

Mount Airy News.

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Settling With Germany.

A conference will be held in the city of London during the next few days at which an effort will be made to reach a final decision as to the amount of damage that Germany must pay for the part she played in the late war. The allies demand that Germany sign up for 56 billion dollars and she comes back with a counter proposition agreeing to pay five billion. Some difference, you see, between fifty six billion and five billion. To give the reader some little idea of how much five billion dollars amounts to we remind you that every bit of property in the state of North Carolina would not be more than five billion dollars, every foot of land, every town lot, every store and its stock of goods, every bank and its money, every factory, every railroad, every piece of personal property of every name and nature in the whole state of North Carolina would not be of greater value than five billion dollars, which is the amount that Germany is willing to pay. But the demands are for 56 billions. It will be interesting to know how they settle the matter.

Work for Somebody.

Now that the folks of this town are beginning to talk of the coming town election there are those who are insisting that an effort should be made to arouse the women to their duty as voters. Some are talking of forming a civic league and get the women to attend and hear discussions of the needs of the town. Others are advocating the forming of clubs where the women will meet alone—no men present, and discuss among themselves what can be done in the way of bringing about a better state of society in our town.

In this connection it may be well to remind the women that there is much that they can do if they only persuade themselves to fall in line and help. Let us enumerate.

Seventeen hundred children between the ages of six and twenty years in the corporate limits of Mount Airy and eleven hundred of them on the school roll.

Five thousand people living in Mount Airy and three-fourths of them non church goers.

Six hundred surface closets unscreened and many of them without a cover of any kind. And many of them so located that there is no way for the garbage wagon to serve them.

Hog pens by the hundred in every part of the city and no system of inspection.

No system of inspection of restaurants, markets, or places where food is sold.

Men and women here by the dozen who have had the benefit of college training and yet apparently indifferent to all these conditions that no community should permit.

But why name the others. You know them. Truly there is work here to do if our people could wake up to the opportunity.

Airing Dirty Linen.

Down at Greensboro last week a suit was tried in the Federal court that has attracted attention in the whole state because of the seriousness of the charge and the prominence of the parties. H. B. Varner, of the town of Lexington, N. C. is suing his wife for divorce charging that she has been criminally intimate with a wealthy negro man in that town. Mrs. Varner as the result of his suit brought action in the Federal court for a division of their property. The ablest lawyers in the state were employed in the case, and for ten days the court listened to an airing of one of the most sordid bunch of circumstantial evidence that has come before the people in many years. The jury decided that the woman has been criminally intimate with the negro and that she is not entitled to any of her husband's property. Mr. Varner is wealthy and is suing the negro who is also wealthy, for \$100,000 damages. Mrs. Varner is sick in a hospital in Greensboro and appears to have lost her mind as the result of the shock that came to her when the verdict was rendered. It is a trial that the state will do well to forget at the earliest possible moment.

Rev. Olive Accepts Call.

A telegram was received by the pulpit committee of the First Baptist church Saturday from Rev. Eugene Olive of Dunn, accepting the call to the pastorate of that church. Rev. Olive is a young man of about 30 years, of age, is a graduate of Wake Forest and also of the Seminary, and is unmarried.

Another Viewpoint of the School Law

By Chas. D. Lucas, Principal of Rockford street school.

As principal of the Grammar Schools of Mount Airy a few facts have come under my observation which pertain to the compulsory school law now being discussed in our town papers.

One article offered criticisms because the smaller children attend school only a half day. That is true. It has been found that the children of the first and second grades do more and better work on a half day session and that a few hours of close application trains their plastic minds more rapidly than a whole day's grind. So half day sessions for the primary grades have been universally adopted by all the best schools of the South.

In Mount Airy, due to the fact that it is a manufacturing town, there is a large number of parents who, being raised in ignorance, cannot appreciate the value of an education, so naturally they are antagonistic to all efforts we put forth to place their children in school. We are full up in our Grammar schools, each teacher having more than double the number of pupils the State Board recommends, yet we are willing and glad to take those who should be in school. For it is far better that we should be overcrowded than to allow them to grow up in criminal ignorance, who when grown will in turn raise families that will oppose all the laws of society.

