

Sink Hands Looters 2-3 Years For Crimes

Sentences of two to three years each were handed four Transylvania County men in Superior Court here Tuesday morning for their part in looting 12 summer homes in the Highlands area as members of a theft ring operating in seven counties in North and South Carolina.

All four entered pleas of guilty through counsel and were sentenced by Judge H. Hoyle Sink. The men are Herbert Hoover Volrath, 25, Jimmy Volrath, 21, Ray McCall, 21, and Ernest Fisher, 18.

Officers of the seven counties broke up the ring in a surprise raid in the Brevard area in February. Most of the stolen property was recovered.

On trial in Brevard two weeks ago, the Volraths were handed five to seven years and McCall three to five years for break-ins in that area. Fisher did not stand trial there.

Tuesday afternoon, court recessed until Monday morning when the judge will dispose of several remaining criminal matters and move into trial of civil matters.

Recommends Courthouse Facelifting

A new course of action on Macon's 73-year-old courthouse was taken by the Grand Jury Monday afternoon.

Instead of recommending the construction of a new building—a practice followed by almost countless juries in the past—the jury urged the modernization of the present building inside and out.

A step already has been taken in that direction. For the past several weeks, painters have been giving the walls in the hall and some woodwork a beauty treatment.

Also recommended before winter was construction of the proposed county home. Meanwhile, the jury suggested that sufficient hot water be furnished at the old home on the Georgia highway (US 23) until the new one is ready for occupancy. The site of the new home is in the Bend of the River section. It was purchased several months ago by the county.

Macon's jail and prison camp were found in good condition. Some painting at the jail was the only recommendation made.

It's Tee Time

The nine-hole golf course at the Franklin Lodge is now open for the season, according to G. R. Pattillo, operator of the resort.

An estimated \$3,000 has been spent this winter getting the course in shape, he said. New tees have been built on most of the holes and the roughs have been cleared.

Mr. Pattillo said he plans to open the lodge early in June. Extensive repairs have been made to the lodge and adjoining cabins, he added.

MEETING POSTPONED

Because of the Easter holidays, the scheduled Monday evening meeting of the Franklin P. T. A. has been postponed until the regular meeting in May, it has been announced.



—Staff Photo by J. P. Brady

Beta Club members at Franklin High School have elected new officers for the year and are now looking forward to attending the state convention in Asheville tomorrow (Friday) and Saturday. New officers are (L to R) Miss Mary Evelyn Cabe, treasurer, Miss Caroline Reece, secretary, Leonard Long, president, and Herbert McKelvey, vice-president.

Political Scene Still Hazy With Deadline On Saturday

Republicans Set County Convention

A slate of candidates for the general election in November will be selected tomorrow (Friday) night by members of the local Republican Party.

The party convention is planned for the county courthouse at 8 o'clock, according to Calvin Henson, local GOP secretary-treasurer.

As a rule, the party here does not conduct a primary to select its candidates.

Women Win H.D. Gavel

A turnout of 65 home demonstration club women at the District 2 H. D. Federation last Thursday in Cullowhee was ample to clinch The Gavel attendance award for Macon County.

Mrs. Donald Smith was elected district secretary-treasurer and Mrs. Carl Slagle, historian, at the meeting.

Mrs. E. M. McNish, of Wayah Valley, is the outgoing district chairman.

As a special feature of the meeting, the Macon County Chorus sang. The chorus, composed of home demonstration women, is directed by S. F. Beck.

Several of the local delegation appeared on the program. Mrs. McNish participated in a panel discussion on the United Nations; the response was given by Mrs. Eugene Couch; Mrs. C. T. Bryson gave a resolutions committee report; Alice Lee Bradley a report on 4-H activities; and Mrs. Slagle a report in her capacity as district historian.

District 2 is composed of Macon, Jackson, and Swain counties. The annual federation was held at the Cullowhee Baptist Church with the theme, "Better World Tomorrow Through Our Youth Today."

ROAD WORK BEGINS

Grading on the last stretch of the Franklin-Cowee Gap highway project (US 23) got under way within the city limits of Franklin, this week. The rest of the project is virtually complete and is scheduled for paving soon, highway officials say.

