

# The Mount Airy News.

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## SURRY PRODUCT GOES TO EVERY LARGE CITY IN LAND

### The Leaf That Made Lowgap Famous Is Shipped Out by Thousands of Cases

#### Small Village 14 Miles From Railroad Has Unique Industry and Manufacturing Plant

Lowgap in the western part of this county is only a wide place in the road. Not one person in five who reads these lines ever heard of the place. And yet Lowgap is so well known that a cablegram from Liverpool, England, addressed simply to Lowgap, N. C. will not be delayed one minute in reaching its destination. From New York the message will be wired into Galax, Va., and from there sent over a private phone line to Lowgap. Every city in the United States and Canada large enough to have a florist is now doing business or has at some time done business with the firm of W. M. Woodruff's Son and Company which firm is in a word Lowgap.

This village, 20 miles west of Mt. Airy, boasts of one of the most unique industries in the country, and the largest of its kind in the world. Reference is made to the gathering, packing and shipping to the florist trade of decorative greens, such as galax leaves, fancy and dagger ferns, leucothoe, laurel, oak sprays, boxwood, magnolia leaves, coontie ferns, lycopodium and many other leaves and decorative plants, grown not only in this state but in adjoining states. Not only does Lowgap ship all these products in their natural state but it has a large manufacturing plant where foliages of all sorts are dyed and preserved so that their life of usefulness is prolonged indefinitely. It will be interesting to our readers to know that this Lowgap plant is the only one in the world that has been able to dye and perpetuate successfully the galax leaf.

This village and its unique industry is the result of the genius and untiring industry of one man—T. N. Woodruff. Twenty five years ago he was a country merchant with a store at Lowgap, owned by himself and father. He was a sort of original genius and wanted to find some way for the mountain people in his vicinity to add to their meager living. Often when going to New York to purchase goods Woodruff would take along bunches of galax leaves or ferns and present them to his business acquaintances. One day he stopped in to see a florist on Fifth Avenue and showed him some of the leaves. The florist immediately came alive, stating that those leaves were just what he had been looking for to make the foundation for funeral wreaths. He gave Woodruff an order. Yes, sir, he would pay real money for them. T. N.—as he is known over a dozen states—T. N. went out of that florist's shop walking on air. At last his dream of an industry that would help to buy his mountaineer customers some of the necessities of life was a reality.

He went back to Lowgap and set a bunch of women to pulling galax leaves and tying them up in uniform bunches, 25 leaves to a bunch. When the leaves were ready he hired an ox-team to haul them 20 miles to Mount Airy, whence they went by express to the New York florist. After an interminable wait the check in payment was received, but the day the check came a new industry was born, not only for the country surrounding Lowgap but for the entire Blue Ridge mountains from Kibler, Va., to Black Mountain, N. C. An area of this mountain country ten miles wide by 75 miles long was literally carpeted with galax leaves. Of course after Woodruff had shown other merchants that there was a market for galax leaves, competition arose. For a long time there were scores of merchants competing for the business. But florists began to insist that the firm who supplied them galax leaves must also supply other decorative greenery, and that ample credit must be extended. In time this developing industry required cold storage facilities, large stocks kept on hand at all times, and a lot of money tied up in accounts, so that by and by it became impossible for the small country merchant to profitably continue in the business. The Woodruff company began more and more to concentrate on the "green goods" end of their busi-

ness and in time T. N. Woodruff came to be known as the "Galax King."

Last week there was filed in Dobson for the firm of W. M. Woodruff's Son & Company papers of incorporation, the form of the organization being what is called an Express Trust or common law company. It is the first paper of its kind ever filed with the register in this county. The paid up capital stock is \$40,000.

The officers are T. N. Woodruff, President, and M. C. Goodson, Secretary-Treasurer, while N. A. Alderman, P. G. Lowe and W. E. Woodruff together with the officers compose the board of trustees. The company is a closed one and there is no stock for sale.

Last year there was gathered and shipped by the Lowgap organization over 5000 cases of galax leaves alone, besides vast amounts of other greens. As each case contains 10,000 individual leaves this represents over 50,000,000 of the beautiful heart-shaped leaves that went out from the village, or from Woodruff's several warehouses. The company now owns its cold storage warehouse in Galax, Va., besides having a storage warehouse for leucothoe in Old Fort, N. C. and another for fancy ferns in Johnson City, Tenn. The business has grown to such an extent that possibly 1500 people are supported in whole or in part by its various activities. Several country stores, many of them owned by the company, act as collecting points for the assembling of the greens gathered by the scores of men and women who work for the most part on a "piece" basis. The company also has men in Florida and Georgia gathering magnolia leaves, coontie ferns and smilax.