The question naturally arises why are these children not in school, and who is to blame for not having them put there? Some put the blame on the teachers, some think the county welfare officer is lax in his duty, while still others believe that the welfare officer and the teachers are working together to keep the children from school. Wonderful criticisms but where is the remedy? We have on file a list of all the children in Mount Airy who are within the compulsory school age, except maybe a few transients. We'll be very glad to furnish this list to anyone who wishes to enforce the school law as we have not the time to serve in the dual capacity of teacher and law officer. It is also a very difficult matter to use the gentle art of persuasion upon those parents who willingly allow their children to be absent from school.

Is it possible that the town could be to blame for this condition? Mount Airy is a wealthy little town. The trade from a large territory pours into it. It has large manufacturing establishments and many stores. It has one of the largest quarries in the world and its fruit market ranks among the first in the state.

Much money pours into its coffers, yet it sends its children to schools where three occupy the same space one should occupy.

Hundreds of acres of flat land lie around Mount Airy, yet the small boys and girls who love so well to play have a side of a puny hill filled with rocks as their athletic emporium. Mount Airy has resident buildings costing tens of thousands of dollars, yet the roof of the Rockford Street school building trembles over the heads of 600 children every time the wind blows.

A short distance from town is one of the largest quarries in the world, yet several hundred primary children go to school in a ramshackle wooden barn where in three of the rooms two inches of ice has been known to freeze over the floor where the water has run in.

At Rockford Street school we punish the boys for using tobacco on the school grounds or on their way to and from school, yet I can cite you to dozens of cases where both father and mother use tobacco and give it to their children. Go into nearly any store in town and you will find all brands of smoking and chewing tobacco and snuff which the merchants sell to any boy or girl who is large enough to carry a nickel. In one room in the Rockford school 88 per cent of the boys habitually use or have used tobacco.

Go into any of the warehouses about 10 o'clock at night when all the tobacco wagons are in and look thirsty while you display a \$10 bill and see the result. Not long ago one of my schoolboys came to school with a four inch gash cut in his head. He had been hit with a bottle by some drunker bully who went not only unpunished but unsought.

Within one hundred yards of Main street I know of a building where a certain clique of boys assemble nearly every night to gamble, tell dirty stories and later to prowl the streets and alleys. I have seen two with daggers and have taken a pistol from a third. Left to themselves within ten years the majority will have attained the penitentiary or electric chair.

Go into the side streets, and that is where the majority of our children come from, and you will find mud axle deep, tin cans and all rubbish is pitched out the back door, waste water is dumped in the streets for germs to breed in, stables go for weeks uncleaned and are the breeding places for flies, and the odor of pigs, cows and boneyard mules pollute the air.

Rather than pass a curfew law to keep the children at home to study, they are allowed to roam the streets at night mingling with company from which they can learn but evil, which is the price of idleness. Dice, cards, tobacco and loafers are congenial company, and some parents seem to care very little where their wandering Willie's are at night although some are surprisingly young.

From this kind of environment how can the children be expected to make good citizens? Oh that's the school's job! That's right it is the school's job, but what about a little cooperation?

Our "Righteously Indignant Citizen" seems to think the teachers of Mount Airy are not earning their salary. Maybe not, but they are doing the amount of work that double the present number should be doing while some of the indignant tax payers howl at the amount of taxes they have to pay, not knowing that they get more value received from money spent on education than from any investment. Properly educate the coming generation and the poor houses,

penitentiaries, and 90 per cent of the inmates of the asylums will not be. For education banishes squalid homes and filth and in their places spring up homes filled with happiness and cheer. Instead of dissipated manhood and womanhood there would be men and women each with trained minds and good physiques all standing equal in promulgating society and its laws.

Let us all get together and pull instead of trying to shift the responsibility.

Chas. D. Lucas.

The Fight Over the Siloam Bridge

An interesting fight took place before a committee of the Legislature in Raleigh last week that is of more than passing interest to the people of Surry county in that it might have called for a large expenditure of money on the part of this county. There are several points on the Yadkin river between this county and Yadkin where the people want bridges erected. By agreement the commissioners of the two counties have erected bridges at two points of the river, namely at Elkin and Crutchfield. Recently the people of the Siloam section started an effort to get a bridge across the river at that point. Here the river is much wider than further up and to build this bridge would cost around 75 thousand dollars.

