

CONFESS MURDERS!

Robert Messer and Earl Odear Admit Killing Halls

World War II Veterans Are Unopposed In May Election

Mayor Gibson And Present Board Did Not Seek Reelection

Sylva voters nominated a full Veteran's ticket for Mayor and Board of Aldermen in Saturday's municipal Democratic primary. This was the first municipal primary to be held in the town in many years.

Jack C. Allison, heading the Young Democratic or G. I. ticket, was nominated for mayor with a vote of 203 to 164 for his opponent, W. J. Fisher.

Nominated for board of aldermen were Joseph F. Wilson with 218 votes, Edward H. Baldrige, 218; Lloyd W. Cowan, 193; R. R. Nicholson, Jr., 193, and Dr. Harold McGuire, 176.

Unsuccessful candidates for the board seats were Paul Kirk, 160 votes; James E. Crawford, 171; James T. Bales, 161; H. E. Ferguson, 156, and Roscoe Poteet, 154.

Dr. Harold McGuire, veteran of 42 months with the Army, was one of the candidates on the ticket headed by Mr. Fisher. James E. Crawford, also a veteran, was on the ticket headed by Mr. Allison. This was the only switch the voters made in their balloting.

The successful candidates will be unopposed in the general election on May 6.

The retiring mayor, Herbert Gibson, and board members, W. T. Wise, Chester Scott, Walter Allison, and S. A. Carden, did not seek re-election. Mayor Gibson, agent for the Southern Railway here, has been in office for eight years.

A brief service of the new nominees is as follows:

Edward H. Baldrige entered service August 10, 1943, and was discharged November 5, 1945. He was engaged in three major campaigns, the Rome-Arno, Southern France and Rhineland. He was taken prisoner by the Germans on the Moselle River crossing September 21, 1944, and remained in the hands of the Germans until liberation by Allied forces April 26, 1945. Mr. and Mrs. Baldrige and son, Eddie, make their home in Sylva. Mr. Baldrige holds a position with The Herald as linotype operator.

Joseph F. Wilson, son of Mrs. T. O. Wilson and the late Mr. Wilson, served with the 8th air force as a gunner on a B-24. He and his crew made 31 missions over European territory. They all came through alive but were forced to bail out of their ship as they were over England returning from their last bombing mission. He held the rank of Staff Sergeant and was in

—Continuing on page 7

First Secretary of the British Embassy Speaks WCTC 29th

Mr. Frank Darvall, First Secretary of the British Embassy, will speak at Hoey auditorium, Cullowhee, Tuesday, April 29, at 11 a. m. instead of at 1:30 p. m. as previously announced.

Mr. Darvall's talk, on "The British Commonwealth and Empire," will be the regular chapel program for that day. The time has been moved ahead to fit in with Mr. Darvall's schedule. He has an urgent appointment in Washington on Wednesday, which will necessitate his leaving on the 3:45 p. m. train from Asheville Tuesday.

The First secretary's address will be primarily for the students and faculty members of Western Carolina Teachers College and the Cullowhee High school, but there

SYLVA SENIORS TO PRESENT COMEDY PLAY MAY SECOND

"A Million Dollar Joke," a comedy in three acts by Pauline Phelps, will be presented by members of the senior class of Sylva High School at 8:00 Friday night, May 2, in the Elementary School Auditorium.

Rehearsals for the play have been in progress for several weeks under the direction of Mrs. Luce and Mrs. Reed, sponsors of the senior class.

The plot involves a modern youth who is really a worm, Percival Smith, and his million dollars in a terrific joke. The worm is made to squirm by a young lady, Peggy Eustis, who shows him his fault. He reforms and it not trampled on by his room mates any more. Percival receives a million dollars and the money gives him the confidence to run for mayor. He has many funny experiences which will be worth a million dollars to the audience.

Combined with the experience of the directors and artistic skill of the stage director are the varied talents and acting abilities of the senior class. Such a combination indicates a successful performance of "A Million Dollar Joke."

Two performances will be given. The matinee for the elementary children will be presented in the afternoon, and admission will be 15 cents. At the Friday night performance, admission will be 25 cents and 50 cents.

