

and listeners.

Glenn Winchester, a likeable young man, is one of the leaders in this section. He is president of the Fifth Sunday Convention and also is in charge of the Mt. Moriah, his home church. His personality and keen wit makes him an ideal person for the job. Crockett Matthews, Holland Corn, Hugh Bradburn, and many other Ecustans support Glenn in his endeavors around the county.

Critics of such singing conventions point out the music used is sometimes questionable, that it is too swingy at times; and that more conservative, recognized music should be used. The singers and audiences alike seem to prefer things just as they are and the huge success the conventions enjoy is proof that the music is what folks like. They say that the spirit and enthusiasm that is characteristic of their type of music exceeds that shown in the more conservative music.

A typical convention attracts from five to fifteen or twenty quartets, trios, etc. and each group takes a turn at the "mike" and periodically the audience is invited to join in on a number. The "singing class," made up of all the groups, sits near the front of the auditorium and leads the congregation hymns. Usually a well-known visiting singer is asked to direct these hymns and the rafters echo the volume thus achieved.

Few of the events here are of a competitive nature, but after the first round of appearances at the mike, it is pretty evident as to the best quartets or trios, and the healthy round of applause calls them back for encores. The groups come from Brevard, Rosman, Hendersonville, Asheville, and many points in South Carolina—Easley, Pelzer, Greenville, and elsewhere.

Names of the groups are varied—Mellotone Quartet, Tonemasters, Harmony Four, or they may be known by the vicinity, family, or church



*In pictures on this and the preceding page, The Echo has tried to capture the spirit of a singing convention. The teen-age girls' trio which effectively introduces the story appeared at a recent Fifth Sunday Singing Convention at the county courthouse. Above, right, on this page is a portion of the large crowd at the same singing; center is the Wilson Trio of Pelzer which made such a hit with the crowd, and below is the Riverside Quartet of Rosman. The pianist is Irene Staton of Endless Belt. Glenn Winchester, president of the Fifth Sunday Convention, is shown in front of the microphone.*



they represent.

A collection is usually taken, with proceeds going to defray expenses of some of the groups coming the longest distance. This is not a profit-making scheme by any means as most of the visiting singers bear their own expenses because they love to sing.

All ages flock to the conventions and with as many young people interested as are, the "singings" will certainly not fade out in the next generation or two. If anything, their popularity will grow and larger auditoriums will be needed to accommodate the gatherings.

We are not sure just how singing conventions began, but the old-fashioned "dinner-on-the-ground" rural church gatherings must have had an influence on their birth. At these occasions, singing was always a big feature since the meeting generally lasted all day and music provided a pleasant break between the preaching services.

