

The Mountaineer

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1933

JUDGE FELIX E. ALLEY

The appointment of Hon. Felix E. Alley as judge of the 20th district to succeed the late Judge Walter E. Moore, did not come as a surprise to Mr. Alley's many friends in the state.

For nineteen years Mr. Alley has been active in the civic, business and political life of Haywood County. He is an orator of note and a student of political affairs beyond measure.

Two years before coming to Haywood County from Jackson County he stepped into a political prominence when he nominated Locke Craig for governor. Since that time he has always taken an active part in all state political affairs as well as national.

He is well fitted for his new task, and the people of this state rejoice at the choice of Governor Ehringhaus in selecting from our midst the man he did.

ABOLISHING THE TAX COLLECTOR

Haywood County's two members of the General Assembly, Senator Francis and Representative Howell, have gotten their bills passed by the Assembly that abolishes the office of tax collector in this county and makes the sheriff tax collector on a commission basis instead of a salary.

The present elective term of the tax collector does not expire until the fall of 1935, as he was elected last November to collect the 1933 and 1934 taxes, and the 1934 tax books will not be turned over to him before October 1934.

At the end of the present tax collector's term the tax books will be turned over to the sheriff of the county who will be tax collector and will receive one-half of one percent for the first \$100,000 collected; one percent on the second \$100,000 and two percent on the balance of the tax that is collected and turned over to the county.

Under the new order, Haywood County will have one less official on the payroll, but the total cost to the county will remain about the same provided the sheriff-tax collector goes after the taxes, and he will, if he gets anything for himself.

"TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS AND A LIFE"

One of the most startling bits of news, Bruce Catton said recently, is a little announcement that came not long ago from the National Educational Association.

Someone in the organization did some figuring, and found out that while it costs \$300 a year to keep a man in prison, it costs only \$100 a year to keep a child in school. The nation spends about a billion and a half a year on its 500,000 prisoners; while it spends only two and a half to educate its 36,000,000 school children.

Money invested in educating children will bring returns, while money spent on prisoners usually does little or no good except to keep them out of trouble while confined to prison, and sometimes while there they are making plans and scheming to do something worse

than before as soon as they are released from prison.

This thought brings to mind an article written for a magazine published at N. C. C. W. at Greensboro recently, which tells the following story:

"Two years on the roads!" the judge rapped out coldly, impersonally.

"But, Your Honor," it was a youth of nineteen who jerked out his answer in surprise—a boy, slim, fair-skinned, blue-eyed—with long, slender hands. "But, Your Honor, that's too much! I only meant to borrow that car for a couple of days! Don't you understand? My mother was sick, and I simply had to go back to New York to see her."

"I understand that you deliberately left town in your employer's delivery truck, and that you remained away for five days. This being your first offense, I had intended letting you off with a twenty-five dollar fine, but since you're not man enough to raise even that small a sum—"

"Your Honor," the boy broke in desperately, "I'm practically a stranger here. If you'd give me a little more time, I'm sure I could find somebody to help—"

"You've had two days and nights. That should have given you sufficient time. But I'm wasting the court's time in this nonsense! Take him away." He turned to address the waiting bailiffs.

As the harsh voice ceased, the boy made one last despairing motion of protest; then dropped his hands to his sides. His face assumed the blankness of a mask. He stood motionless, not heeding the rough hand that fell on his shoulder. Passively he submitted to be led back to his cell. Dumbly he sat down on the edge of his cot and stared into nothingness.

His head throbbed; words beat torturingly into his consciousness: twenty-five dollars—two years—twenty-five dollars—two years.

Six months later, a group of convicts sat, heavily guarded, around an open fire in a prison camp. The leaping flames played over sixty staring countenances—mummy faces, for the most part—whose expressions had been robbed of vitality by weeks of hopeless and unrewarded labor. The white-faced boy alone, sitting on the outskirts of the group, showed any spark of emotion, and this only by the glittering brilliance of his eyes—the restless movements of his narrow hands.

"What's eatin' you, kid?" the reclining, grey-striped figure at his side inquired.

