

OUR CENTURY

1952

AT A GLANCE

Prisoners issue in Korea; labor relations poor



Kuekes

The Korean War had settled into a stalemate, but soldiers still were being killed in fights over meaningless hills and ridges. At Panmunjom, truce talks also were stale-mated, with the same points made over and over.

The biggest issue was prisoners of war. The U.N. forces held 169,000 prisoners, many of them South Koreans

forced into the North Korean Army. The North held 88,000 South Koreans and 11,500 Americans, many being subjected to Communist “brainwashing.”

On the home front, labor relations were stalemated. A White Sewing Machine Corp. strike lasted 22 weeks. A meatcutters strike closed meat outlets for nine days. Interunion disputes took 25,000 construction workers off the job. Sixteen thousand briefly struck Ohio Bell Telephone Co. A 55-day national steel strike led to government seizure of Republic Steel Corp.

With teenagers dying for their country, there was a push for a lower voting age. The Plain Dealer’s Ed Kuekes won a Pulitzer Prize with a Nov. 9 editorial cartoon, but it took another 19 years to win passage of the 26th Amendment.

The Barons finished second in the Western Division and lost to the Providence Reds in the opening round of the Calder Cup playoffs. But then came the break Cleveland hockey fans had been waiting for — or so they thought.

On May 14, National Hockey League owners voted to admit the Barons, assuming the team met financial conditions. On July 2, General Manager Jim Hendy, confident he had met all the conditions, awaited formal approval. Instead, the expansion was defeated by a tie vote of the six owners.

The official reason was that part of the team’s working capital was borrowed money, though that had not been mentioned as a bar in the May conditions. In “Forgotten Glory, the Story of Cleveland Barons Hockey,” Gene Kiczek says the owners still were miffed that Al Sutherland had turned down their offer of an NHL franchise in 1949.

The main reason, though, was James D. Norris, who owned the Detroit Red Wings and was the landlord of the Chicago Blackhawks and the New York Rangers. His influence over the latter two earned the NHL the nickname “the Norris House League.” Had Cleveland entered the league, the balance would have shifted. Toronto, Montreal and Boston voted to admit the Barons.

A team called the Cleveland Barons would play in the NHL in 1976-77 and 1977-78, but the Barons who had won the hearts of Clevelanders remained a minor-league team.

Never did the Indians follow Hank Greenberg’s formula of pitching and the long ball better than in 1952. Though Bob Feller had his first losing season, going 9-13, Early Wynn won 23 games and Bob Lemon and Mike Garcia won 22 each. Larry Doby hit 32 home runs to lead the league. Luke Easter and Al Rosen were close behind at 31 and 28, respectively.

On Sept. 11, the Yankees came to town tied with the Indians for first place. Before 73,609 fans, a Major League season high, the Yankees’ Eddie Lopat defeated the Indians 7-1, and the Yankees went on to take the pennant by two games over the Tribe.

The end of the season brought out a rift among the team’s owners. They voted out Ellis Ryan as president and replaced him with Myron “Mike” Wilson Jr.

The Browns had the poorest record in their seven-year history, 8-4, but they backed into their seventh straight conference title when the Philadelphia Eagles lost their final game. The Browns lost the title game to the Detroit Lions, 17-7, with Howard “Hopalong” Cassady’s 67-yard touchdown run the big play for the Lions.

In later years, it would be remembered nostalgically as “the Golden Age of Television.” Among the stars: Jackie Gleason, Sid Caesar, George Burns and Gracie Allen, Red Buttons, Milton Berle, Ernie Kovacs and, most memorably, Lucille Ball in “I Love Lucy.” Among other shows: “Mr. Peepers” with Wally Cox, “Our Miss Brooks” with Eve Arden, “Toast of the Town” with emcee Ed Sullivan, “Dragnet” with Jack Webb, “My Little Margie” with Gale Storm, “My Friend Irma” with Marie Wilson, “Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet,” “The Life of Riley” with William Bendix and both “Arthur Godfrey’s Talent Scouts” and “Arthur Godfrey and His Friends.”

In the year’s most sensational crime, Lawrence Goldsby went berserk and killed Patrolman Eugene Stinchcomb and three others on a bus at Euclid Ave. and E. 105th St. He was sentenced to life in prison.

George Ross, who had been captured after a nationwide manhunt, was executed for the 1951 murder of Patrolman Forney Haas.

By Fred McGunagle

“The oil-laden surface of the Cuyahoga River swept through the shipyard of the Great Lakes Towing Co. at 201 Jefferson Ave. yesterday afternoon, disabled the Jefferson Ave. Bridge and caused damage variously estimated at \$500,000 to \$1.5 million,” said the Nov. 2 Plain Dealer.

