

2 MACON HIGHWAY MEN GIVEN 30-YEAR PINS; 1 20-YEAR PIN

Two Macon County men, last Thursday night at the N. C. State Highway Employees' Association meeting at the Whittier highway shed, stepped up and proudly received 30-year service pins.

They are Joseph F. (Joe) Setser and George T. Stalcup. Among those receiving service pins for shorter periods was Frank Phillips, construction foreman for this county, who was presented a pin for 20 years' service.

Pulled Out Of Mud

Mr. Setser has seen his county pull itself out of the mud over the years to the present point of having some 90 miles of paved highways and 50 miles of secondary paved roads. And Joe Setser has played a big part in this progress.

He cut his highway teeth on this mud, one might say, after joining the department June 22, 1923 as an axeman. In fact, Mr. Setser worked on one of the first paving projects undertaken in Macon from Franklin south to the Georgia state line. He recalls that the only paving before this "big job" was undertaken was a short stretch running from Franklin to the Jotla Bridge. His boss on the Georgia road job was then-Resident Engineer W. B. Ferguson, who now lives in Weaverville and has many friends here.

"The county was all mud," Mr. Setser recalls, "and the only two months I didn't draw a check was because the roads were so bad we couldn't work." This was in January and February of 1926.

From the business end of an axe, Mr. Setser became a rodder and in 1925 went on location. The years 1925-28 found him in construction on the Georgia road and Cowee Gap projects. Since 1928 he has been with maintenance in several capacities. He first started as a section foreman and during the

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Has Seen Changes

In his 30 years, Mr. Stalcup has seen vast changes in transportation and road-building methods—and in the way people live, as a result of highways.

When he went to work for the Highway Commission, April 15, 1923, he recalled, in an interview, he was given no truck to work with; instead, the commission used hand labor to a great extent, hiring teams and wagons, and occasionally a tractor to drag the roads.

"Now you can hardly get a truck driver to go out without a heater," he remarked, but pointed out that when he finally was assigned a truck—a worn-out used one—it "didn't even have a windshield," and the only shelter was a buggy top over the cab. He wore out two used trucks, incidentally, before he ever got a new one.

He's had some amusing experiences.

Back in the days when the Highlands road was under construction, for instance, he and his workers often went to a neighbor's house for drinking water from the well. (Bathrooms and such-like were the rare exceptions, in the rural areas of those days.)

This section was suffering from a serious drought, and one day the woman of the house complained the well was about

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Wasilik, 'Mr. Forest Service' Heading For Retirement - Gardening And Tennis

If there's any way to turn an acre and a half of land atop Rogers' Hill into a national forest, it's even money that John Wasilik, Jr., will find the way.

And if this is ever accomplished by the genial forest ranger, who will retire July 1 from the U. S. Forest Service with nearly 33 years to his credit, he will just be doing what comes naturally, for John Wasilik is "Mr. Forest Service" in these parts.

That acre and a half of land referred to above constitutes the Wasilik homestead in Franklin, and caring for that small bit of acreage is in distinct contrast to the 100,000 acres he has kept a fatherly eye on as ranger of the Wayah District for the past 15 years.

Retirement, Ranger Wasilik commented Tuesday night from a lawn chair in his front yard, means, "raising a garden and playing tennis," his favorite sport next to softball, "which unfortunately has passed me up in my years."

He explained this: "I knocked a three-bagger the other night over there (gesturing toward the Franklin High stadium) and I've been regretting it ever since. I'd be better off if I had struck out." (A pat of his chest indicated short wind and a slight grimace emphasized sore muscles.)

But, those long years of the outdoor life have been good to John Wasilik.

Last Saturday he marked his 61st birthday, but that number of years falls to show.

"You sure don't look 61, Mr. Wasilik."

"You're very kind," the ranger chuckled, "you must come interview me again some time."

Life began for John Wasilik, Jr., in Roselle, N. J., well before the turn of the century. He was graduated from Yale University June 14, 1917, and four days later enlisted in the U. S. Army—"I didn't even get home with my diploma," he recalls.

He was shipped to Europe in August after brief training and spent two years with French divisions as an ambulance driver; meritorious service which marks him as the recipient of two Croix de Guerre medals from a grateful France.

