessee, for that research. The following are the pristine examples of a fight for freedom that I uncovered from my research:

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**SOURCE: *The Daily Post-Athenian*, Athens, Tenn., August 7, 1946; pages 1, 6.**

Mrs. Roosevelt Grasps Local Facts Better Than Most

Editor's Note — Our attention has been called to Mrs. Roosevelt's column upon McMinn. She seems to have grasped the facts and significance better than any other outside writer:

**McMinn A Warning — By Eleanor Roosevelt**

New York, Monday — After any war, the use of force throughout the world is almost taken for granted. Men involved in the war have been trained to use force, and they have discovered that, when you want something, you can take it. The return to peacetime methods governed by law and persuasion is usually difficult.

We in the U.S.A., who have long boasted that, in our political life, freedom in the use of the secret ballot made it possible for us to register the will of the people without the use of force, have had a rude awakening as we read of conditions in McMinn County, Tennessee, which brought about the use of force in the recent primary. If a political machine does not allow the people free expression, then freedom-loving people lose their faith in the machinery under which their government functions.

In this particular case, a group of young veterans organized to oust the local machine and elect their own slate in the primary. We may deplore the use of force but we must also recognize the lesson which this incident points for us all. When the majority of the people know what they want, they will obtain it.

Any local, state or national government, or any political machine, in order to live, must give the people assurance that they can express their will freely and that their votes will be counted. The most powerful machine cannot exist without the support of the people. Political bosses and political machinery can be good, but the minute they cease to express the will of the people, their days are numbered.

This is a lesson which wise political leaders learn young, and you can be pretty sure that, when a boss stays in power, he gives the majority of the people what they think they want. If he is bad and indulges in practices which are dishonest, or if he acts for his own interests alone, the people are unwilling to condone these practices.

When the people decide that conditions in their town, county, state or country must change, they will change them. If the leadership has been wise, they will be able to do it peacefully through a secret ballot which is honestly counted, but if the leader has become inflated and too sure of his own importance, he may bring about the kind of action which was taken in Tennessee.

If we want to continue to be a mature people who, at home and abroad, settle our difficulties peacefully and not through the use of force, then we will take to heart this lesson and we will jealously guard our rights. What goes on before an election, the threats or persuasion by political leaders, may be bad but it cannot prevent the people from really registering their will if they wish to.

The decisive action which has just occurred in our midst is a warning, and one which we cannot afford to overlook.

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**SOURCE: *The Daily Post-Athenian*, Athens, Tenn., August 21, 1946; Page 1,6.**

Lincoln Said It And It Applies Now As Then

**BY JOHN PECK**

"The government, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it." Abraham Lincoln

We have seen the latter part of the above quotation exercised here in McMinn County. We now have the opportunity to see the first part of it carried out.

What Lincoln meant was just this: The government of any group of people is in the hands of the people and they must carry on an active part in maintaining their government unless they want to abide by the rule of a few unscrupulous persons who find ways and means of getting the reins of power in governmental offices. If the people as a whole do not maintain a vigilant watch over matters of government a few people, grasping for power and domination find it easy to undermine all the principles of democracy.

It has been said that the situation now prevailing in McMinn County puts its citizens in the best position of any county in the state and possibly in the nation as to the control and manipulation of its government.

We are in just that position if the people as a whole will attend the county-wide mass meetings tomorrow night and participate in the election of the representatives of their respective communities who will serve on the Board of Directors of the Good government League of McMinn County.

The people who are elected must have the knowledge that they have the backing of all the people in their community when they go to the various meetings of the Board of Directors and vote on the matters of government that come before that body.

The choice is in your hands; 1. Take an active part in your government, as is your duty and privilege as a citizen, or 2. The next time you find that your government has fallen into the hands of unscrupulous politicians just say, "It's my own fault, I had a chance to do something about it but slept through it."