At Lowgap is situated a large dye and perpetuating plant for the preservation of foliages of various sorts. The stuff to be perpetuated is placed in a vat of water heated by live steam, the dye is put in the vat and the foliages allowed to cook and take the coloring matter for a while. Then the dyed greens are put into preserving vats, filled with a chemical that renders them immune to discoloration, decay or damage from weather or other natural agency. That is they are perpetuated. A large force of women are employed at this plant in bunching, tying and packing the prepared foliage for the florist market. This is the only plant in the world perpetuating the galax leaf.

Woodruff spent a couple thousand dollars experimenting before he finally learned how to perpetuate the delicate galax leaf. Enough festooning is made by this concern annually to string a line of it from Lowgap to Greensboro. The company has a number of festooning machines that grind out these beautiful decorations by the thousands of yards. Funeral wreaths are made by several expert wreath-makers in the village from prepared magnolia and oak leaves. Everything in the decorative line is handled by this organization. And just now Lowgap is in a rush taking care of Christmas orders.

These orders literally come from every large town and city in the country, many of them by wire. The florist business is a rush business in its nature. The company owns its private wire from Galax to Lowgap and maintains a number of trucks to collect the various greens and rush them to the express offices. Sometimes in a single day express shipments will go forward from Galax, Mount Airy, Elkin, Old Fort, and Johnson City, Tenn., besides shipments from one or two points in other states. Moreover, the greens business does not fluctuate in volume as do other businesses. People will die and marry and have balls and banquets and an decorative greens are used for all these occasions, the Lowgap business moves steadily along. The next time you attend a funeral look closely and you will see wreaths made from galax leaves; and the chances are they will have come from that village. Readers of this paper who may chance to motor to Lowgap will be interested in being shown over this most unique manufacturing plant. The management is courteous and willing to explain to visitors all about the business, except of course the formulas for dyeing and perpetuating foliages.

## 93 STILLS CAPTURED IN STATE NOVEMBER

### Federal Agents Seized 2,593 Gallons of Spirits and 14 Cars and Other Property

Salisbury, Dec. 8.—Federal prohibition agents operating in North Carolina captured 93 stills in November, according to A. B. Coltrane, director.

Quite a quantity of liquor and its ingredients was dumped. A total of 2,593 gallons of spirits, 107,374 gallons of malt liquors, 590 gallons of wine and 688 gallons of mash were poured out. Approximately 700 fermenters were seized. Fourteen automobiles were captured while hauling liquor and confiscated. Forty-nine arrests were effected by the federal men.

Value of automobiles seized was put at \$5,134. Total appraised value of property seized and destroyed was estimated at \$54,299, while the value of property seized and not destroyed was \$5,188.80. Amount of proceeds of sale of seized property turned over to the United States treasury was \$2,280 while the amount of expenses incurred incident to seizure and sale was \$418.33.

Other property seized included 1,150 pounds of sugar and one pair of mules.

The above totals are slightly less than those of the three preceding months. This was probably due to the fact that quite a number of federal agents operating in this state were sent to Pennsylvania for a special anti-run campaign.

## "LOST PROVINCE" RAILROAD CAN BE CONSTRUCTED

### Says Frank Miller, Engineer. Bowie Says Constitutionality is Assured.

Greensboro, Dec. 11.—Tom C. Bowie, member of the Appalachian and Western North Carolina railway commission, in Greensboro last night after a meeting of the commission in Raleigh yesterday announced that Attorney General Manning had informed the commission that there was no question as to the constitutionality of the \$50,000 appropriation for preliminary surveys and that he would shortly deliver an opinion to that effect.

At the same time Frank T. Miller, engineer for the commission, made public a report submitted yesterday to the effect that the preliminary surveys for the proposed railroad had gone far enough now to establish definitely the fact that at least two and probably three feasible and practicable lines had been run by the engineers. On any one of the three lines, Mr. Miller thinks, a railroad could be built within the limit of grade and curvature laid down by the commission.

Mr. Bowie said that the attorney general had not informed Governor Morrison, who was not at the meeting, of his opinion of the constitutionality of the \$50,000 appropriation, but that he would do so either Saturday night or Monday.

"The attorney general told the commission that it was his opinion that the appropriation was constitutional and that he would instruct the state treasurer to honor the vouchers against this fund," said Mr. Bowie. This opinion of Attorney General Manning, Mr. Bowie said, did not touch the larger matter of the bonds for the proposed railroad. That matter has not yet come up.

Governor Morrison recently wrote the attorney general expressing doubt as to the constitutionality of the plans and asking for an opinion.

In a report submitted to the commission yesterday Mr. Miller, the engineer, said that his engineers had found feasible lines for a railroad along two routes and had reached a point on a third where they thought they were going to find still another feasible line.

