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The Bell Is Ringing

RECENTLY, on Sunday, the church bells in Franklin, Macon County; and throughout the land rang from 11:55 a. m. until 12 noon. They rang to call the people to prayer for world peace. National events and the international scene have brought about the return of an old tradition. In the early days of this country and before in the countries of our ancestors, in times of need or emergency when the people were needed the church bells rang to call them together. Sometimes action was needed; sometimes the problem seemed almost beyond the ability of mere man to solve, so the call was for prayer.

Today, nationally, we are a mass of conflicting forces and interests pushing and pulling against each other, leaving the individual bewildered and confused as to where he should turn. He cannot find a group that is considering today's problems with the view of settling them for the common good, but, instead, each asks, "How will my special interests be affected?" The "isms" communism, fascism, commercialism, and all the rest are at work throughout the various phases of our everyday life to promote their special group above the rest. Unfortunately, in most cases, even, these special interest groups are controlled by domineering men who through "executive power for the sake of efficiency" slyly take care of their own selfish interests.

Internationally, while the patterns differ, the result, as it effects you and me is pretty much the same. Fortunately, here in America we are still allowed to raise our voice in praise or criticism, but the individual's small voice is usually drowned out by the loud blare of one or more special interest groups.

When the church bells rang they sounded a call—a call to you and me to turn our ears away from the platitudes of ambitious leaders; to turn our backs on selfish groups and unite, each as individuals of the same worth, in striving for world peace.

The answers to today's problems will not come from the lips of any one leader, nor from a small group of successful businessmen, industrialists, military leaders, politicians or churchmen.

When the answers are found, they will come from the hearts of thousands of common folk who have decided to turn their backs to the cry of any special group and work together in everyday life for the good of man. Prayer together would be a great force in bringing this about.

That is why when the bell rings as it should time and time again in the future—you and I should answer the call to come together to meet the crisis. The call will be for us.

A Dangerous Situation

Cement is scarcer than hen's teeth, but in writing editorials, when an impulse hits you, you better tend to it.

We realize that, due to the difficulty in obtaining cement at present, this is not an opportune time to suggest to the town officials that they build a sidewalk, but having the impulse, we would like to call it to their attention. They can take action on the matter when the supply of cement increases.

From Lee Poindexter's filling station to the city limit in East Franklin the traffic, both automobile and pedestrian, is very heavy. Particularly is this true along the stretch from Poindexter's to the intersection of the Dillsboro and Highlands highways.

Since there is no sidewalk along here people are either forced to walk in the highway, dodging a constant stream of automobiles and trucks, or walk on the shoulder of the road. Whenever it rains or in the winter even on sunny days which thaws the ground, the path along the shoulder is very muddy causing the people to take their chances on the paved highway.

Unless something is done someday a pedestrian will be killed, or a car will swerve to avoid hitting someone who is walking on the highway and cause a bad wreck in which several people might be killed or seriously injured.

A sidewalk would be cheaper.

LETTERS

SCOUT LEADERS LIKE AREA

Editor, The Press:

A cordial "how-do-you-do," a hearty handshake, taking time to pleasantly tell a stranger how to find his way to Aquone, or going out of the way to do a favor, may be the way, the one way to lead a stranger to like your town or your county of your state. People like friendly people, and friendly people seek out and like to be with other friendly people. From what some of the Scout people tell me, Macon County folk seem to be a wealthy sort, wealthy in friendliness; not to mention wealth in worldly goods and other kinds of possessions.

Within the last few months some seventy-five to one hundred stout-hearted Scouting men from four states have become personal admirers of the Nantahala mountains and the people who live in and around them. These men have come to your town, to your county, and to your mountains and found wholesome and friendly people there. They have seen the beauties and grandeur of the Nantahalas, have tasted the sweetness of Macon County sourwood honey and luscious country hams. They have come to like your country, not because one, but many of your people made them feel welcome and at home.