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**SOURCE: *The Knoxville Journal*, August 10, 1946; Page 1, 2.**

## Arkansas GIs Threat New Riots

### Say Athens, Tenn., Outbreak May Be Mild In Comparison

Little Rock, Ark., Aug. 9 (UP) — Determined veterans' opposition to entrenched local political machines flared heatedly in several Arkansas counties today, and one GI candidate said the Athens, Tenn., rioting would be "mild in comparison if there are any irregularities" at the polls.

At Malvern, William Weaver, veteran and candidate for sheriff in Hot Springs County, charged his opponent, Ed Deere, was "custodian" of the ballot boxes and warned that "what will happen here" would eclipse the Tennessee GI political revolt.

In Yell County, near the Oklahoma border, a crowd of 1500 veterans prepared for a mass meeting tonight to draft an independent ticket to oppose the machine slate of Chancellor John E. Chambers in general elections in the "free state of Yell."

In Hot Spring County, Weaver and Coyle Collie, veteran of the Battle of the Bulge, are trying to overthrow the long-entrenched machine of Sheriff Jack Knight.

GIs at Malvern planned a meeting tomorrow night. Weaver said "we just want to get a foot in the door of Knight's 'little Tammany' machine."

Meanwhile, a five-man committee of veterans found an 87-vote discrepancy in votes cast for county treasurer, thus placing Norman Gray, veterans' candidate, in a runoff with incumbent Treasurer Ernest Stroud. The first official count declared Stroud the winner with a majority, but disgruntled GI forces appointed the committee last night to examine the ballots.

In Ouachita a hot election loomed in which veterans are opposing veterans.

Despite a no-political clause in its constitution, the Arkansas Department of Veterans of Foreign Wars entered the picture with a statement by State Commander Bob Ed. Loftin, who charged politicians were trying to "use" the VFW vote to influence undecided voters.

In Hot Springs (Garland County), a final move to defeat the only successful GI candidate against Mayor Leo McLaughlin's potent local machine, failed today.

Prosecuting Atty. Curtis Ridgeway, defeated by ex-Marine Col. Signey McMath, demanded a recount, but the new totals changed only two votes.

McMath was the only veteran-supported candidate to win the recent primary.

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**SOURCE: *The Chattanooga Daily Times*, Thursday, August 8, 1946**

### Repeat on Athens Narrowly Avoided

#### **Crockett County Just Misses Election Day Violence**

Alamo, Tenn., Aug 7 (AP) — a Crockett County political leader revealed today that violence similar to that which marked the Tennessee election at Athens last week was narrowly avoided here.

J. T. Green, post commander of the American Legion, disclosed that two mass meetings of veterans were held to dissipate tension among the supporters of an air force veteran, John Paul Butler, 26, who ran for state representative.

"Our boys were ready to go," said Green, "but we didn't want an Athens job here. We want to see what can be done legally in the matter."

Butler, whose campaign was managed by Green, was defeated by former State Sen. W. H. Stallings of near-by Friendship by 14 votes. Green said the result would be contested before the state primary board. "It would have been the same as Athens here," said Butler, "except that we quieted our boys down. We talked them out of using violence."

Butler said his opponent was supported by "a machine."

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### The Chronology of The Battle of Athens

#### **Election Day, August 1, 1946**

##### **9:00 am**

Voting poles opened. Voter turn out was heavy.

The First Flare Up — Precinct 1 (Courthouse)

## The Jailing of Walter Ellis

### **Shortly after 10:00 am**

Conflicting reports as to when Walter Ellis, GI election judge was arrested, one account says 9:30, another says shortly after 10:00 am, but the overall details are consistent. Ellis was summarily arrested and hauled off to the county jail. He was replaced by Fred West. Dispute over who exactly Fred West was immediately erupted. The sheriff's office described West as another GI; Jim Buttram, the GI ticket manager described him as a deputy sheriff and local bartender.

Ellis was held incommunicado at the county jail, and Sheriff Mansfield's men flatly declined to permit either reporters or Buttram to see him. Magistrate Herman Moses, when asked what charges had been placed declared Ellis had "attempted to perpetrate a fraud" by marking ballots in Precinct 1, at the courthouse. Buttram admitted frankly he did not know what had happened in the voting precinct prior to Ellis' arrest but said Sheriff Mansfield's men refused to permit him to make bond for Ellis or to tell him what charges had been placed against the ex-GI.