The first is on the line from North Wilkesboro to Mountain City, Tenn., by way of West Jefferson. From North Wilkesboro to Big Ivy church, about 15 miles, has not been run. But from Big Ivy church to Daniels gap, 17 miles, from Daniels gap to West Jefferson 11 miles from West Jefferson to the mouth of Big Laurel creek, 16 miles, from the mouth of Big Laurel creek to the Tennessee line, eight miles, and from the Tennessee line, about 15 miles, making a total of 76 miles, a line has been run

## Old Negro of Virginia Acts As His Own Publicity Agent

Washington, Dec. 5.—Traffic in front of the White House was stopped today by an aged, white haired negro who waved down automobiles with a cane.

"I'm the only negro who ever took permissoms to the White House," he shouted after he had brought a long line of cars to a standstill. "You ask those boys who used to ride the ponies, referring to the Roosevelt youngsters."

The old negro, a Virginian, who has supplied the favorite negro fruit for the White House for years, has just delivered a consignment for President Coolidge and had decided to take the matter of publicity into his own hands.

## 16 Perish in Fierce Gale Off Pacific Coast

Seattle, Dec. 7.—Sixteen persons are believed to have perished as the result of a 24-mile an hour gale which swept the northwest coast territory Wednesday night and early yesterday, causing great property damage, crippling communication facilities and inundating portions of Moquiam and Aberdeen, Washington, and Warrenton, Oregon.

Fifteen persons are believed to have been drowned when the steamer T. W. Lake sank in Rosario Strait between Boas and Fidalgo Islands, near Anacortes. Four bodies, three of them identified, have been recovered. One of the bodies is said to be that of Captain E. E. Masin, of Tacoma.

to within seven miles of Mountain City on a maximum grade of one and a half per cent, compensated against west bound traffic and one per cent compensated against east bound traffic and with a maximum curvature of eight degrees. This is regarded as a feasible and practicable line. Many parts of it have shown a maximum of five-tenths of one per cent grade and three degrees curvature.

The second line is from Elkin to Mountain City by way of Sparta and Jefferson. Here it is proposed to use the Elkin and A'leghany right of way from Elkin to Doughton, roughly about 17 miles. The line from Doughton to Stone Mountain has not been surveyed but a reconnoiter has shown, said Mr. Miller, that it is feasible; the distance is about six miles. From the foot of Stone Mountain to the top of the Blue Ridge to the top of Peach Bottom mountain by way of Whitehead and Thompson's mill, 17 miles, has been run. From there to the mouth of Cranberry creek on New River is under survey now but sufficient information has already been obtained, Mr. Miller said, to show that it is practicable.

The line up New River from the mouth of Cranberry creek to the mouth of Naked creek is regarded as not difficult; it is 22 miles from Peach Bottom mountain to the mouth of Naked creek. The line from the mouth of Naked creek has been run, five miles, to a junction near Jefferson with the Daniels gap Mountain City line. This comprises a through line from Elkin to Mountain City, Tenn.

The third route is between North Wilkesboro and Butler, Tenn., by way of Boone. About 18 miles from North Wilkesboro on Fall river at the home of Ben Triplett the engineers struck the foot of the Blue Ridge. From there to the top of the Blue Ridge at Deep gap a feasible line has been run, 19 1-2 miles, and from Deep gap to Hodges gap, at Boone, 14 miles. This gives a total of 33 1-2 miles of completed line.

This party was six weeks late in starting and is not so far along as the other two but a reconnoissance has indicated, according to Mr. Miller, that a line from Hodges gap through the Watauga river valley and gorge to Butler, Tenn., will prove feasible and practicable. The engineers on this line are now locating from Hodges gap to Butler. A second party will go to their assistance in the next two or three weeks.

Though all these lines are preliminary, Mr. Miller feels certain that they are practicable. His engineers have struck many points where they could not go further on other routes and the above represent, not the final decision of course, which is the commission's, but the opinion thus far.

## COOLIDGE FOR WORLD COURT—AGAINST SOLDIER BONUS

### In His First Address to Congress New President Outlines His Policies

#### Pays Glowing Tribute To Fallen Leader and With Slight Shifting of Emphasis Outlines Continuation of Harding Policy

Washington, Dec. 6.—President Coolidge addressed Congress Thursday for the first time since he became chief executive.

On the floor of the house itself the crush was so great that members complained they were unable to get the seats to which they were entitled. House officers were directed to clear the floor just before the President's arrival, of persons not entitled to admission.

Mrs. Coolidge sat in the executive gallery. She had arrived before the house assembled at noon, and received an ovation from the floor and galleries.

The chief executive spoke slowly and deliberately without effort at oratory. The first applause came when he said the United States saw no reason to limit its own freedom and independence of action by joining the league of nations.

There was scattering applause as Mr. Coolidge declared for the world court, but with reservations. A declaration against recognition of the Russian soviet government brought further manifestations of approval as did the President's announcement that he did not favor cancellation of the foreign war debt and his announcement of his unqualified approval of the Mellon tax program.

