

Sylvan Valley News

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A HOME PAPER FOR HOME PEOPLE—ALL HOME PRINT

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THE OTHER SIDE OF THE POLITICAL ROW

CHAIRMAN BREESE SHOWS HIS SIDE OF CASE

Also Asserts That No Fraud Has
Been Practised and That He
Has Nothing to Hide.

To the fair-minded citizens of Transylvania county:

In last week's issue of the Sylvan Valley News I stated that I would in this issue state the position of the democratic organization in regard to the parties who failed to pay their poll taxes within the time prescribed by law, and I will now do so.

As I stated in the article in last week's paper I don't want to enter any controversy with the republicans about this matter, but only intend to make a statement to correct any wrong ideas that have been fostered and circulated by ardent political opponents. If the republicans are anxious to discuss this and other matters we will offer them an opportunity to do so in a joint campaign over the county before election. They were afraid to have a joint campaign two years ago, but this poll tax discussion may brace them up, and we will meet them on the stump, and the nominees of the democratic party will argue any political question before the voters of the county, so we will not have any controversy now, but will keep this question to force the republicans to meet us on the stump later on and not let them flunk as they did two years ago.

In order that the citizens may be able to judge this poll tax question fairly and impartially without prejudice it is necessary to first state the facts, then the law applicable thereto and then the moral and political questions involved.

The facts are that Sheriff Shuford was notified that a negro who had set fire to the jail and burned his way out was in Greenville county and to come over and get him, and in performing one of the duties of his office the sheriff went after said negro; that during the absence of the sheriff, on the first day of May, one D. L. English, one of the republican leaders, alleging to have in his possession the money to pay the taxes of certain republicans (several of whom lived in Brevard and had business there) looked around for the sheriff and made loud and lusty protestations that he (English) wanted to pay said republican poll taxes before it was too late. Mr. English had been in Brevard all the week before—all day Monday previously but made no effort or attempt to pay said poll taxes until he found that the sheriff was away, waiting until the last two days to even offer to pay the taxes and then offering to pay some thirty odd polls. Late in the evening Mr. English went to the jailer, J. A. Galloway, and tried to get Galloway to issue tax receipts and accept the money therefor, and Mr. English knew, or should have known, that Mr. Galloway was not a tax collector, but only sworn in as jailer. Without Mr. English making any other effort to pay the money to several other known deputies who were in town, namely T. B. Summey and M. W. Galloway, or without putting the money or checks equivalent thereto in a letter and mailing it to the sheriff, Mr. English let the matter drop until the sheriff returned from South Carolina, and then English tried to get the sheriff to issue tax receipts dated back. He tried to do this not in an amicable manner, but approached the sheriff from the start with "his horns on," as they say, and tried to obtain the receipts by bluff and bluster.

These are the facts. The law is as follows:

The law requires all men liable for poll taxes to pay their said poll taxes before the second day of May of the year in which the election is to be held. For instance, the poll tax levied for the year 1911 must be paid before May 2, 1912, in order to qualify a voter to cast his ballot, if challenged, in any election after the first of May in said year. This 1911 poll tax becomes due and payable on the first day of October, 1911, and the sheriff is required to be in his office for the entire months of October and December to receive taxes. He can not leave his office vacant for a single day. The law also requires the sheriff to advertise for 15 days beforehand and have not less than one place in each township specified to collect taxes during the months of November and March, and Sheriff Shuford tracked the law in this. He staid in his office during the months of October and December, and went into every township during the months of November and March, thereby giving every citizen an opportunity to pay their taxes.

In a small county as this is the sheriff and tax collector are usually one and the same man, and as the law requires the sheriff to give four months out of the seven between October and May to the duties of tax collector it does not require him to give any more, and the other three months he is required to perform the duties of the office of sheriff.

Any citizen of the county or state could require the sheriff to leave his office at any time except during the four months mentioned in order to have a paper served. If he should stay in his office to receive taxes instead of going to capture an illicit still reported to him the law says he would lose his office. If he staid in his office instead of going to serve an attachment or other process he would be liable on his bond for damage sustained by the party wanting the paper served.

The lawmakers, therefore, in order to give every man a chance to pay his taxes—his poll tax—gave him four months in which he could always find the sheriff in his office or in the man's township, but the law also gave the citizen the right to require the service of the sheriff for the other duties of his office during the other three months.

Therefore any citizen who does not pay his poll tax during the months of October, November, December and March must take the chance of finding that the sheriff is out of his office attending to the many other duties incumbent on him.