### **The Courthouse (Precinct 1)**

#### **11:00 am-2:00 pm**

The corridor of the courthouse was crowded with voters, both men and women. Ellis already had been removed, but evidently in fear of some disorder, about 20 deputies, hands on pistols, and blackjacks ready, pushed through the crowd to the voting precinct.

This overgrown combat squad was reinforced by several uniformed and armed city policemen and a state highway patrolman with his hand fingering a heavy revolver.

The deputies ranged themselves around the voting precinct and several, including one dressed like a character from a western movie, placed themselves on the steps where they could watch the entire corridor. Ex-servicemen regard the day's proceedings with varying attitudes but most of them displayed a bitterness seldom seen in the fighting lines. One ex-soldier watching the guarded vote counting before it was moved to the county jail said: "Over there we had something to fight back with." Another remarked, "We just aren't well enough organized and we haven't got guns. We haven't got a chance with this gestapo."

"This is causing a lot of bitterness, and a lot of it will come later today," a man remarked.

### **The Shooting of Tom Gillespie**

#### **Precinct 11, Athens Water Company Building**

#### **2:45 pm**

Tom Gillespie, a [black] farmer came into the Athens Water Company building, which was serving as the 11th Precinct, to vote. It is not clear which of Cantrell's men positioned himself behind Gillespie to observe his vote but when he was observed to be preparing to vote "the wrong way" the Cantrell man told Gillespie, "You'll have to get out of here. You're voting in the wrong precinct."

**3:00 pm**

Gillespie protested to Deputy Windy Wise, "I've always voted here before."

For this monumental impertinence, Wise slugged Gillespie with brass knuckles and shot him with what was said to be a U.S. Army .45 as he stumbled out the door. Gillespie suffered a flesh wound in the small of the back and was taken off by deputy sheriffs for what they said would be treatment.

Just to show that the racial question didn't enter into this travesty-on-an-election, the gold starred deputies directed their attention to the GI election clerks and women who were witnessing the count.

Apparently, their presence was embarrassing to the professional election thieves. Election Judge (and deputy sheriff) Karl Neil, pistol on hip, ordered Mrs H. A. Vestal and five other women to leave the polls. "Get out!" said Neil.

The women stood their ground. "We have a right to watch you count the ballots," one said.

"Go on, get out of here!" shouted Neil, and the women filed out, protesting.

This wasn't enough. Four GI's remained to keep the ballot thieves in line. They were James Edward Vestal (Mrs. Vestal's son), Charles Scott, Jr., Charley Hyde, and J. P. Cartwright.

The [Cantrell] machine had six of its bigger bicep boys there, three wearing sidearms. Deputy Neil then ordered Cartwright and Hyde to "go up in the front and sit down." They said they couldn't see the count from there. "Go on up front and sit down, you don't have to see us count 'em." snarled a muscular thug.

Cartwright said he wouldn't stay if he couldn't witness the count, so he and Hyde left. This left Vestal and Scott as the only GI watchers for Precinct 11.

When Cartwright and Hyde emerged, a roar of anger went up from the hundreds of citizens across the street. The eight or nine deputies in front of the waterworks office fingered their weapons. Charles Scott, Sr. sent word in to his son and Vestal to "come on out. We don't want you boys alone in there with those gangsters."

GI Judge Bob Hairrell Beaten 3:15 pm

Bob Hairrell, GI judge, beaten by Minis Wilburn, officer of the election, 12 precinct, North White Street, Athens.

The First Poll Closing (Illegally)

### **12th Precinct, Dixie Café**

**3:55 pm**

The first closing come at the 12th Precinct, back of the Dixie Café and next to the county jail. The legal closing time was 4 pm. The door was locked and Sheriff Mansfield's men lifted an automobile to the sidewalk, placed it directly in front of the precinct door. Two other cars were placed across the narrow alley to block access to the area of the voting place, and sheriff's deputies, hands on their pistols, guard against entry into the area.