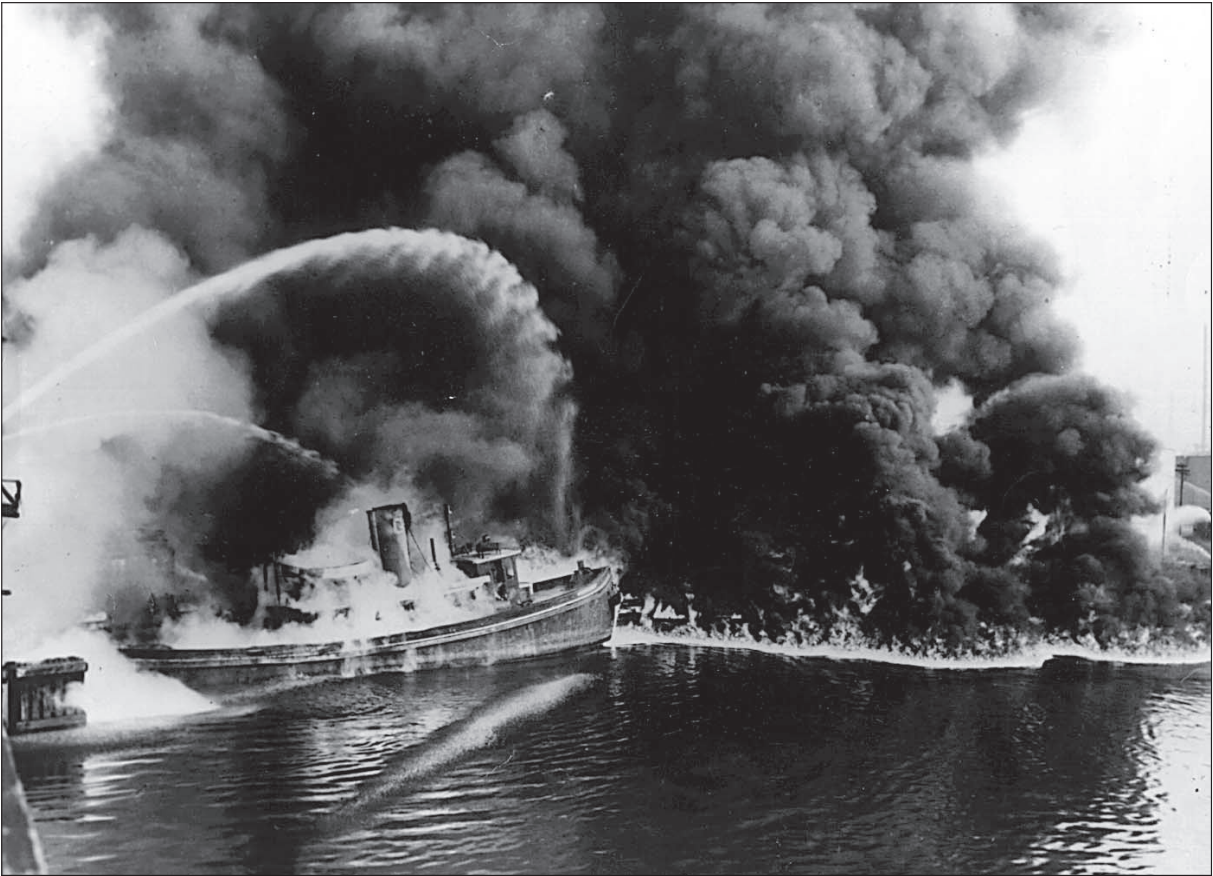
The fire destroyed three tugs in dry-dock. Fourteen fire companies, a fireboat and a rescue squad battled to save the buildings. “Firemen were hindered by the river blaze, which formed a crescent around the crowded buildings of the yard,” the newspaper reported.” Only a miracle kept that fire from becoming a major conflagration,” Bernard Mulcahy, chief of the Fire Department’s Fire Prevention Bureau, said afterward. “If it had spread below the bridge, we would have lost control.”

Police halted auto traffic on Broadway. “If the fire had spread with Broadway full of automobiles, we could never have cleared it in time,” said Lt. Vincent Spisak of the police traffic bureau.

It was the third serious river fire in four years and the worst in more than 30 years. A 1914 blaze had threatened downtown until a providential shift in the wind halted its northward march. Airborne sparks from that fire caused numerous house fires as far away as E. 40th St. A river fire that spread to a shipyard in 1918 took seven lives.

“We have photographs that show nearly 6 inches of oil on the river,” Mulcahy said. “Our reports show the oil there comes from three sources: oil brought down Kingsbury Run, from the Standard Oil Co. and from Great Lakes Towing itself.

“We are forced to the conclusion



PLAIN DEALER FILE

The Cuyahoga burns in 1952, as a fireboat valiantly tries to douse the flames.

that there is no satisfactory method of removing the oil once it has reached the river. The only solution is to prevent it from entering the river.”