"Nothing," replied the boy wearily, but a tense note of strain underlay his voice.

"Nothin'? What'cha working your hands so for, then?"

"Just thinking."

"Bout what?" the other persisted lazily.

"Oh, leave me alone, can't you!" the youth burst out in sudden fierce passion. "If you want to know, I'm thinking about the thousands of dirty crooks that buy their way out of jail every day! I'm thinking about a boy who didn't have even twenty-five dollars! I'm thinking about the hell I'm going to let loose when I get out of this one! I'm thinking—oh, God, what am I thinking!" His voice ended on a wrenching sob, and he buried his burning face in his thin hands.

Ten years from that day a judge in a large city faced a man on trial for his life—a man young in years, but old, very old, in countenance. Bitter lines were stretched on a face that must have been once smooth and fair. Long, slim hands pucked at the corners of a hard mouth.

"Robert Marshall, you have been found guilty of the murder of one George Whitney, merchant, who discovered you as you attempted to rob his vault, and whom you shot. Have you anything to say for yourself?"

"Plenty. But it wouldn't do any good. What's the sentence?"

"It is this: In accordance with statute 4-3-1-9 of the laws of this state, you are hereby sentenced, upon the thirty-first of this month of May, to be hanged by the neck until dead. And may God have mercy on your soul!"

Silently the prisoner allowed his jailers to lead him away. Back in his cell he lay down calmly on his narrow cot—eyes closed, lips closed in a sardonic smile. In his thoughts he saw once more a slim, fair-skinned boy standing for the first time before the bar of justice. Justice! The smile on his lips deepened. He saw that same boy seated in the flickering light of a prison camp fire—death on his soul and darkness around him. He saw that boy—a man now—standing over a still form, the glinting steel of a revolver in his hand. And then, the picture of a man receiving a sentence of death he saw, but this only dimly.

The picture of the boy stood out distinctly. And curiously, inexplicably, a distant refrain beat into his consciousness—twenty-five dollars—two years—twenty-five dollars—and a life—

LETTERS to the Editor

This paper invites letters from its readers for this column which pertain to matters of general interest and do not exceed 300 words. All letters must bear signature of writer before they will be published. Under no circumstances will this paper be responsible for views or opinions of writers of this column.

REQUIRING THE HAYWOOD TAX COLLECTOR TO ACCEPT PARTIAL PAYMENTS ON TAXES

Editor of The Mountaineer: I see in the papers that Senator Francis has introduced a bill in the legislature empowering and requiring the tax collector in Haywood county to accept partial payments on taxes. This is a fine move, a most advantageous thing for our people. But why was it necessary to pass a law to bring this very desirable result about? According to the News and Observer there is at least one tax collector in North Carolina who has been doing this for years. He is Sheriff Meekins of Dare county and he has a head on him. His county is mostly composed of water. Taxes in Dare have largely to be paid from water products—fish and oysters—and prices are low and money is hard to get. But Sheriff Meekins makes the rounds of his county on schedule—either once in two weeks or once a month. John Smith owes taxes of \$20.00 and when the sheriff comes he has only \$1.00 on hand. This money is received and credited on the back of the receipt. On the sheriff's next visit another credit is entered. And so it goes until every dollar of the \$20.00 has been paid and behind John Smith's door are probably many and his family knows when to bow.

And so it is at the end of the year that the Sheriff Meekins has collected \$18 and 19 per cent of the taxes collected in his county. He is probably the only one in the state who does this. It is necessary to pass a law to make such a plan possible in Haywood county, but if it is necessary here, here's hoping that the bill can by this time become a law.

As I have thought, it seems to me that the bill is not a fault, that D. A. Howell the best tax collector the town of Waynesville has ever had in his life time, used this scheme some years ago in collecting Waynesville taxes. And I know that he more nearly collected all the town's taxes than any collector we have ever had.

E. W. GUDGER, New York City.

Ed. Note—Partial payments are accepted by the tax collector at this time and we understand that this has been the custom for some years. We take it that Mr. Gudger thinks that the tax collector should go see the people instead of the people coming to see him. This, we find, is left entirely to the discretion of the tax collector.