Scout Camporee To Be Held May 16 At Lumpkin

The regular monthly meeting of the District Committee of the Smoky Mountain District, Boy Scouts of America, was held at Jarrett's Springs Hotel, Friday evening at 7 o'clock April 18th.

Reports of scouting activities were heard from practically all sections of the District. Mr. Hugh Monteith, Chairman of Advancement, of the Smoky Mountain District, who attended the Regional Scouters Convention, held in Atlanta, March 30th, gave a very interesting report of this meeting.

Camporee for the Smoky Mountain District will be held at Camp Lumpkin, ten miles west of Franklin on the Wayah Road, May 16th and 17th. It is hoped this meeting will be well attended by Scouts and Scouters of this section.

Those present at the meeting

BETTER BABIES IS PART OF COUNTY HEALTH PROGRAM

By MRS. LINA PADGETT
Jackson County Nurse

To the parents of the young infant belongs the care that insures the physical and mental growth of that child into happy, useful citizen.

The Jackson County Health department carries out the following program to help the parents of these infants and pre-school children:

Clinics for mothers and babies are held as given below for examination in order to discover any deviation from good development and health. Conditions needing corrections are pointed out and referral made to the family physician, or if needed to available clinics.

Clinics are held in the spring at the various schools for inspection of the child who is to enter school for the first time in the fall so that parents may take the child to the health department or the family physician for further examination if found necessary.

Immunization clinics are held where advice is given as to what should be done and when to protect the child from communicable diseases and immunizations are offered. Those required by state law during the first year are stressed, and later those required for school enrollment.

The nurse goes into the home as much as she can to help the mother with suggestions and to demonstrate the home care of the child.

The Sanitarian carries on his program that safe living conditions may prevail at home, school or in the cafe; and that safe milk, clean drinking water and food are provided.

WNC Groups Go To Washington About Park Development

Representatives of Western North Carolina Associated Communities will meet in Washington next Tuesday with A. E. Demaray, associate park director, to discuss ways and means of insuring continuing development of Great Smoky Mountains National Park despite the prospects of a sharp cut in federal funds of this purpose.

Mrs. Grover Wilkes Will Have Recital

On Thursday afternoon at 1:00 o'clock in the Sylva Elementary school auditorium Mrs. Daisy Franklin Wilkes will present her music pupils in the annual spring recital. Twenty pupils will present a varied program of musical selections. The public is invited to attend this recital.

Chamber Of Commerce Membership Drive

Felix Picklesimer, president of the Jackson county chamber of commerce, has announced that the annual membership drive will start Thursday, May 1. The membership drive committee will begin canvassing the businesses of the town for their membership at this time. It is hoped, Mr. Picklesimer stated, to complete the work within a few days.

were: Bill Wall, Assistant Scout Executive; Gaston Means, Field Executive; John Archer, Everett Harris, Dr. Harold McGuire, Paul Kirk, O. E. Brookhyser, Sam Gil- lim, A. F. Neely, T. A. Willets, Rev. A. Rufus Morgan, John Allsup, E. W. Renshaw, Hugh Monteith and W. C. Hennessee, District Chair- man.

Will Represent El Salvador At Lions Meet



MISS BRYSON



MISS POTEET

Miss Thelma Poteet, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe Poteet, and Miss Jenneane Bryson, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jennings A. Bryson, will represent the county of El Salvador at the Lions Silver Jubilee Convention in Asheville May 25, 26, and 27. Miss Poteet's father is president of the Sylva club, and Mr. Bryson is a past president and past district governor.

Frank Crawford Succeeds A. Moses As Superintendent Of Jackson County Schools

W.C.T.C. MONOGRAM CLUB SPONSORING AMATEUR NIGHT

The annual Amateur Night, sponsored by the W.C.T.C. Monogram club, will be held in Hoey Auditorium Saturday night, April 26, at 8 o'clock.

Amateur musicians, dancers and comedians will compete for cash prizes which will be awarded at the end of the show. Winners will be judged by the amount of applause received and by judges selected from the audience.

The field is still open to contestants. Anyone wishing to enter may do so by contacting any member of the Monogram club before Saturday night. No entry fee is charged.

Admission prices are .50 for adults and .35 for students and children.