The fire brought a demand from the Chamber of Commerce that

Mayor Thomas Burke eliminate the hazards. “We expect the administration to do something about taking the lead in this problem,” said Vice President Oliver Reynolds.

Burke bristled: “Let ’em come

down and see me any time — I’m ready,” he said. “In the past we have not had the cooperation of industry.”

McGunagle is a Cleveland free-lance writer.

Crowds cheer Ike

Republican nominee welcomes Nixon to ticket

By Fred McGunagle

It was one of the most dramatic moments in American political history, and Clevelanders gave Dwight Eisenhower a lot of help in making up his mind — in fact, a lot more than he wanted.

The Republican candidate for president was scheduled to speak at Public Hall the evening of Sept. 23. He whistled his way that day from Cincinnati with Sens. Robert A. Taft and John Bricker, making a half-dozen short speeches from the rear of his train. He arrived just in time to watch a television program.

It was vice presidential nominee Richard Nixon, defending himself against charges he had been given an \$18,000 “slush fund” by supporters and should be kicked off the ticket. Ike was mad: It came out later that Nixon had infuriated him by demanding (with undeleted expletives) a decision immediately after the speech. Eisenhower watched Nixon’s speech in the Public Hall manager’s office while an SRO crowd of 18,000 watched in the auditorium.

On the air, Nixon produced an audit from Price Waterhouse & Co. certifying that all of the \$18,000 had been spent for legal political purposes. Then he bared his finances — his lack of stocks and bonds, his \$41,000 house with a \$20,000 mortgage, his \$3,500 loan from his parents, his 1950 Oldsmobile.

He jolted Eisenhower when he called on Gov. Adlai Stevenson and Sen. John Sparkman, the Democratic candidates, to bare their own finances. In his biography “Eisenhower,” Stephen Ambrose revealed Eisenhower knew he would have to do the same and he feared disclosure of gifts from his supporters.

Nixon did own up to accepting one gift — a black and white Cocker span-



PLAIN DEALER FILE

Dwight Eisenhower makes his way to Public Hall.

iel: “Our little girl, the 6-year-old, named it Checkers and, you know, the kids, like all kids, love the dog and I just want to say this right now, that regardless of what they say about it, we’re going to keep it.”

When the speech ended, the Republicans in the hall chanted, “We want Dick!” When county Republican Chairman George Bender asked, “Are you in favor of Sen. Nixon continuing as a candidate?” They loosed what The Plain Dealer called “an outburst of assent.” Bender repeated the question and got a louder roar.

Eisenhower dashed off a telegram telling Nixon he admired his courage but wanted to meet him the next day in Wheeling, W.Va., before making a decision. Then he walked out among 18,000 Republicans cheering for Nixon.

Throwing away a prepared speech about inflation, Eisenhower spoke without notes. He praised Nixon’s courage, saying, “I would rather have a courageous man by my side than a whole boxcar full of pussyfooters.” He said his decision rested on “Do I,



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Second Lt. John J. Kuchirchek, of E. 112th St. in Cleveland, met with Dwight Eisenhower during the presidential candidate’s stop in town. Kuchirchek served as photographer at Eisenhower’s SHAPE headquarters in Paris in 1951.

myself, believe this man is the kind of man that America would like for its vice president?” The crowd let him know unmistakably what it thought.

The speech was not televised nationally, but Ike’s advisers were so pleased that they scheduled it for national broadcast the following night. By then, Republican National Headquarters had received more than 30,000 telegrams. When Nixon got off the plane in Wheeling, Eisenhower, though still seething inside, told him, “You’re my boy!”

For better or worse, Richard Nixon had secured his place as a national figure.

McGunagle is a Cleveland free-lance writer.

LOOKING AT A YEAR

Feb. 8: Elizabeth II becomes queen of England following the death of her father, King George VI.

April 15: President Harry Truman signs the peace treaty officially ending World War II with Japan, giving the Japanese government full sovereignty.

June 2: The U.S. Supreme Court

declares unconstitutional Truman’s seizure of the nation’s steel mills during a strike by steelworkers.

July 12: Republicans nominate war hero Dwight D. Eisenhower for president and California Congressman Richard Nixon as his running mate.

Sept. 23: Rocky Marciano becomes heavyweight champion with a 13th-

round knockout of Jersey Joe Walcott.

Nov. 5: Eisenhower is elected president in a landslide victory over Democrat Adlai Stevenson. In Massachusetts, 35-year-old John F. Kennedy is elected to the U.S. Senate.

Dec. 10: Albert Schweitzer wins the Nobel Peace Prize.

Dec. 15: George Jorgenson receives a much-publicized sex change operation, becoming Christine Jorgenson.

Born: Robin Williams, Anjelica Houston

Died: Argentinian Evita Peron, American labor leaders Philip Murray and William Green.