There is a general law under which the county commissioners of two counties can enter into an agreement when erecting bridges across dividing streams. Under this law the counties pay for the work, not equally but according to the taxable property of the two counties. Under this general law Surry's taxable property being much more than that of Yadkin's calls for a larger expenditure by Surry. When the bridges at Elkin and Crutchfield were built Surry county, by reason of this law, was compelled to pay for about three-fourths of the cost. Since these were built our commissioners have felt that they had all the bridge work within the county to do that was possible with the amount of money in hand, and for this reason have not agreed with the Yadkin commissioners in erecting more bridges across the Yadkin river at the present.

Recently a new effort was started to get a bridge built at Siloam by a special act of the Legislature making it mandatory for the two counties to build this bridge. The bill would have further required Surry county to pay for three-fourths of the cost and Yadkin county one-fourth. When the bill came up before the committee a large delegation, both from Surry and Yadkin was present to present their sides of the question. Yadkin put forth evidence before the committee showing that the people of their county needed this bridge in order to reach the railroad which is on Surry's side and were seriously hampered by not having it. All of which the Surry county representative admitted, yet they took the position that they were doing all they could at present in the way of internal work in the county. In defense of their position they showed where they had built around 75 steel bridges within the past five years and had a program of work mapped out for the next year that could not be at the present time abandoned. To further show the advantage Surry was giving its neighbor, Yadkin, the fact of the railroad in the southern part of the county was cited. Years ago when the people of that part of the county wanted this railroad they were called upon to vote bonds to help build it, which they did. Since then they have paid interest all along on these bonds without a murmur, and all the time the people of Yadkin, who assumed no part of the cost of building this railroad, were receiving the same benefits from it that the people of Surry were.

At the end of the hearing the committee refused to report the bill taking the stand that it appeared that the Surry commissioners were already doing all that they could reasonably be called upon to do with the funds they were able to procure, and to pass this bill would seriously injure the work the county had on foot and in progress within its own borders.

As we understand it there is no real objection among the people of our county to the erection of this bridge but it is impossible for Surry to do all this work exactly at the time when the people of the various sections call for it.

Dr. Madison Swadener, of the Anti-Saloon League forces spoke at Central Methodist church Tuesday night. His lecture was rich in thought and delivered in an interesting and forceful way.

Now because we turn our folks loose and give them their liquor back the citizens of Elkin must not conclude that we will be as liberal when they come over to air their troubles.

NOTICE

North Carolina, Surry County. Under and by virtue of an order of the Clerk of the Superior Court of Surry County, made in the special proceeding entitled A. J. Deatherage, Administrator of the estate of Ed. A. Midkiff, deceased vs. Nannie Midkiff et al., the same being No. on the special proceeding docket of said court, the undersigned commissioner will, on the 31 day of March 1921 at 2 o'clock offer for sale to the highest bidder on terms of one third cash, balance in six and twelve months, that certain tract of land in Mount Airy Township upon which is the home of the late Ed. A. Midkiff near the Flat Rock and described as follows:

Beginning at a stake and runs S. 30 degrees W. 27 feet; thence S. 44 degrees W. 123 feet; thence S. 48 1-2 degrees W. 100 feet to a stake; thence N. 16 1-2 degrees W. 1113 feet to a stake; thence S. 82 degrees 30 minutes E. 125 feet; thence N. 2 degrees and 45 minutes 262 feet to a stake; thence N. 14 degrees E. 421 feet to a stake; thence N. 40 degrees and 30 minutes E. 250 feet to the beginning. For better description see deed from C. B. Keesee to Ed. A. Midkiff and title bond from C. B. Keesee to Ed. A. Midkiff.

E. C. Bivens, Commissioner. This the 28th day of Feb. 1921.

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Feb. 11th, 1921.

Mr. Martin Bennett, City.

Dear Sir: Answering your inquiry with reference to my business transactions with your company, it gives me pleasure to testify that they have been satisfactory in a high degree. The members of your firm are capable and energetic; and, in my opinion, people having property to sell cannot do better than to list it with you. I have in mind particularly your sale of the Jno. L. Worth property whereby you disposed of all the property belonging to this estate at excellent prices and in a most satisfactory way. I am glad to learn that you have had equal success with your other sales.

Wishing you continued success, I am, Yours truly, W. F. Carter.

Feb 9, 1921.

Mr. Martin Bennett, City.

Dear Sir: It gives me pleasure to recommend your company. My dealings with you have been very satisfactory. You undoubtedly know how to conduct an auction sale of real estate, and I have confidence that the members of your company will bend every effort to satisfy your customers by securing the very highest prices for property listed with you.

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At S. M. Hale's Monday, Mar. 7, 4 p. m.