He introduced his message with the following tribute to his fallen predecessor:

"Since the close of the last Congress the Nation has lost President Harding. The world knew his kindness and his humanity, his greatness and his character. He has left his mark upon history. He has made justice more certain and peace more secure. The surpassing tribute paid to his memory as he was borne across the continent to rest at last at home revealed the place he held in the hearts of the American people. But this is not the occasion for extended reference to the man or his work. In this presence among those who knew and loved him, that is unnecessary. But we who were associated with him could not resume together the functions of our office without pausing for a moment, and in his memory reconsecrating ourselves to the service of our country. He is gone. We remain. It is our duty, under the inspiration of his example, to take up the burdens which he was permitted to lay down, and to develop and support the wise principles of government which he represented."

Following is a condensed statement of the gist of the President's recommendations to Congress—

Our country has one cardinal principle to maintain in its foreign policy. We attend to our own affairs, conserve our own strength, and protect the interest of our own citizens; but we recognize thoroughly our obligation to help others, reserving to the decision of our own judgment the time, the place and the method.

Pending before the Senate is a proposal that this Government give its support to the Permanent Court of International Justice. I commend it to the favorable consideration of the Senate, with the proposed reservations clearly indicating our refusal to adhere to the League of Nations.

Russia presents notable difficulties. Our Government does not propose, however, to enter into relations with another regime which refuses to recognize the safety of international obligations.

The current debt and interest due from foreign governments, exclusive of the British debt of \$4,600,000,000, is about \$7,200,000,000. I do not favor the cancellation of this debt but I see no objection to adjusting it in accordance with the principal adopted for the British debt.

The Prohibition Amendment to the Constitution requires the Congress and the President to provide adequate laws to prevent its violation. It is my duty to enforce such laws. It is the duty of a citizen not only to ob-

serve the law, but let it be known that he is opposed to its violation.

I am convinced that our present economic and social conditions warrant a limitation of those (immigrants) to be admitted. We should find additional safety in a law requiring the immediate registration of all aliens.

I do not favor the granting of a bonus.

The supply of coal must be constant. In case of its prospective interruption the President should have authority to appoint a commission empowered to deal with whatever emergency situation might arise.

No complicated scheme of relief, no plan for government fixing of prices, no resort to the public treasury will be of any permanent value in establishing agriculture. Simple and direct methods put into operation by the farmer himself are the only real sources for restoration.

The taxes of the Nation must be reduced now as much as prudence will permit, and expenditures must be reduced accordingly. Another reform which is urgent in our fiscal system is the abolition of the right to issue tax-exempt securities.

The present tariff law has accomplished its two main objects. It has secured an abundant revenue and been productive of an abounding prosperity. Under it the country has had a very large export and import trade. A constant revision of the tariff by the Congress is disturbing and harmful.

Our Government during the war acquired a large merchant fleet, which should be transferred as soon as possible, to private ownership and operation.

Unless the Government adheres to the rule of making a (railroad) rate that will yield a fair return, it must abandon rate making altogether. The law for consolidations is not sufficiently effective to be expeditious. Additional legislation is needed giving authority for voluntary consolidations both regional and route, and providing Government machinery to aid and stimulate such action.

The world had had enough of the curse of hatred and selfishness, of destruction and war. It has had enough of the wrongful use of material power. For the healing of the nations there must be good will and charity, confidence and peace. The time has come for a more practical use of moral power, and more reliance upon the principal that right makes its own might.

#### Dr. Burrus Of High Point Talks Out "In Meeting"

High Point, Dec. 6.—The city council meeting last night was enlivened by the declaration of Dr. J. T. Burrus, while he was speaking on the proposal for municipal aid in caring for charity cases, that "whoever it was that said the only contributions I ever made to charity were bills that I could not collect, told an infamous lie." And turning to newspaper men, Dr. Burrus said: "I would like to be quoted to that effect."

#### Fox Hunters of the State Are Ready For Annual Chase

Wilson, Nov. 27.—There's music in the air around Seven Springs today and the baying of hounds will continue to be heard throughout the week—the occasion being the annual meet of the North Carolina Fox Hunters' association.

The big event will be pulled off on Thanksgiving day and it is estimated that at least 1,000 dogs will be in the chase after the brush.

The rules of the National Fox Hunters' association will be observed.

#### "Dead" Man Returns—Dies

Allentown, Pa., Nov. 26.—Declared legally dead several months ago after an absence of fourteen years, William Biery turned up at the home of his brother last Wednesday.

Arrangements had been made for his legal "resurrection" to-morrow so he could share in his parent's estate, which approximated \$10,000, but there will be no legal "bringing back to life" proceedings, for he was found dead in bed to-day from heart disease.