

## **MASCHKE, MAN OF KINDNESS, CHARM**

**Symbol of Bossism, but to Reporter He Was One Who Bore No Grudge.**

BY ROELIF LOVELAND, Cleveland Plain Dealer

Friday November 20, 1936

**I don't know much about editorial opinion or what constitutes a great public servant or a fair-to-middling one. But I do know something about people, as all reporters do who have been in the racket for more than a year.**

You get so you can spot the phonies, and the average guys, and the better than average guys—and every so often you run across a fellow who grows with acquaintance and who never lets you down. And you are inclined to call them great guys, and sometimes you call them great men.

You can kick a heel around, and his bellows will fill the air, guilty or not. You can kick an average guy around, and he'll smack you the first chance he gets. But when you kick a great man around, and he takes it, unconvinced of his error, but grinning, you'll know he's a great man.

### **A Man Kind and Gracious.**

We all booted Maurice Maschke around—and he held no bitterness against us. Why did we kick him around? God only knows. Maurice Maschke was the symbol of party bossism. Maurice Maschke this, Maurice Maschke that. Maurice Maschke wore horns a foot long. So what?

To think of him—and we who knew him are not likely to forget him in a hurry—to think of him is to think of a man who was kind and gracious; who loved his city and his family and his party and truth and personal decency. To be sure, he gave the city about what its citizens wanted. If they wanted the town cleaned up, it was cleaned up. If they wanted it less rigid, it was less rigid, I do not attempt to claim that Maurice Maschke was a Boy Scout.

I can see him as he sat in a court room. Flash bulbs exploded all about him. One exploded. and the glass hit him in the face. Maschke was mad. Not mad about the bulbs, but burned up because he was being kicked around. He was acquitted.

### **Chatting With Foe's Wife.**

I can see him on a platform in Public Hall, graciously trying to make conversation with the wife of one of his political enemies. The lady looked scared to death until Maschke began to talk with her. Only a gentleman to his shoetops could have done it.

I can see him in his office going over the proof of the history of his life which he wrote for the Plain Dealer. A comma out of place was a matter of moment for him. He would consider the break of a paragraph for minutes. He liked words, and he fished for them diligently, until he had the right one. He had a lot of fun. I do not recall that most of the gross Tammany bosses ever gave a comma or a paragraph a thought.

I recall him on election nights, with his hat on his head, and his glasses on his forehead, looking up and pretending to growl at his assistants. They pretended to be frightened by the growl, but they weren't, because they loved him. And I really believe he knew he wasn't scaring anybody.

### **Eyes That Then Were Happy.**

And I remember that night, not so long ago, when Maurice Maschke marched down the aisle of the former Women's City Club where, on the eve of the greatest Democratic victory in history, Republicans had gathered to honor him. The hall was packed. Maschke's scarf was flying free from his coat. His face was flushed. His eyes were happy, and a little moist. He did not seem to be very strong.

One by one, they got up, great and small, and told Maurice Maschke of their regard for him.

His heart was full—full almost to bursting.

It is a comfort today to those of us who booted Maurice Maschke around, to know that he bore us no ill will. He never quite understood it—and neither did we. It was wicked to be a party boss, in spite of what Lincoln Steffens said on the subject. And Maschke let it go at that. Let it go at that, and took us into his confidence and, whether he knew it or not, sometimes into his heart.

And what we saw there was shining silver and pure gold.

For Maurice Maschke, diabolical party boss, was one of the kindest and gentlest and finest gentlemen I have ever known.

[Read more about Maurice Maschke here](#)