

Garner, 70 Today, Carries More Weight Than Ever in Politics; Influence May Mount Before '40

Former Frontier Lawyer
Expected to Hold
Party Sway.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 22 (NEA)—Absent in the flesh as he celebrated his 70th birthday in far-off Uvalde, Tex., today, Vice President John Nance Garner is nevertheless very much of a presence in Washington.

The taciturn Mr. Garner, who has made a formal public speech since taking office in 1933, is a force in the Administration not to be measured by words.

How active he may prove to be as a contender for the Presidential nomination in 1940 is open to conjecture. But there is no doubt that he commands a segment of the Democratic Party, and that he may have as much to say about who is nominated as he did in 1932, the year he switched his delegates to give Mr. Roosevelt the nomination.

The 70 years on which John Garner looks back have marked a career closely tied to home soil and home things. The old board shack with tar-paper roof in which he set up housekeeping when he married Mariette Rheiher 43 years ago still stands on his estate, "Fair Oaks." Mr. Garner never is happier than when among the people he knew when he was young and Texas was almost frontier country.

Frail As Youth

The rugged and ruddy John Garner of the 70th birthday belies the rather frail youth who was born in a mud-chinked log cabin near Clarksville, Nov. 22, 1868. Working at farm chores and walking to school, clerking in a general store at 16, failed to develop a strong physique. By the time he had saved enough to enter Vanderbilt University to study law, a doctor predicted: "That boy won't live to use an education if he gets it."

Frail health continued until he had patched together a lawyer's education at college and by reading with lawyers. For reasons of health as well as of opportunity he moved to Uvalde, and began practice in 1890.

The frontier lawyer of that day had to be a cautious and shrewd business man as well. Mr. Garner was. In less than five years he was prosperous, a leading citizen as lawyer, rancher, trader and editor of a local paper.

They tell a story in Uvalde that Mr. Garner was opposed in his first campaign for public office, a judgeship, by the woman who was to become his wife and secretary. The team has been consistently successful. In 1898 the young judge was chosen for the Legislature.

When large-scale business came to Texas, Mr. Garner was one of those who sought Government control of it in the interest of general welfare. But always conservatively, always advocating the middle way and the compromise, rather than the extremes. He was in those years rated a progressive, impatient of red tape.

To Congress in 1901

His business affairs flourished, banking and ranching being added to steadily increasing law practice. In 1901 he was sent to Congress by the 15th District, which continued to send him back again and again for 30 years. His service in Congress was marked by ability to make friends with those on both sides of any question, and to do energetic work almost entirely without speaking on the floor. Slowly he came to wield a tremendous influence among fellow Congressmen. This influence has broadened, rather than narrowed, since Mr. Garner became Vice President in 1932. That he has been unsympathetic to many of the New Deal programs is no secret. The reason is easy to find in the acceptance speech he made in 1932:

"There are just two things to this Government, as I see it. The first is to safeguard the lives and properties of our people. The second is to insure that each of us has a chance to work out his destiny according to his talents. This involves protecting him from being injured or oppressed by those of superior acquisitiveness, and perhaps less conscience. . . . There is no reason to believe that Mr. Gardner today would wish to broaden this conception."

But, as he rounds 70, all these thoughts are doubtless far from the Vice President. Inspecting the pecan trees or live oaks that surround his home, or possibly making a trek into the Rio Frio country where he can relax as camp cook—these are more to the taste of John Garner than formal birthday party with many candles.

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John Nance Garner . . . key political figure at 70.

WOMAN TENOR DIES AT 48 IN HOLLYWOOD

HOLLYWOOD, Nov. 22 (U. P.)—

One of the world's few women tenors, Ruby Helder of England, died today. She succumbed last night after a long illness. She was 48. Miss Helder's unusual voice was popular in radio and on the English concert stage for more than 10 years before her retirement in 1935. She was one of the British Broadcasting Co.'s first stars, and sang 1912.

Thanksgiving
SPECIALS ON PERMANENTS
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BUG IN EAR 26 YEARS
HOPKINSVILLE, KY., Nov. 22 (U. P.)—Somebody literally must have put a bug in Mrs. Lizzie Metcalfe's ear 26 years ago. A recent X-ray examination revealed the insect in a good state of preservation. Mrs. Metcalfe said she had been having trouble with her ear since 1912.

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