

Louise Watson Retires, Former Yancey Countian

The day came for her to lay down the yoke of a job, and all her friends took her by the arm and led her to a little party on the third floor of the Buncombe County Courthouse.

Miss Louise Watson is a quiet, thoughtful woman, and she is as most of the women raised in the back country of the mountains—a bit retiring. She shies away from any fuss made in her honor.

But they brought her into the party and she smiled and blushed and stood up as well as she could under the terrible pressure of being a guest of honor.

She went to work for Dick Hulme of the N. C. Department of Veterans Affairs in 1947 and she had been with him since.

Before that, she had worked for 7 1/2 years with the North Carolina Probation Commission.

A native of Yancey County, she now lives at 88 Murdock Ave., Asheville. In her neighborhood she is the same quiet force as she was in the Courthouse. Helpful, observant, considerate, and very sensitive to the people around her. You do not truly know how valuable she is in the day to day life of the Courthouse until suddenly she is not there anymore. She left a great vacancy when she retired.

She has worked with thousands of veterans in a five-county district. "They are going to miss her," Hulme said. "She was intimately acquainted with many of their problems. She knew right where their files were,

what troubles many of them had been through in trying to get pensions or hospitalization."

A party for Miss Louise Watson—with punch and cookies and her fellow Courthouse employees gathering around. They were so nice to her. How else to be? She had spent many years being nice to them.

She retired at 62 on a disability—last year she had a severe heart attack.

Yes, they fussed over her and some of the older ones at the party had fleeting envy on their faces. Over, it was now over for her. She could now go out of the work routines and begin to live a life if she could break free of the conditioning of the routines.

"No," she said to a reporter, "I don't have any definite plans. I'm going to keep

my home and live in Asheville."

Mountain stock to the very core, she said very little. But Hulme came to the reporter in one of those lulls at such a party.

"Loyal and dedicated, that's what," he said. "She's the old-time worker. The job was important to her. She put everything she had into it. We'll never get another like her."

Then they gave her a gift, and with that, Miss Louise Watson got up—flattered and flustered and smiling and walked slowly down the hallway to the office where she had put in her years.

One last time, and then home.

(Reprinted from The Native Stone, Thurs. March 9)

Accent on AGRICULTURE

BY B. C. MANGUM

N. C. Farm Bureau Federation

It's no news to farmers that their farm real estate taxes keep going higher and higher, and recent government figures tell a discouraging story.

A rise of nine percent is recorded from 1969 to 1970 -- marking the 28th straight year of increase.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago points out that farm real estate tax levies more than doubled between 1960 and 1970.

In contrast, the Bank reports net farm income changed at a much slower rate resulting in taxes accounting for a larger percentage of net farm income in 1970 than in 1960.

The imbalance in the growth in farm real estate tax relative to farmers' incomes has led to special differential

assessment laws in about half of the 50 states.

Basically the law in these states allows farmland to be appraised and taxed solely on the basis of its value for agricultural purposes. It helps farmers near expanding urban areas to keep their land in agricultural use, or for recreational purposes, rather than having to sell out because of soaring taxes based on value of the land for development.

Although there is currently no special classification for farmland in North Carolina, it would seem to be in the public interest to encourage the preservation of bona fide farmland and forest land in order to maintain a readily available source of food and farm products close to the people of North Carolina.

Working With The Blind

By Steve Stewart
Social Worker for the Blind

When a person becomes blind, whether through accident or disease, he must reorganize his life. Fortunately, he does not have to do this alone. In beginning this reorganization, the blind person can find help, not from a single person, but from a team of people with special skills. While no two persons have the same needs each newly blinded person should begin his reorganization by contacting the local Department of Social Services where a Social Worker from the State Blind Commission will be assigned to work with him.

The Social Worker or advisor, as he might be called, will help determine his immediate needs since losing his sight. There might be—financial aid, housing, counseling, employment, personal adjustment and etc. The Social Worker uses his own experience and resources as tools to meet these needs as quickly as possible.

Once the basic needs are met, the client is usually referred to a Rehabilitation Counselor. This Counselor arranges for educational and vocational evaluation, medical and psychological diagnosis and treatment where necessary.