World War I over, he returned to this country in April, 1919, and forestry beckoned. Back he went to college for a master's degree in forestry.

In 1922 he joined the Nanta-



—Staff Photo by J. P. Brady

John Wasilik, "Mr. Forest Service," who retires the first of July with nearly 33 years of service, scales a log to demonstrate how the Nantahalas have kept him busy. The pooch belongs to a neighbor.

hala National Forest as an assistant forester under Supervisor Jim Shields and except for a brief period of service (1927) as assistant supervisor of the Cherokee National Forest, John Wasilik and the Nantahalas have been almost one and the same.

Over these years, the ranger figures he has helped buy at least 100,000 acres of forest land and has seen more than a million dollars pass hands in timber sales, which, on the basis of this figure, has seen Macon County receive about a third of a million dollars as its share of forest receipts.

And times have changed on the forest, too, Ranger Wasilik declared. Back when he and the Nantahalas first shook hands, the forest embraced not only North Carolina acreage, but land in South Carolina and Georgia as well. Although at this time the automobile was breathing heavily down the neck of the out-going horse and the forest service had vehicles, roads here still had a lot of progressing to do.

As a rule, more walking was done than riding, the ranger explained, adding:

150 Attend 29th Annual Reunion Of Gibson Family

Approximately 150 persons attended the 29th reunion of the Gibson family, held Sunday at the Cowee home of the Rev. and Mrs. C. C. Welch.

The annual reunion is of the descendants of John Stewart and Mrs. Martha Carroll Gibson, and Mrs. Frank I. Murray, Sr., reunion secretary, reported she has a record of 2,112 living descendants.

Mrs. Nancy Carden, of the Leatherman community, aged 90, who was present, is the only one of the couple's 15 children surviving.

Burnham Colburn To Speak At Highlands

Burnham Standish Colburn, of Asheville, will deliver the first in a series of summer lectures at the Highlands Museum of Natural History, it was announced this week.

Mr. Colburn's lecture is set for 8 p. m. Thursday of next week.

Asheville banker and active in the Southern Appalachian Mineral Society, the speaker will discuss the minerals of Western North Carolina.

Mr. Colburn, who is one of the founders of the Highlands Biological Station, served as its vice-president in 1930, and was a member of the board of trustees from 1930 to 1934. Many of the specimens in the mineral exhibit of the Highlands Museum were donated by Mr. Colburn.

PRE-REVIVAL SERVICES OPEN MONDAY

A week of pre-revival services, with Macon County ministers doing the preaching, will get under way Monday at Friendship Tabernacle.

The services will be in the nature of preparation for the annual county-wide interdenominational week of evangelistic services, to be held this year June 28-July 4. The guest minister for that week will be the Rev. R. Paul Caudill, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn.

Next week's pre-revival series will be held nightly at 8 p. m. at the Tabernacle. The ministers who will preach during the week are:

Dr. A. Rufus Morgan, Monday night; the Rev. John Buel, Tuesday; the Rev. Bryan Hatchett, Wednesday; the Rev. R. E. Early, Thursday; the Rev. John Freeman, Friday; and the Rev. C. T. Taylor, Sunday. On Saturday night of that week, a religious film will be shown by the Rev. W. K. Shields.

A choir composed of members of the choirs of the various churches in the county, under the direction of Mr. Hatchett, will provide special music for the services during the two-week period.

In efforts to stimulate attendance at the series of services, a visitation program and a transportation project are being worked out.

Churches throughout the county are asked to conduct visitations Sunday afternoons, June 20 and 27, to invite people to attend; and transportation for those who need transportation will be provided from certain sections of the county. On the transportation committee are Mr. Buell, chairman, the Rev. Robert Hart, the Rev. R. L. Poindexter, Fred Corbin, the Rev. E. G. Altland, Wiley Clark, Mr. Freeman, the Rev. Manuel Wyatt, the Rev. Lyman Wilson, the Rev. Arvil Swafford, the Rev. Tommy Gales, the Rev. Jarvis Underwood, and the Rev. Albert Gordon.

Persons who have no way of getting to and from the services are invited to get in touch with some member of this committee.

Baby's Death Attributed To Suffocation

Suffocation, by becoming entangled in the bedclothing, caused the death of a two-month-old Macon County baby, the death certificate, signed by a Detroit physician, said.

