

Reid Enterprise Is Widespread

WINTON—J. Eley Reid, at 71, stands straight, handles a wide, prosperous variety of business enterprises, and does a full day's work daily.

Reid is a remarkable product of the Roanoke-Chowan area, both for his native business acumen and his background.

The grandson of a free Negro who was a Chowan River pilot before and during the Civil War, Eley Reid was born at Union, received a little schooling in Norfolk. At 14, he went to work for H. F. Dukes for eight cents per day, as a blacksmith. By 1910, he had advanced to the handsome sum of 75 cents daily blacksmithing for J. A. Horton in Ahoskie.

In 1911, he opened a garage where the post office is now located in Ahoskie, which he sold in 1915 to the late George J. Newbern, the town's pioneer Ford dealer.

The next two years Reid spent in Winton, where he enlisted in the Navy, assigned to fledgling Naval Aviation Corps in December, 1917, and was sent as an instructor to the Great Lakes Naval Training Center at Evanston, Ill.

Eley Reid likes anything mechanical, so working on the early airplanes was to his taste. After his discharge in 1919, he returned to work for owners of the Winton Auto Supply Company. When that business closed in 1926, Reid bought the equipment. But the depression was on the way, and luck forced him into a second enterprise which has prospered.

Reid picked a pretty site along

the Chowan River, just north of Winton, and purchased the land in 1926. Doing all the work himself, he built several cottages and other buildings, and opened Chowan Beach for Negro vacationers on August 4, 1926. Through the years, he has continued to turn profits back into more equipment, and Chowan Beach annually draws thousands of visitors from many states. "We have no trouble at my beach," Reid says proudly. "They know they have to answer to me, and I tell them that trouble means they're showing disrespect to each other, not to me." The beach was closed from 1942 to 1950.

Reid also tried his hand at herring fishing, from 1932 to 1942, on the Chowan. During the last five years of that effort, he was in partnership with Charles L. Revelle of Murfreesboro, who sold Reid his interest in 1942.

It was the fish business which got Reid into his present major field—coin-operated juke boxes and machines. In December, 1938, the Wuritzer juke box distributor came to buy some fish

from Reid's firm and suggested that Reid buy some juke boxes and place them around the county.

The mechanical wizardry of these coin-operated machines interested Reid, and he bought five machines at \$385 each. These five juke boxes have since been parlayed into nearly 400, and the value of the machines has risen to about \$1,500 each. Reid now operates about 250 machines in 13 counties of North Carolina and Virginia.

In addition, he owns land in and near Ahoskie, several service stations and grills, and operates pool rooms in connection with several of his eating places. "I always tried to give away my money to those who needed help more than I did," Reid says, "and it seems to keep coming back to me, doubled."

Reid has one son by his first wife, Jacoba Reid of New York City, and two daughters who live in Washington, D. C. He has been married to the former Addie Jones of Gates County for 37 years, and credits her with much of his success.

1920's Not So Gay—Or So Hertford Farmers Thought

The gay "flapper era" of the 1920's looked different to many people, especially farmers.

E. Y. Poole of Coleraine, who served the West Chowan Baptist Association as historian in 1926, took a dim view of the light-hearted attitude of the times.

In Association minutes for 1926, Poole said, "The year 1926 has been an unusual year. The winter of 1925-6 was unusually cold and the summer has been unusually hot and dry. Yet, the Lord, in His goodness, has given us a fair crop. But the price of cotton (then the staple crop) is far below the cost of production. We are hoping that the price of peanuts will be good, though the prediction is otherwise. Our people are largely dependent upon these two crops for support."

"Tobacco is selling well, but it is raised only on spots and our people as a whole are not financially benefited as a consequence," Poole asserted—a far cry from the situation today. "When will our farmers learn the wisdom of

making their home supplies, as far as possible?" was Poole's query, a sentiment which is still echoed by agricultural extension workers.

"From what we can learn our churches have fallen behind on benevolence for the year 1926," Poole continued. "Yet, our people find money for automobiles and gasoline to use for pleasure as much as usual. Fairs, circuses and other places of amusement such as movies and water resorts are largely patronized."

"Cutting down our offerings for the Kingdom of God and keeping our pleasure expenses at high water speaks of the low spiritual condition of our churches," he deplored. "Has not the time come for us to cry aloud unto God for a great spiritual awakening? Our pastors and churches seem to be restless and discontented. Pastors are short . . . There seems to be a craze for something new," Poole summed up the fever of the decade.

RAMSEY

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was taken with measles and died. He was not buried in the family graveyard. It is said that he was buried in the South where he died. Roscius left a widow, Temperance Ramsey; a daughter, Miss Harriet Godwin Borland; and a son, Thomas Roscius Borland.

In Civil War

A seventh grave contains the body of Phogion A. Borland, the fourth son of Euclid and Elizabeth Borland. Phogion was a soldier in the Confederate Army. He was born in Mississippi, June 8, 1839, and he died from a wound received on the battlefield, August 15, 1863.

The eighth grave is that of Samuel Bell, who married Martha Ramsey. Samuel Bell according to what some people say was a gambler. He was born in 1787 and he died December 25, 1814, at the age of 27. On his tombstone was written this inscription:

"In memory of Samuel Bell Who in the prime of life is gone And left a wife and only son. But we hope that he is at rest In the abode of all the best. The wicked cease troubling."

The ninth grave is that of Martha Ramsey. Martha was the wife of Samuel Bell. Martha was born January 16, 1788. After Samuel Bell's death she married Augustus Moore. She died October 20, 1826.

Beside Martha Ramsey lying in the tenth grave is Martha's second husband Augustus Moore.

Augustus was born near Murfree's Landing in Hertford County in 1784. He died in Mississippi in 1843 where he was buried. Several years later his body was exhumed to bring to Ramsey. When the body was taken up it was found to be petrified and it was reinterred in Ramsey in this condition.

Most of the members of the Borland Family are now buried on the Ramsey farm in the family graveyard.

The Ramseys were a very prosperous and aristocratic family. Although the family is now scattered about different parts of North Carolina, Virginia, and Louisiana, there will always be a reminder of this fine family who with the help of other people made Murfreesboro what it is today, a fine place to live.

I hope that all the Ramseys will be joined together in their final resting place, The Ramsey Graveyard.

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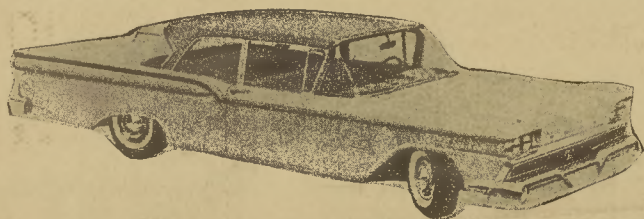
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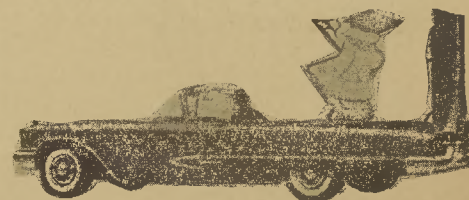
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