**4:15 pm?**

While GIs watched with a scowl Sheriff Mansfield and a dozen of his deputies piled into two cars and drove off to the 11th Precinct at the Water Commission office. There, deputies, with guns ready, kept all observers away from the sidewalk in front of the office, and a throng of several hundred watched silently from across the street.

Vote Counting

### **11th Precinct, Water Commission Office**

**4:20 pm?**

Inside, according to stories the GIs told later, Charles Scott, Jr., and James Howard Vestal, watchers for the GI ticket, were ordered to take seats in front of the room, while the vote counting, by Cantrell men, went on at the rear. Vestal and Scott demanded that they either be permitted to see the ballots or be allowed to leave the area. The sheriff's men refused and ordered them to, "Sit down, you're staying right here." They sat down. A few minutes later, Scott told the machine politicians again that they were leaving. At this, the machine men barricaded the ex-GIs behind a counter and locked the door.

**4:45 pm.**

"We jumped on the counter, climbed over it and tried to get out. The door was locked," Vestal said "and Charlie hit it with his shoulder. They were right at us and trying to slug us with knuckles and their guns. He broke the glass and we stumbled through. Charlie was cut around the shoulders. I got cut a little too, and fell down coming through the door." The door was a plate glass set in a wood frame.

**A Sickening Sight**

Then over a thousand people witnessed a sickening sight. Vestal who was until January of this year a first lieutenant in the army engineers corps and twice wounded in the Pacific, scrambled to his feet, blood dripping from a gash in his left hand. Scott too, picked himself up. Through the broken glass, immediately on their heels squirmed Deputy Sheriff Wendy Wise, a shiny .38 revolver poked out in front of his nose. He shouted something which was lost in the moan which went through the crowd. Women screamed; one shouted, "Oh, god, here it comes." From a long line of ex-soldiers on the sidewalk across the street came gasp's, then cries "let's go get 'em!"; "No, we got no guns, stay away from them .45s." Vestal and Scott, whether heeding Wise's orders or through quick instinct, threw their hands high above their heads and walked slowly and alone across the empty street to the refuge of the crowd. Wise leveled his revolver at their backs, then whirled with the instinct of the gunman to one side and then the other to insure against a potshot at himself from the crowd — then aimed again at the backs of the veterans. George Spurling, another deputy, popped up at Wise's side and slowly brought his pistol down in the direction of the retreating boys, aiming either at them or some of the jeering GIs on the sidewalk to which they were going. He and Wise for a few seconds gave every appearance of being trigger happy. It seemed to us, standing just across the street, that Spurling was in the act of pressing his trigger when another deputy half grabbed his arm, gave him a half-dozen swift slaps in the ribs as a signal not to fire. As Vestal and Scott completed their long, measured march, their GI comrades, boiling mad by now, cried to Wise and other deputies, "Throw down your guns and come out in the street and we'll fight you man for man.

#### **4:50 pm**

Wise ducked back into the Water Commission Office.

#### **4:55 pm**

But further activity was forestalled when Chief Deputy Boe Dunn drove up in a blue sedan, with two ex-soldiers, Felix Harrod, election clerk, and Tom Dooley, election judge, for the all GI ticket were, being forcibly held and transported by Dunn's group, as six men piled out. The deputies formed a cordon from the precinct to the car and Dunn himself went in and stole the ballot box. At least 15 pistols were trained on the citizens of Athens as the deputies rolled away with the ballot box. They went straight to the county jail. Several citizens broke from the crowd, shouting, "Get your guns, boys, get your guns!"

#### **Vestal and Scott Taken To The Hospital**

Vestal's wounds were treated by Dr. C.O. Foree in the physician's clinic. Two stitches were required to close the slash on his ankle. He also suffered a cut hand. Vestal was a first lieutenant in the 3rd Combat Engineers, 24th Division. He was overseas 30 months, was hit by a Jap hand grenade once and wounded by artillery fire once. "How did today compare to fighting overseas?" he was asked. He was quiet for a moment. "Well, today it made you madder than it did over there. And it was closer range."