DID YOU KNOW?

Editor of The Mountaineer: 1. That public education is in serious danger in North Carolina and America. 2. That educational costs in North Carolina have received the greatest cuts of any institution during the past four years. Nine million dollars or 22 percent.

3. That the average daily attendance of pupils has increased 83,303 and that 1,220 fewer teachers handled the situation. 4. That North Carolina transports more students than any state in the union at one-half the national cost. And then we say our schools are expensive.

5. That crowded conditions cause inefficient work and inefficient work causes more failures. 6. That there is a state central monarchy that refuses to allow the local people to exceed state standards. 7. That modern educational methods are necessary to prepare for a modern world.

8. That to remove the 15 cents land tax would remove 4 million dollars from the general fund? Unless there can be found other sources of revenue the schools will bear the brunt of the burden. 9. That last year the county school tax decreased while the county expenses for governmental purposes increased.

10. That North Carolina spends \$37.44 annually for the education of each pupil. The United States spends \$75.34. How can we have efficient schools and fall any lower down the scale. 11. That in North Carolina the total school cost for education has been reduced 47 cents on the 100 dollars valuation and that other governmental cost have increased 48 cents. This is an increase of 1 cent. Had the other governmental cost reduced as much as the schools we would be 94 cents lower than we are today. Why is it that the people are allowing the greatest public institution we have suffer for the short sightness of our leaders?

12. That the total state indebtedness is 85 8-10 percent and the total school indebtedness is 14 2-10 percent. For Haywood County 13. That the county wide school tax rate has been reduced from 77 cents to 29 cents and that the county governmental rate has been increased from 52 to 96. That is, two years ago the schools cost 77 cents and the county government 52. Now the county government costs 96 cents and the schools cost 29. If the county government had taken anything like the cut the schools have taken we would be paying 50 cents county wide tax where as we are paying \$1.25, and the schools are getting only 29 cents of this. Please read this again and then get the auditors sworn statements of these facts which were pub-

ly is 80 cents on the one hundred dollars and 67 cents of this amount goes to the county government indebtedness whereas only 13 cents goes to school indebtedness.

Many people in our town and county would have you believe that the schools are costing more than any other part of the county organization whereas a matter of fact the school cost is only 27 percent. Do you think it is fair for the youth of our county to suffer any further cuts until those who have advanced take a like cut? B. D. BUNN

THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF GOVERNOR EHRINGHAUS

Editor of The Mountaineer: Have you read it? It is the most statesmanlike document that I have perused in a long time. Every citizen, every resident, every North Carolinian who loves his native state ought to read and reread it. It gives reason for believing that North Carolina has another REAL Governor. I wish that our home paper would publish it in full since many of its readers may otherwise not see this great document. It is the most courageous recapitulation of the facts of the financial condition of our State, counties and towns, and the squarest facing of them that I have ever seen in my life. Every citizen of Haywood county ought to study it carefully in the light of the financial conditions that prevail today in Haywood county.

Mr. Editor, can you not publish it in full? It is not too late. It is a great state paper, and it ought to be widely published, and more widely read and then put away and kept for future reference. I shall so do with my copy. E. W. GUDGER

Ed. Note—The following letter was published in the Greensboro News last Sunday. The bill in question is one introduced by Representative J. H. Howell.

THIS IS NEW, ALSO RAW

Haywood county will have a law library established and authorized by a special tax of one dollar levied on every person convicted in the courts of Haywood county who is able to pay. The bill, which has been approved by the legislature, will be introduced by the senator from Haywood, and it is assumed that the house will be agreeable.

The process of reasoning which has determined that offenders in Haywood county who are able to meet a bill of costs should be taxed for the education of the lawyers of the county, is beyond us. Defendants who are able to employ lawyers are supposed to have made their contribution to the lawyer's education and living when they pay the fee exacted. It doesn't seem exactly sporting, to put it mildly, to compel a defendant who has paid for service that didn't save him to contribute further for the benefit of lawyers generally. If the defendant is without the aid of counsel because he was unable to pay, it is adding something like insult to injury to compel him to pay for that which has contributed nothing to his aid and comfort.