It started something like this: Back about a couple of years ago, Mr. John Alsup, Mr. E. W. Renshaw, Mr. Gilmer Jones, Mr. Burt Slagle and others met Mr. Herbert Stuckey, who is a regional officer of the Boy Scouts of America, and found that he was interested in promoting Senior Scouting camps for the young men of the South, where they could enjoy the thrills and adventures of the Carolina mountains. These men of Franklin made Mr. Stuckey feel at home. They took him to the Rotary club. They made him feel that Macon County people believe in the Boy Scout movement as one of the nation's most valuable movements for youth. They found out that Mr. Stuckey was making a study of various mountain areas for potential Senior Scout trail camping and hiking. Without any frills of make-believes your men there showed genuine and consistent interest in a worthy cause.

Mr. Stuckey is just one among thousands of people who happen to go to your town, but he got a rather special feeling that there is a genuine and sincere hospitality amongst Macon County people. When I go into a store and make a purchase, maybe only of a pair of socks, the salesperson says "thanks, come to see us again". Well, Mr. Stuckey was invited back to Franklin, and he got the feeling that the Rotarians and the other men meant it. The Chamber of Commerce, the U. S. Forest Service offered to cooperate. Mr. Clint Johnson of the Forest Service volunteered and took him to see many of the outstanding areas of the Nantahalas, such as: Wayah Bald, Whiteoak Bottoms, Nantahala Lake, Santeehah Lake, Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest and other beauty spots.

Mr. Stuckey's heart was warmed by your people and he, with other members of the regional Scout staff, accepted Mr. Gilmer Jones' hospitality in offering his treasured "High Haven" camp for them to use for one week last year. An expedition of prominent Scout leaders from North and South Carolina, Georgia and Florida was organized under Mr. Stuckey's leadership. They went to "High Haven" on Wayah Bald and conducted a series of experiments and trail hiking projects in June last year and July this year. Men in these expeditions came from many walks of life. Among them was a Florida judge, a Georgia tax commissioner, a state health officer, an air force officer, national directors of Scouting from New York, a representative of the national museum, and several Senior Scouts who were selected on an honor basis to participate.

In these expeditions the men have studied the Appalachian Trail in the Nantahalas, the lakes, the mountain peaks, the streams and the entire environment. They have particularly been interested in the wholesomeness of the people in these areas. They used "High Haven" camp as a base for operations. They learned to love that spot. The people of Macon County and adjoining counties will be interested in knowing that these expeditions have led to the recommendation that Senior Scout units of all scout councils in the sixth region (North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida) make use of certain spots in the Nantahalas (with proper clearance) as Senior Scout hike and trail base camps. The specific spots on their recommended list include the following: "High Haven" camp, Whiteoak Bottoms, Standing Indian mountain, Wayah Crest, Swim Bald, Cook Place near Fontana Lake, Fontana Lake itself, and an area next to Joyce Kilmer Forest.

As time comes and goes you may be seeing crews of Senior Scouts (young men 15 and up) trekking into the Nantahalas with their compact pack sacks, pup tents, adventurous hearts and ravenous appetites to explore the many mountain peaks as they stand as guardians of the peoples of the valleys and the little people of the wild forests, to hike the enchanting Appalachian Trail and absorb the splendor of your lovely land.

Thus a ripple on the waters becomes a bounding wave. The grand spirit, the homey hospitality and the sterling friendliness of your people are wooing many strangers to your town and countryside. Scouting leaders and Senior Scouts like your country and they like you.

Atlanta, Ga.

JON JEFFERSON.

POETRY CORNER

Conducted by

EDITH DEADERICK ERSKINE

Weaverville, N. C.

Sponsored by Asheville Branch, National League of American Pen Women

TAPESTRY

The still blue wonder of the sky,
At Autumn-earth's clear color-cry.
The pine trees stir in soft amaze
At the changing beauty of her days...
Only the butterflies, born of fall,
Dec'n it not unusual—
Dripping, dreamy here and there
Like painted wings on the painted air.