The father, Kenneth Holland, of the Cullasaja community, however, said there was no evidence of choking when the baby was found dead last Sunday morning.

Mr. and Mrs. Holland and their children, Gerald, aged about two years, and Betty Leann, two months and nine days, had been here since December, when Mr. Holland was laid off his automobile plant job. Sunday they returned to Detroit. Sunday morning, when they awoke, the baby was dead.

A physician, who was called, said death probably occurred about 6 a. m. Sunday.

The body was brought back here, and funeral services were held yesterday (Wednesday) at 11 a. m. at Bethel Methodist Church. Officiating were the Rev. F. D. Freeman, Macon circuit Methodist pastor, and the Rev. Fred Sorrells, of the Cullasaja Assemblies of God Church.

In addition to her parents and brother, the child is survived by her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Holland, and Mrs. Plenty Dowdle, and step-grandfather, Mr. Dowdle.

Funeral arrangements were under the direction of Potts Funeral Home.

PLAN BAKE SALE

The St. Agnes Episcopal Auxiliary will hold its monthly bake sale at the Children's Shop tomorrow (Friday) morning at 9 o'clock, it has been announced.

AUXILIARY TO MEET

The American Legion Auxiliary will meet with Mrs. Pearl Hunter at her home on Main Street Tuesday night at 8 o'clock, it has been announced.

4 Of 7 Escapees Are Still At Large

12 MACONITES GRADUATED

At least a dozen Macon County young people were graduated from universities and colleges, in this and other states, earlier this month.

This list includes Herbert L. Hyde, from New York University law school; Jerry Potts, University of North Carolina school of business administration; Miss Patricia F. Hays, in home economics, and Miss Edith Plemmons, in music, from Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, Okla.; Howard Horsley, Duke University school of medicine; Miss Patricia Landrum, A. B. from Woman's Col-

WINS TOP HONOR

Howard T. Horsley was one of 13, out of a graduating class of 80 in the Duke University school of medicine, to be elected to Alpha Omega Alpha, honorary scholarship fraternity that compares with Phi Beta Kappa in undergraduate work. It is the top scholarship honor in medical school.

lege, Greensboro; Kenneth Corbin, from Wake Forest College; Miss Beth Jones, Brevard College; Miss Betty Sue Ledford, in home economics from Berea College; and Miss Josephine Dalton, John W. Edwards, and Lester Arnold, from Western Carolina College, Cullowhee.

Miss Dalton, who completed her work at the end of the winter quarter, is employed as first grade teacher in the Gastonia city schools. Miss Ledford was on the Berea Woman's Council and was dormitory president. Miss Jones is employed in secretarial work at the University of North Carolina. Mr. Hyde will take the N. C. bar examination, and later will leave for a year's advanced study in England under a Rotary scholarship. And Dr. Horsley will leave Franklin Sunday to start his internship at the College of Virginia Hospital, Richmond, Va.

Plans of the others were not learned.

PLAN BIBLE SCHOOL

A vacation Bible school for children and adults will open Monday at Union Methodist Church. All persons in the community are invited, it was said. Sessions are set for 7:30 p. m.

Four of the long-term prisoners who escaped from the prison camp here five days ago yesterday (Wednesday) still were at large.

One was captured in the Riverside community early Sunday morning, and two at Nantahala Station Tuesday afternoon.

Meanwhile, officers in this and neighboring states were conducting an intensive hunt for the other four. Local prison authorities, members of the sheriff's department, and highway patrolmen have been working almost around the clock since the escape.

The break occurred in mid-afternoon Saturday.

Using a two-foot pipe wrench, the escapees twisted the bars at a cell-block window, crawled through the aperture, climbed the prison fence, and disappeared before their escape was discovered.

Prison Supt. J. R. Overton placed the hour of escape at about 3:40 p. m. He said it was discovered by Perry Norton, on duty at that time as assistant steward.

Mr. Overton said the escape must have been detected promptly, since the guards make their rounds at intervals of about 10 minutes.

One prisoner was at the window, on the inside, when Mr. Norton appeared.

Mr. Overton has no idea, he said, how the prisoners obtained the pipe wrench, except that it must have been smuggled in to them.

Officers believe the escapees are responsible for three break-ins and one automobile theft.

