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Upper Laurel Winners



UPPER LAUREL RESIDENTS were honored Dec. 3 at the annual awards luncheon of the Western North Carolina Community Development Assoc. Those receiving

awards were, from left: Lucille Burnette, Sandy Chesi, Lisa Chesi, Renee Ponder, Carol Bailey, Michael Tipton, Jeff Bailey and Vernon Ponder.

Marshall Police Quit

Officers Resign Following Gunter Dismissal

The resignations of two Marshall policemen left the town without a certified police officer for several days last week. Officers Jasper Treadway and Edward McLean gave mayor Betty Wild notice of their resignations following the Dec. 5 town meeting at which Wild announced that Carlie Gunter, a member of the town police force for 18 years, would not be rehired.

On Friday afternoon, William Beasley received certification from state law enforcement officials in Raleigh. Beasley was sworn in and reported for duty on Friday night. Mayor Wild reported that the town's new police officer would be patrolling the town from 10 p.m. until 6 a.m. Over the weekend, Beasley was assisted by former police

officer Warren Edwards. Wild said that Edwards was working in a "night watchman's capacity" and was not appointed as a member of the force.

In one of her first acts as mayor, Wild announced that she had terminated the town's entire police force. At the time the force consisted of Carlie Gunter, Jasper Treadway and Edward McLean. Both Treadway and McLean were deputies for Madison County Sheriff E.Y. Ponder. Gunter was the town's only full-time officer. He had served as assistant police chief when Faye Reid was the town's police chief, but had no official title at the time of his termination.

The Madison County Sheriff's Department and the N.C. Highway Patrol were

assisting with law enforcement in Marshall while the town was without any police. Mayor Wild reported on Monday that both the sheriff's department and Highway Patrol would continue to assist until the force can be fully staffed again.

On the day following the announcement that Gunter would be terminated, Wild and the board of aldermen met again at Town Hall to discuss the decision. Aldermen Ed Niles and Sammy Lunsford voted to fire Gunter while board member John Dodson opposed the firing. After the Tuesday meeting, the mayor said that she did not need the approval of the aldermen to fire Gunter. The mayor maintained that the town charter gave her the authority in police matters. On Monday, Wild said that

she hopes to hire another full-time policeman once an audit is completed of the town's finances. "We can't do anything until we know how much money we've got," she said.

Marshall's newest police officer was introduced by the mayor at last week's town meeting. Wild said that Beasley is a Madison County native who formerly served as a sheriff's deputy in Texas. Beasley was given temporary certification by the state law enforcement officials. He will have one year to complete his certification training.

Rumors have been circulating that Gunter plans to challenge his dismissal. Contacted on Monday, the former police officer declined comment.

Farm Bureau Federation Holds Asheville Convention

ASHEVILLE — Policy decisions covering a wide range of farm problems were completed Wednesday by voting delegates to the 48th annual convention of the North Carolina Farm Bureau Federation.

John Sledge, who was unanimously re-elected president of the organization, said the approved resolutions become official state Farm Bureau policies for 1984. Resolutions dealing with national issues are forwarded to the American Farm Bureau convention for consideration.

Sledge also announced that membership in the state organization now stands at over 225,000 member-families. Re-elected to serve with Sledge for another one-year term were Vice Presidents D. Gray Faulkner of Henderson, and Atlas Wooten of Greenville. Also elected as Vice President was S. E. Johnston

of Fletcher.

Delegates, representing every county Farm Bureau in the state, unanimously approved a resolution outlining certain basic rights for farmers "to protect American agriculture from exploitation and discrimination." This includes:

- The right to own farm property without government interference.
- The right to pass on farm property for the purpose of farming without confiscatory estate taxes.
- The right to use all necessary tools, both mechanical and chemical, unless otherwise proven without doubt to be harmful to the public.
- The right to have access to all markets by all types of transportation without restrictions, slowdowns, or stoppages by any individual, organization or union.
- To have access to world

markets, free from all embargoes or restrictions, unless proven by Congress that these embargoes will be in the best interest of the United States. If Congress decides an embargo is necessary, the price support on embargoed commodities should be 100 percent of parity.