#### **First Violent Incident in McMinn County**

Kennedy's Essankay Tire Company

**5:10 pm**

W. O. Kennedy, Republican election commissioner and crowd of veterans walked to Kennedy's garage and tire shop near the center of town. Two deputies, with badges and sidearms walked toward the crowd. This was a mistake as this was most assuredly seen in the abstract a representation of a decade of tyranny and oppression of a despotic government, the Cantrell political machine. The crowd was quickly inflamed at the arrogance of the two deputies and suddenly there were yells of "Kill them, kill them" sounded in the streets. The deputies drew their guns and prepared to shoot down anyone who came near.

It is the trained and instinctive nature of veterans of war to react offensively at such an oppressive act committed by the deputies. Otto Kennedy and his civilian task force accepted the challenge. They rushed across the street and overwhelmed the two deputies before the pair could choose a target for their fire.

W. O. Kennedy, his two brothers and several other furious vets attacked the deputies with a proper assault and battery upon their faces and ripping their clothes.

The crowds packing the main square heard of an impending attack by the sheriff's force and rushed to the scene.

### **First False Alarm**

Cries of "here they come" sent the onlookers scattering wildly for shelter but the garage garrison stood firm and waited for the assault. When no more gunmen appeared after five minutes the crowd came out from the hedges, homes and parked cars.

By now there were literally thousands of people — mostly men — strung along a three-block area. They were frightened people, and people who were ashamed of their town's politics, but something in the attitude of these embattled veterans held them.

### **Second Alarm Netted Two More Deputies**

The veterans waited. The mob huddled back against the store as soon as the shot came. Another thunderous warning, "Here they come," emptied the streets. It was an anti-climax. There were no onrush carloads of deputies. Only two deputies appeared.

They had guns of course. But the group at the garage had two guns now. Kennedy's rangers made short work of them as they had the first two. The second pair were marched into the garage to join the first pair. Chattanooga Times reporter Richard Rogers attempted to mingle among the crowd when he was spotted as an unrecognizable intruder by a veteran and that veteran challenged him for his business being there. The reporter identified himself and was promptly escorted into the garage where the captured deputies were. In any act of revolt there is the human nature to extract the same kind of punishment upon the tyrannical proponents that they had

inflicted upon the citizenry. The veteran guards over the four deputies, in using intimidation and humiliation tactics common in any war goaded any one or all the deputies to attempt anything to give justification in the veteran's desire to shoot them, saying "Go ahead, you sons of -----. I'd love to kill every ----- one of you. The reporter's escort pushed him closer to the deputies quite possibly to provide the reporter the opportunity to interview the prisoners, saying to the deputies, "Here's a reporter."

### **Third Alarm Nets Three More Deputies**

This interview arrangement was interrupted with another alarm warning from outside. "Here they come!" The reporter's escort spun around, and ran outside again. One guard ran after him. This left the four deputies with one veteran guard and the reporter. The lone guard threatened the prisoners saying, "If those guys get in here and get me, I'll kill you first." Another yell bellowed from the street. A veteran stuck his head through the door and shouted "Watch out! They're going to rush us." The reporter ducked behind a stack of tires.

Just then there came the loudest most frightening, skin crawling roar of voices those people could emit. The reporter saw the lone guard waving one gun in his direction and upon seeing its muzzle, comparing it to the size of Chattanooga's Braided Tunnel, he jumped through the window which was behind him and the stack of tires.

Now out on the street the reporter had seen that the crowd had grown and saw one carrying a 12-gauge shotgun and another had a repeating rifle. Unexpectedly, three deputies appeared on the street. Two were overcome immediately. The third was overpowered by Otto Kennedy, throwing himself upon the larger man, shoved his own .45 against the fellow's face and the fight went out of the deputy. That was the last capture of the engagement.

### **Transport Seven Captured Deputies Out of Town**

**5:30 p.m.**

The crowd remained in the streets. The veterans pleaded for volunteers to haul the deputies out of town, and one by one, citizens came forward with automobiles.