The home of Marion Childers on Baird Cove Road was entered, Saturday afternoon when the family was away, and men's clothing was found missing. Clothing identified as that missing was found on Carl Prange, 21, sent up from Mecklenburg County for a term of 12 to 15 years for armed robbery, when Prange was captured about 6 a. m. Sunday in the Riverside section by Prison guards Carl Tippett and Fred Dills.

Prange also had two bags of pennies, amounting to about \$10, Mr. Overton said. The C. C. Stamey store in that area was

Two Macon Scouts Get Tenderfoot Rank At Honor Court

Two Boy Scouts from Macon County were awarded their tenderfoot badges at the Smoky Mountain District Court of Honor at Bryson City last Thursday night.

The two given tenderfoot rank are Paul Edwards and Paul McDonald.



—Staff Photo by J. P. Brady

MORE THAN JUST TIME—Weimar Jones (left), retiring president of the North Carolina Press Association, is shown receiving a gold watch from D. Hiden Ramsey, former president of the association. The presentation was made at the banquet of the association's convention at Lake Junaluska last week. In presenting the watch, Mr. Ramsey said the association wanted to do something special for Mr. Jones, in recognition of his outstanding work during the past year in presenting the position of the newspapers concerning the legislation which allows appropriations committees of the legislature to meet in closed session. The watch bears the following inscription: "In appreciation to Weimar Jones, courageous defender of the people's right to know. President N.C. P.A., 1953-54."

broken into Saturday night, the sheriff's office said, and Mr. Stamey later reported he had a large number of pennies on hand, and that they were missing.

Prange, found walking on the railroad track, offered no resistance, the guards said. Also broken into was Harley Roper's store in the Burningtown section. Candy and cigarettes were missing.

Mr. Overton said he has evidence that the two prisoners taken at Nantahala went across Burningtown Gap and down the Winding Stairs. He is inclined to attribute the Roper store robbery to those two prisoners.

They are Joseph Ellis, 35, serving a 30-year term from Johnston county for second degree murder, and Seth Gibson, Jr., 28, sent up from Gaston County for life, on conviction of rape. Their home addresses were given as Inglewood, Tenn., and Jersey City, N. J.

They were captured by Highway Patrolman L. H. Baker, of Andrews, and Patrol Sgt. T. A. Sandlin, of Bryson City. Officers said the two, who offered no resistance, were found in an empty freight car on the siding, having taken refuge in the car from rain.

The four prisoners still at large are: Hubert Watts, 34, serving 15-20 years from Columbus county for second degree murder; Cecil Earl Smith, 42, doing 25-30 years for second degree burglary in Craven County; Mack Hoover Walden, 25, sentenced to 15 years from Mecklenburg County for robbery; and Leslie Edward Dickerson, 33, sentenced in Forsyth County to 21 to 33 years for a series of crimes, including breaking and entering, larceny, and carrying concealed weapons.

The office of Sheriff J. Harry Thomas was notified about 1 a. m. yesterday that the automobile of Mrs. Nina Johnson, who lives near Longview Church, stolen Sunday night, had been found abandoned near Clarksville, Ga.

Earlier, authorities had sent out a warning to motorists not to leave their automobiles unlocked.

Austin Dills, who lives just off Highway 64, west, reported that one of the prisoners appeared at his home and forced him to have Mrs. Dills prepare food for the prisoner. He did not say how he was forced to act.

The sheriff's office reported that it has received telephone calls day and night from persons who had, or thought they had, tips on the prisoners' whereabouts. Office Deputy Tom Henson estimated the number of calls at 50. Each was being followed up, Deputy Newell Pendergrass said.

All the escapees, except Watts, were wearing brown prison clothes when they escaped, Mr. Overton said. Watts was in stripes.

The three recaptured were returned to the camp, and, as is customary when prison rules are broken, were put in stripes and chains, the prison superintendent said. Yesterday they were at work on the Allison road.

An investigation of the break has been conducted by Mr. Overton and Burt Freeman, of Brevard, district prison supervisor, Mr. Overton said. The investigation was completed Tuesday and a report sent to state prison authorities in Raleigh. He said the investigation developed few new facts about the escape.

At the time of the break, 81 prisoners were in the prison's two sections. Following the escape, all prisoners, save trustees, in the east section were transferred to the other until the twisted bars could be replaced.