Not only is the dollar for the law library to be taxed in the cost paid by defendants convicted in the Superior courts but the bill provides that the mayor of Waynesville and the police courts in the other towns of the county—Canton and Clyde—must exact the dollar for the law library. The chairman of the board of commissioners, the clerk of the Superior court and the president of the Haywood County Bar association will be custodians of the library supported and maintained for the use and behalf of the Haywood county lawyers at the expense of persons adjudged guilty in Haywood county courts.

Levying a special tax through court costs isn't a new proposition. But levying it for the use of a special group of citizens, as in this case, seems to us about as raw a proposition as one would meet in a day's journey. By no stretch of the imagination that can be imagined for the moment can this tax for the benefit of Haywood county lawyers be called a tax for legitimate public purposes, since it is impossible to conceive any obligation or duty due from luckless defendants in Haywood county courts to members of the Haywood county bar.

If this measure becomes law we

24 Years Ago in HAYWOOD

As was reasonably expected Governor Kitchen last week reappointed Dr. Thomas Stringfield to the position of inspector-general of the North Carolina National Guard with the rank of colonel. This is an honor well bestowed and will be worn by Colonel Stringfield with becoming worth.

Headline: Shall Waynesville Forward? It is up to our people to answer this question. In the Month of Fine Scenery and the Most Beautiful Climate in the Appalachians We are Being Surpassed by Other Winter weather in dead earnest last Saturday, Sunday and Monday was the exclamation of all. It was cold freezing cold, the coldest in several winters, pinching every one with a much more pinching pinch than would have been the case had the spring-like weather not prevailed for a month.

22 YEARS AGO IN HAYWOOD T. N. Massie's store was broken into last Friday night and between \$150 and \$200 worth of merchandise was stolen. The police are working on the case but so far have gotten no clues as to who the guilty parties are.

Miss Nan Killian was a charming hostess to the members of the West-nesley Bridge Club. The prize, a blue dome in water color, was won by Mrs. James E. Carraway. The guests were: Mrs. Carraway, Mrs. Ray, Mrs. Blylock, Mrs. Barr, Mrs. Newell, Mrs. Camp, Misses (Mrs. Killian), Sarah Stringfield, V. L. and James Little-Satterthwaite, Mrs. A. J. Little, Edie Glavin, Lee Johnson, and Lucile Sue Adams.

The return of Hon. Felix E. Alley to the office of his office is a matter of the public interest.

Dr. and Mrs. J. E. Abel will arrive Wednesday afternoon at five o'clock in Baltimore.

Mr. James Reed and Min. Reed went to Spartanburg Saturday and spent a few days with Mr. Reed's mother.

Mr. and Mrs. James Killian are expected to return from Stark, Va. the first of the week where they have been on an extended visit.

Mrs. S. J. Bushnell entertained a family Thursday afternoon at bridge in honor of Mrs. E. M. Beardon of Asheville who is the guest of Miss Nan Killian.

"I once tried to teach a little Alabama boy to speak pure English," writes Octavus Roy Cohen. "I'll never forget the despairing way he said to me at the end of the thirtieth or fortieth lesson: 'Dey aren't no ain't you, is dey? It's aren't you ain't it?'"—Ex.

may hope that some defendant in Haywood courts who finds himself under compulsion to contribute a dollar to the law library will have the nerve and the money—and the latter might be made up by public contribution—to ask the courts by what authority the penalty is exacted for private purposes.

R. R. CLARK

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ALEXANDER'S QUESTION BIRD

Tell me if many good remedies are not made from plants and roots? H. H. Answer: Yes, men simply assist Nature in the making of medicine!

The best remedies that have been prepared to assist man in living his "three score and ten" are first prepared in Nature's laboratory. The drugs sold by us are guaranteed as to their purity and our prescriptions are compounded in a careful expert manner.

Alexander's Drug Store PHONES 53-54