Suicide Closes Bomb Death Of Local Man In Mount Airy

MACON READY TO MARK DAY

Easter Sunrise Rites Slated At Wayah Bald, Whiteside, Coweeta

It's nearly Easter, 1954, and Maconians are planning their traditional observance of the sacred day with special sunrise and church services.

Highspots of the day's celebration will be two sunrise services at opposite points in the county—Wayah Bald and Whiteside Mountain. Both annually attract hundreds of worshippers from over Western North Carolina.

Still another sunrise service is planned atop Raven Rock, in the Coweeta section. This rite will be conducted by the Rev. R. L. Poindexter, Methodist pastor, and is set for 5 o'clock. Persons planning to attend are asked to meet at the gate of the Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory at 4:30.

The Wayah service, held at the camp of Mr. and Mrs. Gilmer A. Jones, will begin at 5:55. It will be preceded by special recorded music obtained by Frank Martin. A public address system is planned to carry the service to worshippers who wish to remain in their cars.

The Rev. F. Doyle Freeman, Methodist pastor, will open the service with a call to worship and invocation; Miss Margaret Jones will give a reading, "The Empty Tomb", followed by a scripture and prayer by the Rev. C. T. Taylor, Baptist pastor.

The Easter message will be delivered by the Rev. Bryan Hatchett, pastor of the Franklin Presbyterian Church. The Rev. C. E. Murray, Methodist pastor, will give the benediction.

Atop Whiteside Mountain, near Highlands, the Rev. John Buell, pastor of the Highlands Baptist Church, will deliver the Easter message, assisted by other pastors in the area. This service is set for 5:24, and also will be preceded by special recorded music over a public address system. The toll road to the crest of the mountain—believed to be one of the oldest in the world—will be open free of charge for the service.

An Easter cantata, "The Lord is Risen", will be presented at 2:30 in the afternoon at the Iotla School by the P. T. A. Miss Nora Moody and Paul Swafford are the directors and Lowell McKee is in charge of music. Mrs. Houghton Williams will be the pianist.

Four services will be conducted over the county Easter by Dr. A. Rufus Morgan, Episcopal rector. At 6:30 a. m., a celebration of Holy Communion and an Easter sermon is planned at the St. Agnes church in Franklin. Dr. Morgan will then be at the Macon Prison Camp for a special service at 8 a. m., going from there to St. Cyprians for a celebration of Holy Communion and an Easter sermon. At 11 a. m. he will be at the Church of the Incarnation in Highlands for a similar service.

Highlands Hall Open

Highlands town officials Friday moved into the city hall at the intersection of Oak and Fourth.

Designed by Architect Upton Ewing, of Coral Gables, Fla., and Highlands, the new city building was built by local day labor, according to Mayor W. H. Cobb.

The upper story of the structure has been "roughed in", the mayor said, and will be completed as soon as funds are available. He estimated the total cost at \$15,000.

Housed in the building are the town office, fire department, police department, and jail. The upper story will contain an apartment.

The architect drew the plans free of charge, Mayor Cobb said, expressing his appreciation for this service. Mr. Ewing also designed the Highlands Community Hospital at no charge.

The two-year-old mystery hanging over the booby-trap slaying of William Homer Cochran, Jr., in Mount Airy and last week's bombing attempt on the Franklin man's widow in Edenton was cleared with the suicide Friday of a 38-year-old Pittsboro mechanic and neighbor of Mrs. Cochran's parents.

With the suicide of George Henry Smith, whose body was found in a patch of woods near his home—a .22 rifle wound through the heart—S. B. I. agents marked "closed" the baffling case of young Cochran's slaying, according to local officers.

The 24-year-old agricultural teacher, son of Policeman and Mrs. Homer Cochran, of Franklin, died December 31, 1952, in a Mount Airy hospital, several hours after he climbed into his pick-up truck to leave for work at White Plains High School and touched off an explosion which nearly blew him to bits.

'Not Satisfied' Suicide Closes Son's Slaying

"If he (Smith) is the guilty one, suicide was too easy for him", the father of William Homer Cochran, Jr., feels.

In an interview with a Press reporter, Policeman Homer Cochran said he is not satisfied with the S.B.I. report that the booby-trap slaying of his son is closed.

