

The Cherokee Scout

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Murphy, North Carolina, Thursday, June 23, 1938

OUR PRESSING NEED

An authority on community betterment planning recently visited Cherokee county. In connection with his duties he discussed a number of problems designed to make Murphy and Cherokee county more advantageously accessible to North Carolina's swelling tourist trade.

Many logical deductions were made which in time, if practiced, should prove very beneficial to the county. Later when the survey is completed it is planned to present it in detail in an effort to follow out the theoretical principles proposed.

But one important problem which was apparently overlooked, or which did not come under the jurisdiction of the proposals, is the local highway situation.

It has been repeatedly pointed out that Murphy serves as a "hub" of five important main highways. Inasmuch as four of these lead directly into the state, visitors gain their first impressions of North Carolina here.

Two of the most important of the five highways are in a sad state of affairs, and another, fortunately, will soon be opened to take care of all kinds of traffic.

Reference is specially made to the highways leading into Murphy from Georgia and Tennessee. The condition of the Culberson-Blue Ridge road has often been brought to attention in the past. The Ducktown Basin highway from the state line to Ocoee is also unpaved and uninviting to the tourist.

At long last it appears that improvements on the Asheville highway will soon be ended and that traffic will flow from that section unimpeded. But at Murphy its enticement ends.

It appears that, no matter what the kick may be against the North Carolina highway division, they have more than met their obligations to the neighboring state of Tennessee and Georgia.

The first aim of Cherokee county citizens, therefore, should be to implore the surrounding states to improve their highways leading to North Carolina's state line; and in that one movement, it is felt, Cherokee county's most pressing problem will have been met.

As for the road leading to the Hiwassee Dam, extensive improvements can be expected soon. At least we hope so!

A NEW "COMMUNITY BUILDING"

It appears at this time that Murphy will soon have its long-awaited community building, gymnasium, public building, or call it what you will.

Many have generously loaned their cooperation to this project. The county and town of Murphy have agreed to jointly sponsor the project. Definite plans for the project have been drawn; and the federal appropriation at this time seems a certainty.

It is hoped soon to give more complete and detailed information to this important public building.

Roughly the sketch of the project includes a large assembly room appropriate for a public gathering or basketball court; a kitchen; several smaller adjoining rooms that can be used for a number of purposes, and showers.

INFANT DEATH RATES IN CHEROKEE COUNTY

The ever-interesting University of North Carolina "News Letter" presents, in its most recent issue, some figures very flattering to Cherokee county.

According to a table Cherokee county ranks second of the hundred counties of the state in low rate of child mortality during the year 1936. There were 443 births recorded in this county during that year. Of this number 14 died giving the county a death rate of 31.6 per 1,000 births. The lowest county had a death rate of 29.1, and rates increased for the 100 counties to 123.8.

An interesting note accompanying the table stated: "Note especially the low death rate in most mountain counties and high rates in many extreme eastern counties."

Thus one gathers from this table that the old, mountain country is still a mighty fine place to live.

ANTI-RANSOM LAW IN KIDNAPING DISCUSSED

Most of us will experience a sorrowful gratification at the speed with which the death sentence was meted out by the Florida court to the kidnaper and murderer of 5-year-old "Skeegie" Cash. Coming as it did only nineteen days after the kidnaping was discovered, it seems likely that a new record has been set in cases of this character.

Meantime, the succession of brutal kidnapings throughout the country is bringing home to all of us the realization that, even with the splendid work of the Federal men worthy of all the praise it receives, a kidnaping case that is marked "closed", with the victim dead, is closed any way but happily or justly.

Observers of our difficulties with this particular phase of crime are more and more strongly averring that, no matter how proficient our agencies for tracking down the heartless kidnapper, the necessity for their activity will continue to arise so long as there is a chance for the criminal to extort money in the process. There is no way to remove the possible profit element, in this view, except to make it illegal to pay a ransom.

The regulation would naturally stop the practice, in which both local officials and Federal men for obvious and creditable human reasons join, of giving the kidnaper a sort of official "King's X" until the family of the victim has made contact and, if possible, paid a ransom for the return of a loved one.