• To be free from farm products being used as a political tool at home and world-wide, resulting in great loss not only to the farmer, but to the United States as a whole.

Delegates also went on record supporting farm legislation and programs for agricultural commodities that will assure adequate food and fiber for consumers and provide an opportunity for farmers to make a profit.

Among other policy positions, voting delegates:
• Opposed any action which would reduce the ability to the Farm Credit System to serve farmers.

• Supported the year-long effort to make 1984 a special year of soil and water emphasis in North Carolina and to make the public aware of conservation assistance available.

• Recommended the extension of the Milk Law, and continued support of the concept of the N. C. Milk Commission and the principles on which it was established.

• Supported the flue-cured tobacco lease and transfer program as defined in the recently passed legislation.

• Recommended that information on agricultural products so important to the economy of North Carolina be displayed in all information centers situated along our highways.

Mr. and Mrs. Samuel T. Franklin, Jr., Henderson were selected as Farm Bureau's "Young Farmer and Rancher Family of the Year" during the Asheville convention.

Conservation District Elects Metcalf

Emery Metcalf was elected Chairman of the North Carolina Area I Soil & Water Conservation District Association on Nov. 1, 1983 during the annual fall meeting at Lake Junaluska.

The Area I SWCD Association consists of the 16 western SWCD's in North Carolina. The Districts are responsible for carrying out a soil and water conservation program in their respective counties.

Metcalf is currently the chairman of the Madison County Soil & Water Conservation District. He has served on the district board for the past 9 years.

Before being elected as Area I Chairman, Emery had previously served as vice-chairman of the association for the past two years.

Metcalf lives in the Long Branch section of Madison County.



EMERY METCALF

Marshall Seeks Payment Schedule

Marshall will try to work out a payment schedule for a \$37,000 bill owed to the N. C. Employment Security Commission (ESC) for unemployment benefits paid to former town employees. Marshall mayor Betty Wild announced that the town would be forced to pay the bill at last week's meeting of the board of aldermen.

Most of the money owed to the ESC stemmed from unemployment benefits paid to workers on a Housing and Urban Development rehabilitation project in the Rollins section in 1981.

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The Life and Times of Jeter Conley Pritchard

By JOE MORGAN
Last Part of a Series

Jeter Conley Pritchard was born in a two-room cottage beside the railroad tracks among the poor folks of Jonesboro, Tenn. on July 12, 1857. His father was a carpenter and his mother was the daughter of a farmer. Early in his life, his mother predicted that young Jeter would succeed in life.

When he was still a toddler, there occurred an incident upon which she based her prediction. One afternoon, Jeter began crying lustfully and continued far into the night. After all her efforts to put him at ease had failed, she observed that the child's gaze was fixed upon the mantel. Mrs. Pritchard took down a shiny clock from the mantel and gave it to the child. His crying ceased immediately and his mother knew that such persistence would later serve the child well.

Jeter exhibited the courage early in life that would later serve him well in his political and legal career. During the Civil War, East Tennessee was a battleground for both sides and often changed hands during the course of the extended conflict.

Jeter's boldness was demonstrated at the tender age of seven. He and his younger brother, George, a

future Mitchell County Sheriff and U.S. Marshall, were playing along a roadside when a troop of Confederate cavalry came upon the scene. Jeter and George threw rocks at the approaching soldiers causing the horses to buck and stopping the advance momentarily.

The officer in charge yelled for them to stop and offered that he wished a hundred men of such fortitude so that he could make short shrift of the war.

Jeter's father served in the Confederate Army. When the war was over, young Jeter hoped against hope that the next train would bring his father back. The father never returned, having succumbed to dysentery in Mobile, Ala.

Jeter attended the village school in Jonesboro for two or three terms. This was all the schooling his mother could afford at the time. Jeter would later attend an academy. At the age of eleven, he was apprenticed to a local printer in order that he might learn the printer's trade. When his apprenticeship was completed, Jeter set out for Bakersville, N.C. where a small weekly newspaper, The Mountain Republican, was being published. His mother hoped that Jeter would be able to secure employment with the newspaper. When he left home, she was like all the

could spare, ten cents in money, a fried chicken wrapped in a bandana and her blessing.