One of these was an aged gentleman who operates a hardware store near the Essankay garage. He introduced himself as Emmett Johnson. "Do you live in Athens, sir?"

"I do. And today I'm ashamed of my home. These gangsters have disgraced us. If the boys want my car they can have it. They can have anything. They should have started cleaning up on those crooks a long time ago." As the deputies lives were in grave danger they were put into cars and driven out of town. Then the crowd was told to scatter. The crowd reluctantly dispersed.

W. O. Kennedy Interviewed By Five Chattanooga Times Staff Reporters Kennedy agreed to an interview with the Chattanooga Times. Five of the Times staff drove a mile into the country to Kennedy's home. At the Kennedy home were Otto Kennedy introducing his brothers J.P. and C.O.; J.B. Adams, his son-in-law, and Frank McCracken.

Otto Kennedy revealed the deputies were out-of-towners. And one claimed he got arrested this morning on a traffic charge and instead of paying the fine they made him a deputy and gave him a gun.

### **Second Ballot Box Taken To Jail**

**6:35 pm**

The sheriff's men, assisted by state highway patrolmen and city policemen removed the automobile from in front of Precinct 12 (Dixie Café) and carried the ballot box into the McMinn County bastille, where presumably, Ellis and several other GIs still were being held incommunicado. As the sheriff's men carried the box across the jailhouse lawn, they were preceded by two men armed with shotguns and followed by four more equipped with heavy-gauge shotguns and high-powered rifles. Apparently pistols, of which several hundred were on display, were not longer considered to handle the occasion.

### **GI's Gather At GI Headquarters**

**7:30 p.m.**

GI's Converge On The Jail

**8:45 p.m.**

A crowd of about 500 armed with pistols and light rifles moved on the jail.

### **Battle Begins**

**9:00 pm**

Ralph Duggan, a former Navy lieutenant commander and a leader of the ex-GI's said the crowd was "met by gun fire" and because they had "promised that the ballots would be counted as cast," they had "no choice but to meet fire with fire." Violence flared anew with GIs reported firing on the county jail. Shooting began around 9:00 pm for the first time. Sheriff Pat Mansfield  
Interviewed By Chattanooga Daily Times Via Telephone

**10:00 pm**

Sheriff Pat Mansfield breaks off telephone conversations to Chattanooga Daily Times, stating "I can't talk anymore — there's mob violence at the County Jail right now. Things are too hot here now. I haven't got time to talk to you — I'm standing in front of the door." he said hurriedly as he hung up the telephone.

### **Sheriff Pat Mansfield and Deputies Threaten Hostages**

**11:00 pm**

Sheriff Pan Mansfield and deputies threatened to kill three GI hostages held within the jailhouse. The three GI hostages are Felix Harrod, Tom Dooley and Walter Ellis.

### **Thousands of Rounds Exchanged**

**11:35 pm-12:40 am**

Thousands of rounds of shots were exchanged between ex-GIs and an estimated 75 deputies barricaded in the McMinn County jail. No state guardsman had arrived at 12:40. Former soldiers were pouring lead into every opening in the brick jail. The officers' returning fire was weakening. Some GIs were firing from ground level across White Street. Others were on roofs on the Power Company Building and other near-by structures.

### **Tennessee State Guard Mobilized?**

**12:00 am (midnight)**

State Adj.-Gen. Hilton Butler announced that he was mobilizing the Sixth Regiment of the State Guard in connection with election violence in McMinn County. This report was later proven untrue.

### **GIs Cut Telephone Lines To The Jail**

**1:00 am**

GIs cut telephone lines to the jail. The officers, inside the jail, were out of ammunition or running extremely low. Firing of the GIs included rapid bursts of 10 or more shots. Apparently they were using some automatic rifles.

### **Last Warning! Deputies Threaten Hostages' Lives**

**2:00 am**

Deputies sent out last warning that they would kill three GI hostages within the jail immediately if the firing did not end.

GIs Replied With Ultimatum Of Their Own

**2:20 am**

GIs issued an ultimatum to the deputies to come out with hands upraised or the crowd would rush the jail.

