

New Personnel Director Says Civil Service Has One Goal

By Marshall Watzke

The man who will put Santa Cruz county's new civil service system into operation is a youthful native of New York state who believes firmly in the importance of his job.

At 28, John Toombs has held positions as personnel technician with the New York state civil service department and as personnel director of Maricopa county, Arizona, of which Phoenix is the seat. He strongly supports civil service as a way of improving efficiency of county administration.

Last Monday, he assumed office as Santa Cruz county personnel director.

"I think of civil service as a way of filling county jobs fairly and with the best people available," Toombs says. "Our goal will be to give all qualified persons an equal opportunity for employment with the county."

Toombs faces a tough job. The county's civil service ordinance was a burning issue at the last election and more recently a reclassification of jobs and salary increases has stirred bitter con-

troversy among both county officials and employees.

It will be up to this quiet young man from New York to untangle the many knotty problems that beset a new organization and keep happy the county officials who are held responsible by the public.

Graduated magna cum laude from Syracuse university in 1949, Toombs went to work as a high school teacher at Cortland, N. Y., and there met a girl named Betty. They were married in 1950.

Toombs decided that life in the classroom was not for him, and he transferred to the New York state civil service department.

After more than two years there, he moved on to Phoenix, where he worked until he took his Santa Cruz county job.

Now situated in his new office at the county agricultural building, Toombs thinks he will like life in Santa Cruz.

"Everyone I have met here has been very co-operative," he said, "and I'm truly impressed by the climate and scenery."

He described in glowing terms his first view of the county as he drove with his wife over Hecker Pass.

Toombs makes no secret of the fact that he thinks he faces a difficult challenge in Santa Cruz county. "There is a lot of work ahead of me getting the county's civil service system under way," he commented.

In addition to keeping the routine records of county personnel, Toombs must immediately arrange to have the many employees now on temporary status tested and made eligible for permanent positions. This burden was created by necessary hirings since passage of the civil service ordinance last fall. Until now there has been no system of examinations to qualify employees for permanent status.

Another chore he faces is making a detailed record of each of his early decisions in personnel matters. These are important because they will set a precedent for future decisions.

Still another matter will be to overcome prejudice that exists in the county against a civil service system.

Regarding this prejudice, Toombs says, "I think the criticism of civil service is criticism of bad civil service. What many opponents of civil service are thinking of when they criticize are poor examples of civil service."

Toombs says it is his aim to administer the county's civil service system according to the highest standards, to sell civil service to those who may doubt its value.

Convict Kept Silence Vow For 18 Years

McAlester, Okla. (AP). — From that moment in 1934 when John A. Cane pointed to the spot where he buried his slain family, he vowed a life of silence. For 18 long years as a convict at Oklahoma State penitentiary, he kept his vow.

The incredible story of the prisoner who wouldn't talk was revealed yesterday. He decided to talk in hopes of winning a parole.

It was told by reporters for the Tulsa Tribune, which said it agreed to keep the secret learned in June, 1952.

Former Warden Jerome Waters said Cane was arrested a few days after his wife and three children disappeared from their home. After questioning, he broke down and admitted killing them and burying their bodies in shallow graves. He took officers to the spot.

From that moment on, he refused to say another word.

The 61-year-old convict said in an interview that "I made up my mind I'd never say another word and decided I'd play I couldn't hear."

The vow of silence was broken after Cane was told at a mental hospital where he was taken for a sanity hearing that he would not get a parole if he did not talk. He also was warned he