

PUBLIC PULSE

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**Deputy Oid Wiles
Answers T. H. Settle**

Editor The Journal-Patriot:
I have heard a rumour for the past four years to the effect that I together with other Republicans were disloyal to certain Republican candidates in the election of 1930, but up until this time no one has had the gall to make the charge under his signature until in your issue of May 14th T. H. Settle made this charge. I have been a Republican all of my life and never in any election have I failed to vote and support the entire Republican ticket. I am happy because that so many loyal Republicans among whom I was reared in Rock Creek Township know of efforts I exerted in the election of 1930 for the entire Republican ticket, so the Republicans of Wilkes county do not have to rely upon my word as to my loyalty because I am able to substantiate it by my neighbors who are as good Republicans as ever lived in Wilkes county.
My neighbor, Crealy Wiles has also intimated that I did not work for the straight ticket. I want to say to Crealy that if he had worked all day long as hard for the ticket as I did he might have helped in bringing up the Republican vote, and I will leave it to the majority of the leading Republicans of my township as to which one, Crealy or myself, exerted the strongest effort for the straight ticket on that day. It is hard for me to understand what has come over Crealy anyway. He even criticizes our sheriff because in his announcement he states that many Democrats wanted him to run for sheriff. It has been a time honored custom in our county for the candidates of all political parties to appeal to the masses for votes in the general election, regardless of political affiliation, and I hope the time will never come that a nominee of the Republican party will be so prejudiced that he would not appreciate the votes of any man or woman. An officer when elected must serve all the people, and if the Republican party is to succeed in Wilkes county we must have men

in office who will rise above politics when it comes to the discharge of the public duty.
In Mr. Settle's article he referred to a bill passed in the legislature allowing me \$50.00 per month as police officer, and intimated that Mr. Hugh Cranor was instrumental in the passage of this bill allowing this amount. I want to say now that I never discussed this matter with Mr. Cranor or he with me. The bill authorizing this amount was introduced in the senate by Senator Grant, Republican. He introduced the bill on the recommendation of leading citizens of our county. He thought it was necessary on account of the increasing crime to make this allowance. The truth is that in most of the counties of North Carolina not only one, but several deputies have a salary, but Mr. Settle would have you believe that an appropriation of this kind was unknown in any county, except Wilkes. Mr. Cranor was under no obligation in the world to me, and I made no appeal to him for assistance of any kind.

It is not incumbent upon me to defend Sheriff Somers, from the attacks made on him by Mr. Settle because Sheriff Somers is amply able to defend himself, but I do want to call attention of the voters to Mr. Settle's inconsistency. He is now making at least a sympathetic fight in interest of one of Sheriff Somers' opponents, Mr. Coyd Elledge, who was jailor for six years prior to his first election. Mr. Settle charges the entire amount of feeding the prisoners up to the Sheriff's salary, which he knows is unfair, but he failed to tell the tax payers of Wilkes county that Sheriff Somers has only received for several years about one-half as much for feeding the State prisoners as was paid to Mr. Elledge. Mr. Settle complains about the cost for the collection of delinquent taxes, but he fails to state that there never was a cent credited to Wilkes county for cost on delinquent taxes, neither before nor since the enactment of the salary law. Sheriff Grant Elledge and his deputies were paid the fees for cost in the same amount that has been accredited to Sheriff Somers, and yet Mr. Settle for these two reasons would have the Republicans of Wilkes county to defeat Sheriff Somers and nominate Coyd Elledge. Mr. Settle seems to have a storehouse of knowledge and qualifications as an expert in county affairs and proceeds to advise the people just what to do, but I do not think they will heed his advice for the reason that he has been Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners for six years and it was his duty to assist in making settlements and recording same, which he did and if the fees about which he complains were all wrong why did he not inform the tax payers before this time? Not only the fees for cost have been paid Sheriff Somers and his deputies, but were paid to Sheriff Elledge and all other Sheriffs that have served since the year 1917. It is a late day, after sitting there and handling these matters for almost six years to make a complaint now.

It is my pleasure to agree with one statement which our Register of Deeds has made in his article in the last issue of your paper. He says that Mr. C. H. Ferguson, the County Accountant is very efficient and able officer, and to this statement I heartily subscribe. In view of the fact that both Mr. Settle and myself agree on this I respectfully suggest that any citizen and taxpayer who wishes to know just how Sheriff Somers makes his settlements get their informa-

tion from Mr. C. H. Ferguson. This information will disclose that Sheriff Somers' settlements and also the settlements of Sheriff Somers' deputies have been conducted upon exactly the same basis as the sheriff's settlements had been conducted before Sheriff Somers was inducted into office. That is, that the cost charged on these delinquent taxes, whether from real or personal property has been charged to the delinquent tax payers, and not a cent of the money has been actually paid by Wilkes county.

The truth of this misleading statement is nothing more or less than the fact that a number of men in this county have been made mad because they could not dictate to the Republican party. As every person who is acquainted with public affairs in this county knows, there has been a tremendous internal difference in the party for the past several years. The men who are sponsoring these fights on myself and Sheriff Somers are not doing so for the best interest of the people of Wilkes county or the Republican party, and then they further accuse Sheriff Somers and myself of not being loyal to the Republican party four years ago and not one instance or proof of disloyalty have they ever been able to produce until this day. Two years ago they accused Sheriff Somers of charging illegal fees and stealing off the county, and the answer of the voters to this charge was a twelve hundred majority in the

primary for the present sheriff. In the election a part of this same fellows lined up with the Democrat candidates and voted the Democrat ticket all of which Mr. Settle knew as much as any man in Wilkes county, and yet our ticket was elected. The next thing we hear from them is that Sheriff Somers has stolen \$13,000.00 from Wilkes county as attested to by W. A. Stroud and his self-employed auditor, and only to later reduce this amount to about \$3,000.00 which it is claimed that Sheriff Somers over-charged.

Of course, I don't suppose that the fact that I had to serve an execution issued from the Clerk of the Court's office and had to lay off Mr. Settle's homestead in the attempt to force him to pay a just debt that he denied, caused him to write his letter of attack upon myself and Sheriff Somers. I am certain that I have never done anything against Mr. Settle. Personally, I have always tried to be his friend in all matters. Therefore, I cannot conceive of any other reason why he should attack me or Sheriff Somers, except the fact that by reason of our official position it was necessary to serve an execution and lay off his homestead to force him to pay a debt that he had refused to pay.

Incidentally, in the allotting of Mr. Settle's homestead it was disclosed that Mr. T. H. Settle had bought a new automobile which he used in riding every day from his home to his office.

In attempting to collect this debt, he made oath that the automobile did not belong to him, and in every way has attempted to evade the payment of the judgment rendered against him by the Superior Court of Wilkes county. There is now several hundred dollars due him by Wilkes county that he has refused to apply to the satisfaction of this judgment. I mentioned this fact only for the purpose of letting the people of Wilkes county know the reason for Mr. Settle's unjust attack on Sheriff Somers and myself. We have

been diligent in discharging our official duties with regard to this matter as with all other matters and since we have Mr. Settle has joined the mad mob and is trying to destroy not only the men who were formerly his friends but the entire Republican party in Wilkes county. I leave this whole case in the hands of the Republicans of Wilkes county to judge who is right and who is wrong.
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