The officer said he is planning a trip to the Mount Airy-Edenton-Pittsboro area "to satisfy my mind a little more."



Mrs. Cochran

SCHOOL FIRE CHECK COMES

\$105,000 Settlement In Full; Deposited To Special Account

A check for \$105,000—full insurance settlement on the old Franklin high school building—was received here Saturday and has been deposited to a special banking account to replace the building, which burned last month.

County School Supt. Holland McSwain said yesterday (Wednesday) preliminary plans for a new building are being prepared by Lindsay Gudger, Asheville architect.

The new building should be ready for occupancy some time in the fall, he said. However, there is little hope it will be ready at the outset of the 1954-55 school year, the superintendent added.

The insurance on the 34-year-old building was carried with the division of insurance of the State Board of Education. The structure was completely gutted in an early morning fire March 16.

Commenting on the arrival of the check, Mr. McSwain said "we appreciate the cooperation of the division for the promptness in which this matter was handled", adding that the speedy settlement will enable the county to start to work immediately on a new building.

At its April meeting, the Board of Education earmarked the insurance money solely for replacing the loss.

Shops Opening

Several persons from this county plan to attend the opening of the new 14th highway division shops in Sylva tomorrow (Friday) from 4 to 8 p. m.

Close to 1,000 are expected to show up, according to Commissioner Harry E. Buchanan. A barbecue supper is planned at 5:30 o'clock, he said.

IOTLA BENEFIT SUPPER

The Iotla P. T. A. will sponsor a benefit supper at the Iotla School Saturday night beginning at 6:30 o'clock, it has been announced.

Mrs. Cochran, home agent in Chowan County, found a crudely-made bomb under the front seat of her car as she left for work. Edenton Police Chief George I. Dall was painfully burned when the bomb exploded as he carried it into the police station.

Certain that jealousy was the motive behind young Cochran's death and the attempt to kill his widow, who planned to remarry, officers pinpointed their investigation on Smith, who had been a principal suspect since the Franklin man's slaying. It is understood agents were unable to uncover enough evidence to warrant his arrest, but had kept close watch on his movements at intervals.

Smith disappeared from his parent's home soon after officers arrived and asked permission to vacuum clean his automobile. It is reported this was the first indication Smith had he was under suspicion.

His body was found the following morning by members of his family.

Mrs. Cochran recently announced plans to marry George Alam Byrum, Edenton City councilman and businessman, on April 24.

The crude bomb put in Mrs. Cochran's car probably would not have killed her. Officers said Smith probably just wanted to scare her out of marrying again. Smith is reported to have tried to date the young widow and it was definitely established he was in the Mount Airy area when the truck explosion ripped the young agricultural teacher's trunk.

BAKE SALE SLATED

The American Legion Auxiliary will sponsor a bake sale tomorrow (Friday) at the Nantahala Power and Light Company building, it has been announced.

EASTER PROGRAM

An Easter program, "Crown of Thorns", will be presented tomorrow (Friday) night at the Carson Chapel Methodist Church by members of the M.Y.F., Miss Carolyn Waldrop, president, has announced. The youth choir will present special music under the direction of Mrs. Robert D. Burnette. The event is set for 7:30 o'clock.

Scouts - And A Ray Of Easter Sunshine



—Staff Photo by J. P. Brady

Brownies and intermediate Girl Scouts of Franklin worked diligently last Thursday afternoon to bring a ray of Easter sunshine into the lives of elderly women in the county, making Easter bonnet pin cushions and bunnies. Pictured at work with needles and thread are (L to R) Brownie Kit Gnuse, Frances Whittington and Launa Baker, intermediates of Troop 29, and Linda Morrow, of intermediate Troop 4. Adult leaders will help the girls distribute their works of art by Easter.



—Staff Photo by J. P. Brady

NEW FRANKLIN GARDEN CLUB OFFICERS are shown discussing plans for the new year at the club's annual luncheon last week at Kelly's Inn. They are (L to R) Mrs. Gus Leach, secretary, Mrs. R. G. Lichtenstein, president, Mrs. J. H. Stockton (standing), treasurer, and Mrs. Gilmer A. Jones, vice-president.