

Readers will find plenty of warmth and pathos to maintain interest in Herron's first book.

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**Herron, Roy and L.H. "Cotton" Ivy. *Tennessee Political Humor: Some of These Jokes You Voted For.* Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2000.**

The authors are well known in Tennessee, especially in the Western District. Their fame stems from their having served as state senator and state representative, respectively. They are also known for their humor. Their sources were their own experiences, the major newspapers of Tennessee and the Tennessee State Library and Archives. At times they even found information in Washington, D.C. They also obtained help from UT Martin graduates Emmett Edwards and Nelda Rachels and UT Martin English Professor Walter Haden, who read the book's early drafts.

Herron and Ivy selected political humor that follows the grand tradition of humor and tall tales begun by David "Davy" Crockett. According to Herron and Ivy, they harvested "the best pearls of humor...found in Tennessee politics and government." Early they explain their choices are based on good taste. For instance, they soften "offensive language by substituting dashes." They generously provide photographs of many Tennessee raconteurs.

Herron and Ivy begin by focusing on governors and U.S. senators. They first mention the campaigns of brothers Republican Alf and Democrat Bob Taylor, competing for the governor's office. The authors quickly cover the "pet coon feud" between Senator Estes Kefauver and Memphis "Boss" Crump, during which the former claimed he was not the latter's "pet coon." In exchanging barbs Governor Gordon Browning alleged Crump insisted on correct spelling of tombstone names for "an honest election." Naturally the authors highlight the 1986 gubernatorial campaign pledge of House Speaker Ned Ray McWherter: "Swear me in, give me a cup of coffee, two vanilla wafers, and I'll be ready to go to work."

Among the best political stories one concerns a faithful southwest Tennessee Republican. He insisted in the 1950s that President Dwight D. Eisenhower appoint him ambassador to Britain. Instead, as "consolation,"

he was made postmaster of Moscow—in Fayette County, Tennessee. Another gem concerns an East Tennessean who preferred voting for the imprisoned incumbent because, as he said, “We’ve already sent one good man to the legislature—we don’t want to ruin another.” Perhaps no other claim surpasses the lieutenant governor who stood both “firmly for” and “firmly against” whiskey.

One legislator staunchly admitted, “I believe in collecting the taxes where the money is—in cities—and spending it where it’s needed—in the country.” He also decided against a legislative license plate lest his vehicle be too readily identifiable. One solon needed to know how a colleague would vote because “I’ve got you sold both ways,” he said, “and I’ve got to give one guy his money back.” A freshman lawmaker reproached a veteran legislator for violating their voting agreement. The veteran smiled and said, “Welcome to the legislature.”

Readers will gain from Herron and Ivy many insights into how state government operates. They give background information that is often not in the textbooks. For example, an East Tennessean’s effort to move the acceptance of and then second his own bill brought only amusement to fellow legislators. The writers certainly explain why many legislators have avoided determinedly the tedious work of the House Judiciary Committee.

Pranks have helped to break the lawmakers’ daily routine. One legislator put foot powder into his associate’s microphone knowing that the Giles County representative always blew into his mike. Surely enough, he did!

The book explains the origin of early atomic research in Tennessee. President Franklin Roosevelt needed the help of Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Kenneth McKellar to conceal a huge appropriation for the highly secret bomb to end World War II. The Senator responded, “And where in Tennessee do you want me to hide it?” The location became Oak Ridge.

The authors devote a chapter to one-liners to capture another aspect of political humor. Older readers, especially, will see the significance of Senator Baker’s observation to his father-in-law Senator Everett Dirksen of Illinois: “You don’t choose your words for what they mean; you choose them for how they taste.” After a commentary on one-liners, they devote a complete chapter to “Davy Crockett: Tennessee’s First Political Humorist.” Ivy and Herron have done enough homework to include excellent biographical background and examples of Crockett’s humor.

Herron and Ivy conclude their volume with “Politics and Cotton.” One aspiring local politician stopped campaigning because “Some of them lies they was tellin’ on me, they can really prove!” Cotton observed that if a mother quickly washed a politician’s kiss off her baby, “You need to

mark that vote down as 'doubtful.'" One governor told "about how he was born in a log cabin he built with his own hands."

For light but informative reading, try *Tennessee Political Humor*.

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**Grubbs, Morris Allen, Editor. *Home and Beyond:*  
*An Anthology of Kentucky Short Stories*  
The University Press of Kentucky, 2001, 424 pages**

*Home and Beyond* is a remarkable collection of forty short stories, each by a different "Kentucky Writer." Not all of the contributors are natives or even adopted citizens of the Commonwealth, but as editor Grubbs explains, "Their personal identities and often their fiction and poetry are shaped by their Kentucky experiences." Professor Grubbs has helpfully provided a concise biographical sketch of each author, listing his or her major works.

This anthology covers the post-World War II period through the 1990s. The stories from 1945 through 1960 reflect "a sense of impending loss," and those of the 'sixties and 'seventies are set "in a world where the home is mobile and the characters are adrift." The stories written after 1980 "refocus on a sense of being connected to a place and the sense of home." Perhaps this emphasis on family ties and "belonging" amid overwhelming social and economic change is why I can identify with and enjoy these later stories as much as I do.

My favorite is Wendell Berry's "That Distant Land," written in 1986. It seems to me so beautiful that it's almost poetry. Other stories which I especially enjoyed were "The Gift" (1957) by Janice Holt Giles; "Fur in the Hickory" (1953) by Billy C. Clark; "Play Like I'm Sheriff" (1968) by Jack Cady; "A Fellow Made Himself Up" (1982) by Leon V. Driskell; "The Fugitive" (1984) by Richard Cortez Day; "Dr. Livingston's Grotto" (1989) by Normandi Ellis; "Belinda's World Tour" (1993) by Guy Davenport; and "The Way It Felt to be Falling" (1993) by Kim Edwards. I realize, of course, that other readers will find their own favorites among the forty selections.

There are many more of these stories that I will revisit, even those dark tales which poignantly and truthfully describe troubled minds and tortured souls. While I can't honestly say that I "enjoy" some of these