Jeter loved his mother with a zeal bordering on worship. After getting settled in his work, he tenderly cared for her until the day of her death. He provided an education for his sisters, though struggling with his poverty. His mother died in Bakersville in the 1870's in middle age and was buried on a knoll overlooking the village.

The town of Bakersville is linked with his destiny. While Jeter was on his way to a community gathering, a foot, for lack of other means of transportation, Jacob Bowman, a prosperous lawyer of Bakersville, and his attractive daughter, Melissa, whisked by in a handsome surrey drawn by spirited horses. Later, the daughter graced Jeter's home as his second wife, during his term of office as State Senator.

An influential Democratic friend of Pritchard, observing his financial struggles, prevailed upon him to file his application for appointment as "Revenue Officer" during President Grover Cleveland's first administration. In filing his application, however, he took the precaution for lack of political foresight to note on the application that he was ill-

ing as a "true blue Republican".

While serving in this capacity, he had many thrilling experiences. On one occasion, he was in Raleigh on some business connected with his duties, and Governor Alfred M. Scales handed him a circular that offered a reward for the arrest of a desperate character, thought to be in Mitchell County. Scales remarked to Pritchard that he could earn the reward by arresting and delivering this prisoner. Pritchard located the party and, after a tough tussel, hand-cuffed him and started by train from Marion to Raleigh with the prisoner. Arriving at the first station on the way, a mob bent on rescuing the prisoner met the train. Pritchard backed the prisoner into the second class coach with drawn revolver and at the same time told the mob that at the first move of violence on their part he'd kill the prisoner before they could take him. This worked, and Pritchard delivered the prisoner to Governor Scales in person.

Another interesting experience occurred while Pritchard was in the Revenue Service. A desperado named Redmon, with a bad criminal record, had murdered a revenue officer, and after being wounded by federal officers, had been captured.

He was taken to a nearby boarding house in Bryson City for first aid treatment. Pritchard and four others were selected to guard him. A young girl informed Pritchard that Redmon's wife had slipped him a pistol and that he kept it concealed under his pillow. By a conversational ruse, Pritchard distracted the attention of the prisoner, suddenly lunged to his bedside, managed to wrest from the prisoner's hand the pistol which he had snatched from under the pillow. By a hair's breath, Pritchard escaped death.

While still a resident of Bakersville, Pritchard married August Ray, a graduate of Asheville Female College. She was the daughter of a well-to-do farmer who lived in Madison County. After his marriage, he moved to a farm at Kay in the White Oak section of Madison County, near Mars Hill. While residing there, he became obsessed with the idea of running for the office of Sheriff of Madison County and appeared at a county convention with many delegates backing him and strong prospects of being nominated for this office. The Republican leaders of the county had other plans, however. One of these leaders was Major M.W. Rollins, who

said to him, "Pritchard, you're too kind hearted to be sheriff; you could not drive away and sell for taxes a cow belonging to a widow and hungry little children. You're better suited to represent your county in the State Legislature." Thus, Pritchard was dissuaded from running for sheriff. This proved to be the next important step in his career.

Sooner than expected, opportunity knocked on his door. In the ensuing county campaign the Republican nominee for State Representative, unequal to his opponent on the stump, was being chewed to pieces. The Republican leaders persuaded their candidate to withdraw and let Pritchard take his place. When Rollins notified Pritchard of his selection, he was in the field plowing. Rollins loaned him the money with which to buy a suit in which to make the race. He proved more than a match for his hard hitting Democratic opponent and was elected to represent Madison County in the General Assembly. He and Major Rollins became lifelong friends.

Pritchard personally operated a farm for a year or so. Then he turned country merchant and operated a store and grist mill on California Creek, about three miles



JETER CONLEY PRITCHARD

north of Mars Hill. He was equally unsuited for farming or merchandising. Due to his generous nature, he was too loose in extending credit to his customers, so his mercantile business went sour, leaving him heavily indebted to wholesale merchants.

After serving his first term

in the state legislature, and while still operating the little store and grist mill, Pritchard studied law by day when trade was dull, and at night in the home, by a study lamp with a child on his knee, reading the pages as he read Blackstone.

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