There is, however, one way that every man can pay his taxes at any time and secure all the benefits of early payment of his taxes—a way so simple and inexpensive, a way that has been so clearly passed upon by the courts of this land that even the youngest law student knows of it, and the way which would have been suggested to D. L. English had he consulted a lawyer as to what he should do, and that way would have been for each man interested to have mailed a check or the money to the sheriff for the amount of his poll tax at such a date that in the ordinary course of transportation it would have reached the sheriff before May 2, that would have settled the matter.

The sheriff is not a lawyer, does not claim to be a lawyer and did not know what to do about the one or two checks he found in his office on his return from South Carolina sent in to pay poll taxes until he consulted his attorney and found out what the law was.

From the legal standpoint therefore Sheriff Shuford had complied with all the requirements as to staying in his office and going to the different townships to collect the taxes, and his temporary absence was caused by his trying to perform one of the other duties of the sheriff, namely, to capture an

escaped prisoner who had nearly burned up the county jail and who had endangered the lives of the jailer and his family and also of the other prisoners confined in the county jail.

And right here we pause to ask if the republicans would not have been hollering just as loud if the sheriff had stayed here to collect the poll taxes of the democrats who failed to pay up in time, and would not they have been charging that he was allowing a dangerous and desperate criminal to escape when he could have caught him just in order to stay around and collect all the democratic polls? Certainly they would. Somehow a democratic officer never does to suit our radical friends. It seems as if our democratic sheriffs do business a little differently from the republican sheriffs anyhow. There has never been much complaint about republican sheriffs failing to collect the taxes, but there has been considerable complaint about the way they settle after their collections.

And it does seem as if those republicans who were so anxious to get their taxes paid would have remembered how slow some former republican tax handlers were and would have sent their money straight to the sheriff, for if they had done this, or if the men to whom they sent their money had not held it back, there would not have been one of them that would not have had his taxes paid in time. Sheriff Shuford was away because it was his imperative duty to leave—it was no trick; it was not done under the cover of darkness nor behind the back, but it was done in accordance with his views as being a part of his official and sworn duty. If his action was illegal any person who alleges he is injured has ample time to have his case tried and settled in either the state or federal court before election; no man can be deprived of his legal rights in North Carolina.

And now, having finished with the legal side, let us turn to the moral and political side. We can discuss these two matters jointly, for politics without morality is beneath the contempt of honorable men and results in demagoguery, trickery and the low practices of the ward heeler.

The democratic party has always stood for what is right and just, it has stood for the elevation of the white man, for the protection of the home, for law and order.

When the constitutional amendment was passed a few years ago the republicans said that it would result in the disfranchisement of many white men. One of Transylvania's gifted sons, Hon. R. H. Zachary, went over this county and on every stump proclaimed that statement as being false, and that the democratic party would never disfranchise any white man who was entitled to vote no matter what his politics were, and what Mr. Zachary said was the truth then, and is the truth now, and no white man who is a legal voter will be disfranchised, whether he be a republican or democrat.

Mr. English and other members of the republican organization did not approach or consult with the members of the democratic organization in regard to Sheriff Shuford's absence. The republicans did not try to find out what was going to be done but, working under the principle "that the guilty flee when no man pursueth," they ran up and down the county crying "fraud." This cry of fraud, however, is no new thing as coming from the republican leaders. To hear them talk they have never been beaten in any election by the democrats except when the democrats bought or stole the election; in fact the republican leaders are so fond of the word fraud that they accuse each other of it in their own party squabbles; they even go so far that the good people of these United States are now being humiliated by the spectacle of the president of the

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GREAT STRIDES IN EDUCATIONAL LINES

INTERESTING ESSAY BY INSTITUTE STUDENT

Showing the Rapid Strides Made
in Educational Lines in
this County.

Graduating essay of Sallie S. Merrill, Brevard Institute, May 22, 1911.

In the rich mountain plateau of Western North Carolina lies the small county of Transylvania, whose mild climate is exceedingly favorable for health and recreation. With her rugged mountains and fertile valleys threaded with clear, rippling streams, she must labor against many difficulties in transportation and therefore in education. Any county which is behind in transportation is restricted educationally, for education depends upon transportation. As this is an agricultural county, children have to travel long distances to reach school, and many of them are deprived of their school advantages by long distances and bad roads. Hence it is easy to see why education has not made as rapid progress as in other counties of the Old North State. Regardless of her disadvantages she is making rapid improvement in her public roads, her school property and her school teachers.

