

**[F. L. Alley]**

Sept. 23, 1939

F. L. Alley, Deputy Sheriff

Catawba, N. C.

Ethel Deal, writer

Dudley W. Crawford, Reviser Original Names: Changed Names:

F. L. Alley G. F. Aiken

Weaverville College Warner College

North Newton North Bakerton

Asheville Ashton C9 1/22/41 - N.C. Box 1.

Aside from the static on the radio, the sheriff's office was quiet. With his feet on the window sill, deputy Sheriff George Aiken was leisurely smoking a cigar and looking through the window at the screeching jay birds in the giant oaks on the court house lawn.

"What station do you get all that beautiful static from?" I asked, and his feet came to the floor with a resounding phlop, as he removed his big black hat with one hand and the half-smoked cigar with the other.

"Hello, I didn't realize that thing was making such a terrible noise, have a seat."

"Not if you are busy," I replied. "But I did want that story you promised."

## Library of Congress

“Do I look busy, I was just day-dreaming; I go on a vacation next week. I was just thinking about the good times I'm going to have up in the mountains. Everybody is so busy in their crops at this season there's nothing much for a deputy to do. Seems they all let up on their meanness about this time o'year. But they'll be trying their hand at making brandy just as soon as the crops are gathered. You know, I think I've got a solution for this crime problem; don't know whether anybody's ever thought of it before or not, but if we could keep all o'them interested and busy at something worth while we wouldn't have any crime.

“As for that story, I ain't got nothing to tell. What grade did I go to in school! Good Lord, woman, I'm forty-five years old; they didn't have grades when I went to public school. I went as far as I could and then my dad sent me to Warner College, as a sort of prep school, I reckon you'd call it now, over near Ashton. He wanted me to go on through college, but I reckon I was just too dumb to see it that way. I got a notion I wanted to go to work.”

Just then a timid little woman entered and asked for the Sheriff. Deputy Aiken told her the Sheriff was out of town and offered his services. Some one had given her a worthless check and her groceryman was holding her responsible, she was terribly perturbed. The deputy made a note and assured her he would speak to the man and see if he would make it good. As she left the office another small woman entered and hesitatingly asked to speak to him privately. They went into an anteroom and her shrill, high-pitched voice was clearly heard through the open transom, as she recounted a pitiful story of being beaten by a drunken husband. “You'll have to get a warrant,” the deputy was heard to say.

3

“I couldn't do that,” the creature replied. “Then I'd get beat up sure enough.” She emerged from the room nervously twisting a dirty, tear-soaked handkerchief, the picture of despair.

## Library of Congress

"A Sheriff has sure got his troubles", the deputy sighed as he resumed his seat and reached for the telephone, which had been ringing for some time. "George Aiken speaking. Yes, we'll be glad to do what we can.

"That was a woman calling. Her husband works in the silk mill and makes good money, and she says he's spending it all on another woman. We have a lot of trouble with folks like them. But this woman's as jealous as the dickens. He's a bootlegger and just works in the mill as a side-line. 'Course, he mixes a lot with other women - has to in a business like his. You know, the women handle and drink about as much licker as the men, now-a-days. Naw, we can't catch him; searched the place time and again, but he's just too slick for us. Sometimes we find some licker, most times we don't. Three of us went out there Friday night and watched for hours. We was hiding behind the hedge and could see the cars coming and going, but we couldn't figure where the licker was. Finally I saw some one go into a small basement under the house we didn't know was there.

4

"I slipped up close to the little door and saw him make the sale. They had a fine place to keep it, and when we searched the place we got eight gallons of "sugar head". (whiskey made of sugar and corn meal.) It was hid behind a panel built in the basement wall."

The telephone rang again. "Sure, we'll look into it right away, good bye. That was a fellow out in North Bakerton, says some of his neighbors are selling licker and he don't approve. Well, I sold goods for a while, but I didn't like it much. It was too dull. We never had anything more exciting than listening to Mrs. Smith tell about her family troubles while we sold her a bill of groceries, which could have been done much quicker if she didn't talk so much. But here you never know what's coming up next. Any minute I may get a call to investigate a car wreck, suicide or murder. Then there's the women who calls to come get hubby who's celebrating over the week-end. We have more trouble with the weekend drinkers than we do the man who drinks continually. You see a woman gets used to it and expects nothing better when her husband keeps it up, and she does very little about it. But

## Library of Congress

when a man first starts drinking a woman thinks she can break him, and she uses every 5 method she knows, none of them ever works. Having him arrested and brought into court proves effective sometimes, and again it makes him worse.

We've got a case now thats giving us trouble. The man drinks continually, has been doing it for years. His wife works and makes the living. Back in the spring I got a call one day about one o'clock to come out and get him. Two of us went. You never know what to expect when you get a call like that. We pushed back the screen, stepped into the kitchen. The man's wife stood leaning against the door facing. Her son, a grown young man, supported her with one arm. He held a glass to her lips. I asked what was wrong and the boy said it was a heart attack. Inside the dining room door sat the man. His head sunk on his chest, drunk. There was a stream of tobacco juice from his chair to the fire place. In one corner of the room was a lovely old cabinet. The glass doors lay shattered on the floor. The man never spoke. We told him to come get in the car. We started with the woman to a doctor. She only spoke once: 'Please do something', she said, and died. Thats been six months ago. We've had the man up time and again and it don't have a bit of effect on him. He leads his family a terrible life:

6

Always on a drunk. They're fine people and ashamed of the way he does, therefore, he gets by with it, and they have to suffer.

Another interesting thing is court. I have to be present to hold the Bible for the witnesses to kiss. See that the prisoners get safely back and forth from the jail. I'm a very busy man in the court room. Civil Court is so dry I get bored to death, but Criminal Court is interesting. A Deputy is so busy looking after other folks troubles he has no time to worry about his own. One thing I don't do is worry. Yes, I get a fair salary, and then I have a farm near town. Got a good house on it and they are all paid for. Got a wife and a couple of kids, one of them just staring to high school. No, we ain't laid anything up much, but I carry a good life insurance; 'nough to take care of everything if anything happens to me. No, I

## Library of Congress

don't carry accident insurance; too high for anybody in this business. But the insurance company needn't be so leary about me, I don't take any chances. “