### **GIs Escalate The Fight With Use of Dynamite**

**2:59 am**

The ex-GIs went into action with demolition charges — home made, but effective. After a fourth blast had rocked the jail one of the deputies leaned from the building and shouted "Stop that blasting. We'll give up — we're dying in here. Firing continued a few moments then stopped.

### **The Deputies Surrendered**

**3:02-3:30 a.m.**

The officers began filing out of the battered building. They were searched, and roughly, by the attackers and marched back into the building to be locked in cells under guard of the ex-GIs. When Wyse came out, several in the crowd surged forward and mauled him with fists and elbows before he could be returned to comparative safety of the bullet scarred jail.

### **Riots & Destruction Begin**

**3:45 a.m.**

Automobiles belonging to deputy sheriffs overturned in streets, smashed and burned.

**4:00 a.m. Sunrise.**

Battle over. The veterans armed with rifles were patrolling the streets to maintain order by sunrise.

### **George Woods Concedes**

**5:00 a.m.**

By telephone George Woods concedes GI victory.

### **Paul Cantrell Concedes Defeat**

**7:05 am**

Frank Cantrell, Mayor of Etowah issued the following statement: "In behalf of my brother Paul Cantrell, I wish to concede the election to the G.I. candidates in order to prevent further shooting. (Signed) Frank Cantrell.

### **Deputies Released From Jail 9:00 a.m.**

GIs Disperse 10:00 a.m.

### **Three-man Commission Elected**

**4:00 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 3**

Three man commission chosen as governing body by mass meeting at Court House. Volunteers by hundreds offer assistance in setting up government framework.

### **Cleansing & Restoration**

**4:00 p.m. Friday to 5:00 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 3**

Curious crowds mill streets as the new government cleans up "hot-spots." Beer sales banned. Town is orderly.

Rumored Biggs-Mansfield Invasion Sets GIs On Alert

**9:00 p.m. Saturday**

Rumor and newspaper story from Knoxville sets off high strung nerves with the report that Biggs and Mansfield will attempt to storm Athens.

### **1,500 Citizens Converge On Athens**

**9:00 pm**

Fifteen hundred citizens pour into Athens with firearms to back the new government. Telephone calls from neighboring cities pledge aid if needed in defense of the town.

### **GIs on Patrol**

**7:00 p.m. Saturday Aug. 3 to Sunrise Sunday, Aug. 4**

Athens is patrolled by GIs and citizens.

### **George Woods Returns to McMinn County Under GI Escort**

**4:00 p.m. Sunday, August 4**

### **G-I CLAIM ELECTION TO OFFICE — ISSUE STATEMENT**

This special announcement was hand to the Daily Post-Athenian and Radio Station WLAR at 3:02 A.M. by the Non-Partisan Candidates for immediate release shortly before the exodus of imprisoned officials in the county jail:

"The G-I election officials went to the polls unarmed to have a fair election, as Pat Mansfield promised. They were met with black-jacks and pistols.

"Several G-I officials were beaten and the ballot boxes were moved to the jail. The G-I supporters went to the jail to get these ballot boxes and were met by gunfire.

"The G-I candidates had promised that the votes would be counted as cast. They had no choice but to meet fire with fire.

"In the precincts where the G-I candidates were allowed watchers they led by three to one majorities.

"THE G-Is ARE ELECTED AND WILL SERVE AS YOUR COUNTY OFFICIALS BEGINNING SEPT. 1st, 1946."

The G-I Candidates, thus claiming election to officer are:

Knox Henry — Sheriff

Frank Carmichael — Trustee

Bill Hamby — Circuit Court Clerk

Charlie Pickle — Register of Deeds

Campaign Mgr for the G-Is was Jim Buttram.

George Woods returns to McMinn County under protection by the GI-Citizens Government.

Sheriff Mansfield Resigned

**5:00 p.m. Sunday**

Word is received from Nashville that Mansfield had resigned as sheriff.

### **George Woods Declares GI's Elected**

**10:00 a.m. Monday, August 5**

George Woods signs election certificate declaring GIs officially McMinn County Officers.

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