CHILDREN'S WORK IN CULLOWHEE BAPTIST CHURCH IS GROWING

The beginner-primary department of the Sunday School of the Cullowhee Baptist Church is under the direction of Miss Annie Knotts, first grade teacher in the local training school and a genuine servant to children wherever she goes. She is assisted in the work by Mrs. Ed Crawford, who devotes most of her attention to the little folks of a pre-school age.

During the worship hour on Sunday mornings Miss Knotts can almost always be found in her place in the educational department of the church building with

anywhere from twenty to thirty children between the ages of six and nine going through a carefully planned program which is suitable to this age group. On special occasions they are to be observed in a body in the auditorium in worship along with the adult congregation; in this way they practice under able and consecrated guidance the art of congregational worship. This group of children and their leader have recently made a number of improvements in the appearance of their large class room, the most obvious of which is the hanging of attractive draperies.

—Continued on page 6

Killers Used Machine Hammers To Brutally Slay the Victims; Robbery Said To Be Motive

Complete confession of the gruesome murder of Jack Hall and his wife, Margie Maple Hall, on Sunday night, has been made to Jackson county officers by Robert Messer, 21, and Earl Odear, 24, both residents of Dillsboro community. One of the worst crimes ever committed in Jackson county's history, Jack and Margie Hall were bulldozed to death by blows with machine hammers carried by the killers in their pockets.

Robert Messer made his statement to officers Thursday night while being held in the Sylva jail. After several hours of grilling he (Messer) said that he and Earl Odear went to the bus station in Sylva where they hired Jack Hall, local taxi operator, to take them to the home of Lonnie Odear who lives on the old Dillsboro, Sylva road, and where Robert Messer had been staying. Mrs. Hall, who usually accompanied her husband on his night trips, was with him at the time and accompanied them. Messer further stated in his confession that he and Earl Odear had planned to strike Mr. and Mrs. Hall at the same time at a wide place in the road about one fourth mile from Lonnie Odear's home. They planned the crime at the wide place in order to prevent wrecking of the car. He said that they hit their victims at the same instant, using machine hammers which they had hidden in their clothes, Earl Odear striking Mr. Hall and Messer Mrs. Hall; that when the car came to a stop they jumped out and robbed Mr. Hall of money, (it was not stated to the Herald how much they secured). However, officers have recovered \$14.00 which was hidden between Sylva and Dillsboro. Messer stated that after robbing Mr. Hall they switched off the lights of the taxi, walked back up the road to Sylva where they got in Odear's car, which they had left at Cogdill Motor Company's used car lot, and headed for Knoxville, Tenn., by way of Asheville; that they stopped near Ode Robinson's store on Balsam Mountain and washed some of their clothes in an effort to remove blood stains, which had splattered over them as they beat their victims' skulls to pieces.

At this point this was as much of the confession statement as was released as officers who worked up the case have other details to complete in connection with the murder.

Evidence that led to the arrest of Messer and Odear showed up Monday morning, almost immediately after the dead body of Mr. Hall had been discovered about 6 o'clock lying on the floor board of the front seat of his taxi with his wife lying unconscious across the front seat.

Officers found that Messer and Odear had left town for Knoxville sometime Sunday night or early Monday morning. They returned to Sylva late Monday afternoon and were brought to the officers by Messer's mother, Mrs. Hannah Messer. After being questioned the boys were released. Upon securing further evidence, officers arrested Earl Odear at the home of Frank Rhinehead Wednesday morning and lodged him in Swain county jail at Bryson City. Odear made his confession in jail early this morning. His confession coincided in principal with that of Messer's. Messer was arrested the same day and placed in the Sylva jail.

Murder Weapons Found

Handcuffed together Messer and Odear were carried by officers to a point on Scotts Creek just below the bridge opposite Sylva High school about 10:30 this morning. Here they pointed out the exact spot where they threw the hammers in the creek. Surrounded by a large crowd of spectators Patrolman Phichard Smith and S.B.I. officers, H. H. Zimmerman, waded in the creek and soon found both hammers. The hammers, now in the hands of officers, are both the same size, weighing about a pound and a half each with long, heavy handles.

A Gory Sight

A crime, although committed by young white men in their early twenties, was horribly staggering to those who witnessed the bodies of the victims at the scene of the crime. With blood and brains oozing from the

Continued On Page 4