

Ramsey, Claude Swanson ^[1]

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by Mary Cowles, 1994

2 Mar. 1899–17 Oct. 1963

Claude Swanson Ramsey, newspaper executive and political writer, was born in [Burlington](#) ^[2], the son of S. Clay and Lucy Pinckard Ramsey. As a youth he moved to [Asheville](#) ^[3] with his family and began his newspaper career as a newsboy while still in grammar school. He sold copies of the *Asheville Gazette-News* (forerunner of the *Asheville Times*) in 1912 and became a reporter in 1917, his senior year at Asheville High School. Enlisting in the army in 1917, he served as a sergeant in the 113th Field Artillery, 30th Division, from the time it was formed until it was disbanded at the end of the war. He saw action in the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne offensives and the Toul and Woivre sectors and received four battle stars. He was graduated from the Saumur (France) Artillery School.

In 1919 Ramsey entered the [University of Virginia](#) ^[4], where he was sports editor of the university newspaper, *College Topics*, and a member of Sigma Nu fraternity. In 1920, however, he joined the news staff of the *Asheville Times* and three years later became sports editor, a post he held for two years.

Ramsey was sent to [Raleigh](#) ^[5] to cover the regular session of the [General Assembly](#) ^[6] in 1929, and he returned to report on the sessions of 1931, 1933, and 1935, as well as the special sessions of 1936 and 1938, for both the *Asheville Times* and the *Asheville Citizen-Times* ^[7]. Although it was said that he was capable of handling any job in the newspaper plant save operating a linotype machine, it was in Raleigh that Ramsey's fascination with people and politics came to the fore. With an uncanny capacity for remembering names, faces, and facts, he came to know virtually everyone in public life in North Carolina. Many of these people became his close personal friends.

In 1939 he became North Carolina publications director for the United Brewers Foundation and made his home in Raleigh. In 1947, however, he once more joined the staff of the *Asheville Citizen-Times* to cover the General Assembly. Later in the year he was promoted to executive editor of the paper, a post he held until his death.

Known throughout the state for his work with the American Legion, Ramsey was district commander in 1936–38 and commander of the Kiffin Rockwell Post, Asheville, in 1937–38. He served as editor of the *North Carolina Legion News* and was chairman of the legion's publications committee as well as a member of its legislative committee. A member of the Thirtieth Division Association, composed of members of the [World War I](#) ^[8] unit, he served as president in 1932. He was also a member of the [Veterans of Foreign Wars](#) ^[9] and of the Veterans of World War I.

A [Democrat](#) ^[10], he served as Twelfth District secretary of the Democratic state conventions of 1956–58 and as a Democratic presidential elector in 1956. He was a director of the Associated Press Managing Editors Association from 1954 to 1957 and was elected president of the North Carolina Associated Press News Council in 1954.

In 1923 Ramsey married Nell Hendon, of Asheville, a native of Tuskegee, Ala. He was survived by his wife and four children: Claude S., Jr., James C., Mrs. William W. Dodge II, and Mrs. Adam Hardison.

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