To show the improvement it is necessary to give a sketch of the schools from 1830 to 1900. Eighty years ago there was no Transylvania county. This was Buncombe. The first and oldest school to be mentioned was situated on top of what is known as Gallamore Hill. The house was nothing but a log cabin, about twelve by sixteen feet, furnished with slab benches and a writing desk which extended through the middle of the house. The course of study was spelling, reading, writing and ciphering. One was considered educated if he was a good speller, could write a good hand, and work all the problems through the double rule of three. In those days the teachers of Western North Carolina thought the pupils were not studying unless they could be heard. In 1845, six years after the formation of Henderson county from Buncombe, the first denominational school, known as the Davidson River Academy, was founded at Davidson River by the Presbyterians under the leadership of Rev. James Smiker. About the same time a public school was established near Dams Rock, known as the Dams Rock Academy. These schools continued to prosper until the buildings were destroyed by fire during the civil war. After the close of the war the school at Davidson River was re-established by Rev. G. E. Robertson and Mr. Chapman, but they did not meet success. In the fall of 1871 Rev. E. Allison of North Brevard taught the first school in Brevard, known as Bethel public school. This was the year of the formation of Transylvania county. The many difficulties and hardships of the civil war caused a decline in education which could not be overcome in a few years. This reorganization extended through a period of about thirty years. During this time the people regained their faith and began work again. Rev. Fitch Taylor of Asheville came to Brevard in 1895 and founded Brevard Epworth School, now Brevard Institute. In 1899 the Baptist association of Transylvania county organized Broad Valley Institute, near Penrose, under the direction of Rev. S. W. Hall and Prof. J. N. Bradley of Wake Forest college. Since 1908 this school has been a state high school.

The school property of this county has been greatly improved, but still more improvement is needed. In the year 1908 a local branch of

the Women's Betterment association was organized to foster the spirit of public education, increase the length of terms, decorate the walls with pictures, beautify the grounds, besides encouraging other public needs.

Ten years ago not more than two respectable school houses could be found in the county. The old and inconvenient houses have been replaced by new and comfortable ones, eleven of which wear coats of paint while two send from their towers the sound of a bell that warns the children it is school time. Seventy-five per cent of the houses are supplied with patent desks. Five-sixths are sufficiently supplied with blackboards. At the beginning of the twentieth century not a single school library could be found in the county and only three in the year 1905. Now there are fifteen. Some of these libraries are very small, but they are being increased by private donations, entertainments and a special fund which has been set apart by the county and state.

Not a school in the county was over four months long until 1906. Since then the citizens have come to realize where they stand in education and where their posterity will be placed. The terms could not be lengthened without a special tax voted upon each district for that purpose. This has enabled the schools in the special tax districts to be lengthened from four to six or eight months.

Since the year 1905 the county superintendent, T. C. Henderson, and the board of education have been working to secure a way to help the teacher. This is being done by teachers' institutes and monthly meetings. Here the teacher has an opportunity to tell her troubles and receive suggestions that will aid her in directing the pupils to right living and higher ideals. She can have more control over the pupils than any other person. If this influence is not for good it is certainly for the bad. Every teacher should be a consecrated Christian, for her influence will last when she is gone. The teacher does not realize what she has done until it is too late.

From the improvements already mentioned it looks as if a compulsory school law is the next thing to interest the patrons. It has been found that in the year 1910 there was an average attendance of about 50 per cent, and an enrollment of 75 per cent of the school population. This shows that the children start to school but for some reason do not continue. Here is the need of compulsory education. The better the masses are educated the less the expenditure of the commonwealth will be for reformatories, jails and penitentiaries. This applies to Transylvania county just as well as to the nation. Three-fifths of the crimes in this county can be traced to ignorance or carelessness, and either one is caused by lack of education. As ex-Governor Aycock says: "The strength of every community is dependent upon the average of the intelligence of that community, and this intelligence is dependent upon the education of the entire mass and not the few."

PENROSE POINTERS

Mrs. W. L. Talley and son returned home from a visit to Mrs. Talley's father last Friday.

Jake Beck of Asheville returned home Sunday. He has been working on L. F. Lyday's house.

S. Shuck and Mark Clayton returned home from Mars Hill college last Saturday.

Mrs. A. J. Clayton is improving her house by the addition of four new rooms. W. L. Talley is adding five more rooms to his house, and A. L. Ledbetter is building a new house.

Joseph Clayton, of Mars Hill college, returned home Monday.

With best wishes to the News and its correspondents.

ROBIN HOOD.