BESS HINSON HINES,
Highlands and California.

ALCHEMY

First love is like the dawn
Full of joy and singing
Plum boughs and nectar cups
White blossoms clinging.

Last love is like the night
Silent and complete
Life seasons it with sorrow
To keep the nectar sweet.

MARIE HALBERT KING,
Asheville, N. C.

Others' Opinions

"TWO DRINKS DON'T HURT ME"

If you are one of those "two-drinks-don't hurt-me" guys, here's something to think about:

The 1948 edition of "Accident Facts", statistical yearbook of the National Safety Council, shows that one out of every five drivers involved in fatal motor vehicle accidents in 1947 had been drinking.

Special studies indicate that drivers who indulge in only a few drinks are three or four times more likely to have an accident than those who refrain from drinking if they drive. And drivers who are heavy drinkers are 55 times more likely to have an accident.

The yearbook also points out that one out of every four adult pedestrians killed in traffic accidents last year had been drinking.

--The News-Herald, Morganton, N. C.

Nantahala Forest Pays Off In Crops Of Trees, Game, Water, Tourists

By CHESTER S. DAVIS

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article, which appeared recently in the Winston-Salem Sunday Journal-Sentinel, was written after Mr. Davis had spent considerable time in this and adjoining counties studying the Nantahala Forest and the results of forest conservation and multiple-use.)

In the past it has been customary to think of our mountain counties as being blessed with a great wealth of natural resources. However, when you get down to the cold business of inventoring those natural resources the result is disappointing.

The soil of the Carolina mountains is suitable for producing a crop of trees and not much else. There is good farmland on the narrow valley floors and along the mouths of the larger coves, but the acreage of arable land in that mountainous country is limited.

Of course you have the mountain scenery and the mountain climate and the tracery of streams which drain the heavy rains off the land. When you list these things—not forgetting the native-born mountain people—you have come close to cataloging the natural resources of Western North Carolina.

But the test of any region is not so much its resources as it is the way in which those resources have been used. Until rather recently the wealth of our western mountain counties has not been used wisely.

Because the country was remote and difficult to penetrate, it wasn't until the last years of the 19th century that the lumber companies appeared to log the timber.

Clean Out Forest

Working on the then-prevailing philosophy that the county's stock of commercial lumber was unlimited, these companies cleaned out tract after tract. They cleaned them out to the last saw log and, in their operation, smashed and trampled down the seed stock of the future.

For a time it was boom. Saw mills and lumber crews provided employment and the mountain people had cash in their pockets. Then, when most of the land had been cut over, it was bust. Where the timber was gone those people were left to their hill-side farms and to the slim diet of mountain scenery, mountain climate, rain and rivers.

In the days before the automobile put wings on the itching feet of the American tourist, the scenery and climate had little commercial value. Inadequate transportation prevented industry from making use of the abundant flow of gin-clear water.

Admittedly this is an oversimplified presentation. But it serves to explain why, at least until 25 years ago, the western counties of North Carolina were accurately described as the Lost Provinces, the poverty-ridden county cousins of this state.

The day when the counties of Piedmont and Coastal Carolina can look down their noses at the mountain folk is over. Now when we look to the west there is something like envy in our eyes. Our country cousins are doing very nicely for themselves and making the most of the natural resources available to them.

Four National Forests

How did the change come about?

There are many answers to that question but in any answer you are bound to hear a good deal about the quiet, effective work which has been done by the men of the United States Forest Service.

In 1911, congress, disturbed by the condition of the nation's navigable streams, authorized the establishment of national forests in the Eastern United States. In 1924 the legislators passed the Clarke-McNary act and gave the Forest Service the power to buy cut-over and worn-out lands and to use this acreage to produce timber.

Year after year the men in green purchased tracts of land, frequently after commercial companies had logged and left. Working jig-saw fashion, these tracts gradually were built into national forests.

