



## Ridgeway Church Nominated

The Chapel of the Good Shepherd at Ridgeway in Warren County has been nominated for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places by Larry E. Tise, state historic preservation officer. The register is described as a national list of distinctive properties worthy of preservation because of their historical or other cultural value.

The Chapel of the Good Shepherd is a small Episcopal Church erected in 1871, during the Reconstruction era when Dr. William J. Hawkins, J. M. Heck, and others in the Ridgeway Company sought to make Ridgeway, a village on the railroad, into a bustling new city amid a county of plantations severely affected by the Civil War.

Hawkins contributed the land and most of the money to establish the church, which flourished under the leadership of the Reverend William Pettigrew until 1900. The picturesque red brick Gothic Revival chapel in the now sparsely inhabited village is an isolated remnant of the grant plans of the Ridgeway Company.

The nomination was submitted in connection with the Division of Archives and History's long-range program to identify and document the authenticity of historic properties in North Carolina. Approval of the nomination by the Department of the Interior usually takes about six months and will be announced through the state's congressional delegation.

## Thaw Could Be Harmful

# Mud Could Cause Problem For Roads

Mud may be a new jailer for rural North Carolinians now imprisoned in their homes by ice and snow, David Tomlin, Associated Press writer, says in an article turned over to The Warren Record this week by Glenwood Rose, Road Maintenance Supervisor of Warren County. A slow and partial thaw with intermittent freezes offer the best hope for Warren roads, Rose said.

"Most of us forget about winter road problems when spring comes, but for state highway maintenance crews that's when the difficulties are really beginning," Tomlin said. He added:

This year, says M. C. Adams, chief maintenance engineer, may be the worst in the state's history.

The problems will be concentrated in the northern Piedmont, the foothills and the western mountains, Adams says, and both paved and unpaved roads will be affected. But the biggest potential problem will be the rural unpaved roads, where winter moisture has been locked in two feet below ground level or deeper.

The stone-dirt mixture that keeps those roads together is only three to six inches deep, Adams says, and a quick spring thaw coupled with warm rains would be disastrous.

"The mud will make them

almost impassable," Adams says. "They won't support traffic. The surface just goes to pot."

What that will mean is that rural residents who depend on those roads for links with the state's secondary paved road system won't be able to go anywhere.

Even worse, the state won't be able even to drive its own equipment in to repair the damage until later in the year when they dry out.

"If there are emergencies where people just have to get out, we'll send our equipment in after them," Adams said.

About 15,000 miles of unpaved roads lie in the area where problems are expected. On top of that, Adams says the state expects patching and resurfacing chores on the paved roads.

Adams said there were between \$5 million and \$7 million in emergency and contingency funds which might be available for whatever comes with the spring.

"Our budget appropriation was made up last July when snow was the last thing on anyone's mind," Adams said.

Whether it would be enough to cope with an unusual winter remains to be seen. If the spring thaw is slow and dry, it probably will. But if it happens fast, Adams said, "we'll call the Lord."



J. W. Arvin, [left], newly-elected National Director of Ruritan, is shown with Mr. and Mrs. Leland Gottschalk of the Afton-Elberon Ruritan Club at the convention held in Mobile, Ala., last week.

## Couple Attends Meeting

Mr. and Mrs. Leland Gottschalk of the Afton-Elberon Ruritan Club, Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Little of the Wise-Paschall Ruritan Club and A. C. Coghill of the Aycock Ruritan Club attended the Ruritan National Convention in Mobile, Alabama, last week.

They were among 1577 Ruritan members and wives from 32 states East of the Rockies who assembled.

The lack of personal privacy is an old complaint of presidents and their wives, the National Geographic Society says. Certainly no couple suffered more from publicity than President and Mrs. Grover Cleveland on their honeymoon in 1886. The press—equipped with spy-glasses and cameras—followed the newlyweds to a lodge in a Maryland mountain resort.

An old dormitory on the campus of Gettysburg College was used as a hospital during the Battle of Gettysburg.

The convention began Thursday and concluded Saturday night.

## Pruitt Addresses Warrenton Lions

The Warrenton Lions Club held their regular meeting on January 28 at 7 p. m. at the Lions Den. Junior citizens from the area were the invited guests.

Lion President Jimmy Roberts called the meeting to order and Lion J. E. Rooker, Jr., was recognized on his 74th birthday.

Lion Monroe Gardner presented Professor Ray Pruitt of Louisburg College who gave a very interesting talk directed to the junior citizens.

Gene Rodgers thanked Gene Rodgers for a great job with the white cane drive. The club has raised over \$1,900.

Lion Hy Diamond won the pot of gold. Being no more business, the meeting was adjourned.

# Former Governor Died In Debtors Prison

By SARA W. HODGKINS  
Gov. Benjamin Smith died Feb. 10, 1826. A short obituary notice in the "Raleigh Register" for Tuesday, Feb. 14, 1826 reads: "Died: at Smithville, Brunswick County, Gen. Benjamin Smith, formerly governor of this state."

Further reading in the N. C. Archives reveals that Governor Smith died in prison for debt. An immediate question comes to mind: Why was Governor Smith jailed for debt almost half a century after the 1776 N. C. Constitution provided (Article 39) "that the Person of a Debtor, where there is not a strong Presumption of Fraud shall not be confined in Prison after delivering up, bona fide, all his Estate, real and personal for the use of his creditors in such Manner as shall be hereafter regulated by Law."