The Social Worker, Rehabilitation Counselor and medical worker are prepared to make suggestions to the blind person for treatment and/or training, depending on his abilities, emotional and physical needs, background and most important—by what he himself wants to do.

The Social Worker and Rehabilitation Counselor work closely with the blind person at this point. He needs help in discovering just what his desires are and in determining his goals. A definite plan is formulated with the blind person and he is given encouragement and counseling in carrying out this plan and reaching his goal. This takes not only professional skill but patience, tact and warmth on the part of the persons working with the blind client.

For some clients training must be postponed until additional medical treatment is given.

Once the blind person is ready for training he usually goes to the rehabilitation center. The one in North Carolina is at Butler. If a child, he would probably go to the State School for the Blind at Raleigh.

Once at the training center he is given instruction in manual dexterity, courses in braille, in typing and in personal grooming. They are also given training in homemaking skills such as cooking, housekeeping, etc.

At the same time the person is given training in mobility through aids, methods, services and skills that will enable him to move about in a sight oriented world with confidence and purpose.

The acquisition of the basic skills varies with the individual as does his capabilities for a job or career. He may now begin further vocational, technical or professional training at a rehabilitation center, technical school or at a college or university.

This process of movement from a newly blinded person to a trained, capable person may not have taken months, but years.

The final step is finding a job and becoming independent. Help in getting a job comes from Rehabilitation Counselors, Social Workers, employment bureau workers and any and all members of the State Commission's "team". However, in many cases it is the blind person himself who finds his own job through the confidence and training he has acquired.

For some of the blind, especially the elderly, Vocational Rehabilitation and going to work is not possible. However, rehabilitative services are helpful even if to a limited degree in personal reorganization and learning daily living skills. Even those who are multiple-handicapped can become at least semi-independent.

Fortunately our state has the N. C. State Commission for the Blind which stresses a team effort on behalf of all its employees to assure the best possible life for all our state's blinded citizens.

For further information about any or all of these services contact your local Department of Social Services

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Yancey Tomatoes Are Good

By Allen McMurray

The exceptional quality of trellised tomatoes produced in Yancey County has become well known, and the "Smoky Mountain" Brand, from the Yancey County Producers Association, is appreciated by consumers and produce buyers over the eastern half of the United States.

The production of trellised tomatoes offers a good opportunity for more farmers in the Yancey County area to increase the income by \$1500 or \$3,000 dollars for 1/2 acre of this crop. Thirteen farmers who participated in the Tomato Demonstration program in 1971 kept records to show an average of \$3,447 per acre return for them to put in their pockets after all expenses were paid.

Only the hardest working and best planning farmers should grow tomatoes. This crop requires careful planning for top yields of 60 tons of marketable fruit per acre. A labor requirement of 1,000 or more hours per acre means the growers must plan their time wisely and use their time to the best advantage.

Tomatoes can mean dollars for Yancey County farmers and a better way of life for them and their families.

All Recreation Areas To Open

All fifty-eight National Forest Recreation Areas in North Carolina will be open by May 26 according to Del Thorsen, Forest Supervisor. Some areas such as the Neuse River Area on the coast and the Pink Beds Area near the Cradle of Forestry will open sooner depending on climate, use and other variables, Thorsen said, and anyone desiring information about a special area should contact the local District Ranger's Office.

Supervisor Thorsen urges all persons using National Forest Developments to comply with the fee requirements where applicable and observe the posted occupancy regulations on all areas for the benefit and safety of all concerned.

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Bedspread Made From Leftovers

Mrs. Betty Howell, Oxford, has found a unique way to use small leftover pieces of polyester knits.

Working in her spare time, she designed and constructed a colorful and attractive bedspread. "The spread," says Extension Home Economics Agent Linda Bright, "is made up of 950 individual pieces stitched together."

Each piece was made from a large circle that was gathered at the edge and pulled into a powder puff effect. The raw edges were covered with a small circle cut from a contrasting color and stitched in place.

After all the circles were completed, they were arranged in a colorful array and stitched at the edges to form an attractive open work design, Miss Bright adds.