Today there are four national forests in North Carolina: the Croatan on the coast, the Uwharrie in the Piedmont and the great Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests in the mountains. (For administrative purpose, the Croatan and the Uwharrie are handled as parts of the Pisgah Forest.)

Million Acres

These four forests blanket something like one million acres of Carolina timberland. Their size alone makes them important to the economy of this state. But size is only a part of the story. A visit to the Nantahala National Forest will convince you on that score.

The Nantahala forest was established as a purchase unit in 1911. It became a national forest by Presidential proclamation in 1920. Today the Nantahala forest covers all or parts of the seven counties located in the southwestern toe of this state.

At the present time 377,000 acres are publicly owned—most of it purchased in the \$2-10-an-acre price range. However, the Nantahala forest is scattered over a gross area of 1,366,000 acres.

The Nantahala is not a wilderness. Some 60,000 people live within its boundaries and their farms, homes and villages are considered "non-purchaseable" by the Forest Service. The purchaseable land—land suited to timber use and little else—totals something like 918,000 acres. In time the Nantahala forest will approach that size.

E. W. Renshaw, supervisor of the Nantahala, was born in the Clearwater country of Idaho and raised in the shadow of a ponderosa pine. Educated as a forester, Mr. Renshaw spent his early years in the service working in the forests of Idaho. Like most men from the horse-and-cattle country, where rope burns are an occupational hazard, he would just as soon appear in public without his shirt as without his soft-leather gloves.

Backed by a staff of 32 regular employes and from 10 to 30 seasonal workers, Mr. Renshaw runs the show in the Nantahala. It is a big show. There's fire protection, the maintenance and operation of ten fire towers, 250 miles of road, 320 miles of trail and 305 miles of telephone lines. Except during the depression, when there were barrels of WPA dollars and camps full of CCC manpower, his work has been done by skeleton crews frequently financed by what must have seemed to be a phantom budget.

Fire and Other Problems

Fire protection is essential. Before the forests of the Southern Appalachians were established from 30-50% of the forested land burned over annually. Today this loss has been cut so less than one-tenth of one per cent. But fire protection represents only one phase—a negative phase at that—of the Forest Service program.

Mr. Renshaw puts it this way: "Forests like the Nantahala were created in order that the land and resources could be used or the best advantage of the greatest number of people. Over the years this general goal has taken the shape of a long-proved program. The four prongs are:

1. The protection of the forest watersheds.
2. The growing and harvesting of the forest crop.
3. The restocking, managing and harvesting of the annual crops of fish and game.
4. The preservation and development of the forest's recreational possibilities."

These are more than lofty ideals. In the Nantahala National Forest each phase of this multiple-use policy is backed by a program which presently is producing results. Take watershed protection as an example:

The Nantahala forest blankets a country of heavy (50 to 100 inches) annual rainfall. Something like 6,000 tons of water is drained off every acre of land in the forest each year. This water provides one of the great resources of Western North Carolina.

Power Dams Built

The Nantahala Power and Light company, a subsidiary of the Aluminum Company of America, has built a number of power dams within the Nantahala forest. More recently great dams have been raised in this same area by the TVA. Today there are some 30,000 acres of man-made lakes in the forest. They range from lakes of less than 100 acres (Queens Creek and Sapphire) on up to such sprawling giants as Fontana (almost 10,000 acres) and Hiwassee (7,000 acres).

As sources of power (planned potential of about 500,000 kilowatt hours) and as tools for controlling floods along the Tennessee, Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, these mountain lakes are immensely valuable. They will remain valuable just as long as their watersheds are protected and they do not fill with silt.

This job of protection is handled by the Forest Service. When the work began the service knew little or nothing about the water-absorbing ability of forest cover. To find the answers and learn the techniques of intelligent watershed management, the Service launched a unique experiment in the Coweeta mountains near Franklin, seat of Macon County.

The fundamental research under way at Coweeta already has provided information which

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