Canadian police enforce regulations to this effect, and this position seems to us to be worthy of the consideration of our legislators. Certainly we are not doing a very good job on the basis we are on and if there is a possibility of improvement it may be wise to try new measures.

In a nutshell, the changes proposed would seem to pose the question, "Is it worth while to subject a few parents and a few kidnap victims to the extra hazards which these changes would make inevitable, with the hope that this extra hazard would become a lasting contribution to the greater safety of others who also might be threatened with the cruel menace of kidnaping?"—Knoxville Journal.

THE NANTAHALA NATIONAL FOREST

A great deal of interesting material is being distributed free lately by the officials of the Nantahala National Forest.

It is significant to note that the Nantahala National Forest is coming rapidly to the front as one of the most publicized and one of the most delightful government conservation and recreation grounds in the country.

The literature describes, for the most part, the many attractions to be found in its confines.

Few of us who live in or near the Nantahala National Forest realize the many wonderful opportunities it offers for picnicing and camping, firgin timber, fishing and hunting and its gorgeous scenery.

The Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest, the John B. Bryne Memorial tower, the Winding Stairs with its high, mountain waterfalls—these and many more attractions await but a short visit to thrill any lover of nature.

Information and literature may be obtained by writing to Ranger William Nothstein at Andrews, N. C., or to the Nantahala National Forest headquarters, Franklin, N. C.

Let's tell our friends of the awe-inspiring Nantahala National Forest.

"TAKE CARE OF TODAY"

Our friend, G. W. Candler, submitted this article under the above caption which he recently found in an issue of "The Dixietype":

"Once a famous writer wrote,— 'Our grand business undoubtedly is: not to seek for that which lies dimly in the future, but to do that which lies clearly at hand.'"

Now isn't that good, plain common sense. Such advice is worth listening to, for if the business man of today could banish his fear of what tomorrow might bring, we'd all see a different trend of affairs in today's business world.

"We hear of wars, and rumors of wars. We hear of ruinous government regulations, and of unheard of taxation. We hear of labor movements, political battles, and business monopolies.

"So we sweat and stew and cramp our wee minds full of fears for the future. When all in the world we need to do is to quit worrying about tomorrow and do the task of today.

"Let that which is dimly in the future take care of itself. Let us be concerned with that which lies clearly at hand. Thus shall we save ourselves a passel of gray hairs and replace our worried minds with peace and contentment."

J. T. Hayes, of Tomotla, Is Second Oldest Postmaster In Nation, Records Reveal

Has Served Actively in This Capacity For More Than 56 Years; Father Was First Postmaster

The distinction of being the second oldest postmaster, from the standpoint of service, in the United States belongs to Jefferson T. Hayes, of Tomotla, Cherokee county, who has served actively in that capacity for more than 56 years.

When the post office was established some few years before 1860, Mr. Hayes' father, George W. Hayes, Sr., was appointed first postmaster. The post office was discontinued during the War between the States however and George W. Hayes, Jr., served as postmaster from its re-establishment in 1868 until 1870.

These facts and many interesting phases of the colorful life of the Hayes family were divulged recently when Mr. Hayes' record of service was called to the attention of Wythe M. Peyton, Asheville postmaster and president of the North Carolina Association of postmasters.

Mr. Peyton inquired of the post office department at Washington, D. C. to see if Mr. Hayes was the oldest postmaster from the standpoint of service, but it was learned that a woman in Oxford, Mr., has been serving since May 9, 1877 and holds the record.

Lives In Old Home

Mr. Hayes, now 75, lives on the original Hayes homestead which was built in 1855, and which has housed the post office ever since. Tomotla, a rural community, is five miles east of Murphy on the Asheville highway. The postoffice serves between 35 and 40 families.

George W. Hayes, Sr., settled in Tomotla in 1855. Several years later the post office was established to serve a large rural community, and Mr. Hayes was named postmaster.

In 1861, however, it was necessary to discontinue the post office during the War between the States when acts of lawlessness were prevalent.