Benjamin Smith, distinguished Revolutionary soldier, first benefactor of the new University of North Carolina, general of the militia and state senator for many years, was elected governor in 1810. The man who was a descendant of prominent South Carolina Smiths, who served as aide-de-camp to Gen. George Washington, was at one time owner of the famous Orton

Plantation. Named for him was a town, Smithville (now Southport), an island (now Baldhead) and a hall at the state university, Smith Hall (now the Playmakers Theater). But he died in prison because of his debts.

The story of imprisonment for debt is a long one, beginning with English statutes from 1285. A legislative act appears in colonial statutes in 1669 when North Carolina became a haven of sorts for debtors. The law ruled that debtors coming into North Carolina could not be sued for debts for a period of five years after their arrival.

In 1773 an act allowed a person charged with debt, after 20 days "in close prison" and an oath to two justices that he "hath not the worth of 40 shillings sterling money in any worldly substance...over and besides his wearing apparel, working tools and arms for muster..." and that he had not "secretly conveyed away his property" to be released. He could not be jailed again for the same debt, but any property he later acquired might be seized until the full amount of the debt had been satisfied.

Governor Smith, a man described as possessing "not only wealth but fine talents and high social station...well educated..." also possessed a quick temper. This temper led him into several duels, one of which left a lead bullet in his hip from which he suffered the rest of his life.

After the depression of 1819, Governor Smith met with financial reverse after reverse. At that time, the state allowed a person to be imprisoned upon the complaint of a creditor. It so happened that several of Smith's creditors pressed him for payment at one time and would not hear his pleas for more time to pay what he agreed were "honest debts." Smith went to jail.

Tradition says that a short time after he was placed in prison, he was taken with a short, but violent illness and died in only a few hours. At that time, creditors could lay claim even to the body of the deceased to satisfy debts. However, if burial could be carried out immediately, the creditor could not remove the body from the ground.

Governor Smith's close friends, notified immediately of the death, made plans to bury him at once. At midnight, they secretly removed the body from the house and buried it in the woods near Smithville "with only the flickering gleam from pine-wood torches to furnish sufficient light to dig the grave."

Several years later, the remains were reinterred at old St. Phillips Church at Brunswick to comply with Smith's

often expressed wish to be buried near Orton Plantation, his former home.

As the grave was opened, some expressed doubt that it was the body of Smith, since it was an unmarked site in the woods, but most were fully convinced when the lead bullet from the duel of many years before was found in the ashes. Friends placed a marble slab over the new grave, inscribed "Benjamin Smith, once governor of North Carolina."

Nearly 50 years later, a Civil War shell destroyed the marble slab, but spared the nearby walls of the church.

About the same time he was governor, Smith served as master of the grand lodge of Masons, and nearly a century after his death, that fraternity added a monument to the grave.

Through the years, various

laws were passed pertaining to imprisonment for debt. However, debtors continued to be imprisoned throughout the first half of the 19th century, until 1868 when the new Constitution of North Carolina abolished the practice except for fraud. During these years, bankruptcy procedures were available, but terms were harsh and few filed.

So, the governor who was elected 15 times to the Senate of North Carolina, gave to the then penniless state university the 20,000 acres of Tennessee land he had received for his service in the Revolution, who had urged a penitentiary system for the state and advocated public schooling "within reach of every child," spent his last hours in prison because his creditors found his word to pay was not good enough.



REP. J.T. CHURCH      REP. T.W. "TOM" ELLIS      REP. WILLIAM T. WATKINS

## OPINION POLL — 13th DISTRICT CASWELL, GRANVILLE, PERSON, VANCE AND WARREN COUNTIES

We, your representatives from the 13th District, would like to know your true feelings in regard to some of the important issues that are to be considered by the 1977 Legislature. It would be most helpful and we would appreciate it if you would take the time to complete the following questionnaire, along with your comments and suggestions, and mail to Box 7169, State Legislative Building, Raleigh, North Carolina 27611.

Thank you for helping us to represent you.

Gratefully yours,  
REP. JOHN T. CHURCH  
REP. T. W. "TOM" ELLIS  
REP. WILLIAM T. WATKINS

1. Do you favor capital punishment?  
YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ UNDECIDED \_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you favor the Equal Rights Amendment?  
YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ UNDECIDED \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you favor changing the North Carolina Constitution:
  - A. Do you favor the Governor and Lieutenant Governor succeeding themselves?  
YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ UNDECIDED \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Do you favor two four-year terms?  
YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ UNDECIDED \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Do you favor one six-year term?  
YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ UNDECIDED \_\_\_\_\_
  - D. Do you favor no change?  
YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ UNDECIDED \_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you favor liquor by the drink?  
YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ UNDECIDED \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
STREET: \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY: \_\_\_\_\_

Please clip and mail to:  
Box 7169  
State Legislative Building  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27611

## Revival Services Begin

Evangelist J. D. Ramkisson, who resisted his parents' pressures to become a Hindu priest and instead converted to Christianity when he was 16, is the guest evangelist during a series of revival services which began last night at the Church of God at 512 S. Main St. in Warrenton.

The Rev. Mr. Ramkisson, a resident of Trinidad, is preaching nightly through Feb. 13, at 7:30 o'clock.

The pastor of the Church of God, the Rev. Samuel Z. Harris, said the public is invited to the revival.



RAMKISSOON

## Mrs. Davis Attends Directors Meet

Mrs. Mabel H. Davis attended the North Carolina Mental Health Association's Board of Directors Meeting at the Hilton Inn-Raleigh on January 28 and 29. She served on several committees, and has consented to becoming a member of the Long Range

Planning-Goals-Priorities committee.

The Legislative breakfast honored guests included the Governor, James B. Hunt, Jr., the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House, and many other members of the Legislature.

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