The elder Hayes went to war. He was captain of the 22nd North Carolina cavalry, and formed the second company. He served from 1861 until 1864. At home on furlough, he saw the need for added protection for women and children. So he began a tedious trek to Raleigh to attend a session of the general assembly. Stopping over in Franklin, however, he became seriously ill and died.

From 1868 until 1870 George W. Hayes, Jr., acted as postmaster. He gave up the position to attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Tells Of Experiences

When "Jeff" Hayes took over the post office in 1882, it was one of the few in Western North Carolina, although post offices had been established in Murphy and at Valleytown (now Andrews) a distance of 18 miles.

In a recent letter to Mr. Peyton, Mr. Hayes pointed out many of the interesting changes that have taken place in his post office and in the United States mail service since that time.

Back in those days the mail was carried from Asheville to Franklin one day, and on to Murphy the next. This two-day service was contrasted with the six hours it requires a letter to be carried between these two points today.

"Then we had no central accounting office," Mr. Hayes said. "At the end of each quarter we settled up with the mail contractor. If I was due the government anything I paid it to the mail contractor and took his receipt for it. In turn I took his receipt and sent that in with my quarterly report. Then we got 60 per cent of all the stamps we sold. The mail was all in one big bag. I had to look over all the mail to find out what was Murphy."

"I was allowed 15 minutes to sort the mail and many cold nights we gave the mail carrier a cup of hot coffee and something to eat while he waited for the mail to be sorted." Not until the Southern railway was built through the Nantahala gorge and extended to Tomotla did the horseback rider mailman give way to more modern methods.

Many tales of hardships that the horseback carriers had to suffer are recalled by Mr. Hayes. "A number of times," he said, "I had to knock his (the mail carrier's) feet loose from

the frozen stirrups of his saddle.

Citizen Was Weekly

"People would come on foot or horseback for miles to get their mail. The Asheville Citizen was then a weekly paper and the day the paper came they would come for miles to hear the news. Then we had no telegraph office, no phone; our only way of communication was by letter. There were no paved roads and no snow scrapers, and many times the mail carrier could not cross the Nantahala mountains on account of the deep snow between Franklin and Murphy.

Mr. Hayes said he serves as many people now as he did back in his first days due to a more thickly settled population.

The aged postmaster said he does not recall any of the mail carrier ever having been held up or robbed or meeting with any serious accident during the lonely and dangerous trips over the mountain wilds. "Why there was not one hundredth of a devils in those days that there is today," he asserted. "Nobody ever heard tell of kidnaping or such things." He recalls that one of the most popular and longest-serving mail riders was Will Enloe.

Although Mr. Hayes' duties prohibit him from taking any active part in any political campaign or holding any other public office, his judgment of community affairs is highly respected throughout this section. Many visitors come to see him at his home which is on a hill about 100 yards off the highway and overlooks the broad Valley River valley.

Meaning Is Unknown

The name, Tomotla, is an Indian word, Mr. Hayes explained, but its meaning is unknown. Local residents, however, never think of the name without connecting the name of "Jeff" Hayes with it, for he is one of the best-known men in Cherokee county.

Mr. Hayes' father, who came to Cherokee county as an orphan in 1832 from Georgia to live with relatives, served in the state legislature for 16 years. The late A. H. Hayes, a brother served eight years in the legislature from Swain county.

The elder Hayes introduced the bill in the general assembly that brought the first public highways into this section of the state.

In those days, Mr. Hayes said, the land was so high that it was almost impossible to buy property to build roads. So under Mr. Hayes' plan, the state purchased all the property, and would give so much land to persons who would build a public highway through it. That was back in the times of slavery and slaves were used to a great extent on road work.

Mr. Hayes the youngest of nine children has two sisters living in Cherokee county.

After divorcing her husband, who was out of work, Mrs. Mary Ridden of Kansas City sent him \$25 with her "best wishes."

Don't Blame the Car



Less than 10 per cent of the fatal and non-fatal crashes on our highways last year were caused by mechanical failure, according to The Travelers Insurance Company's analysis of the 1937 automobile accident experience.

In more than 90 per cent of the accidents, the vehicle was found to have been in apparently good condition. The trouble lay in human failure.

In the vast majority of cases it is the driver or the pedestrian and not the car that causes accidents.