

Highly Respected Citizen Of County Dies At Age Of 83

Last Rites For Mrs. Martha Peel Held In Bear Grass Yesterday Afternoon

Mrs. Martha Godwin Peel, highly respected county citizen, died at her home in Bear Grass Township Wednesday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock from a stroke of paralysis suffered the Sunday evening before. Eighty-three years old the 22nd of last month, Mrs. Peel was unusually alert until about a year ago when she experienced declining health. However, she remained fairly active most of the time right up until her last illness. Attending a special mother's day dinner with her children, Mrs. Peel appeared unusually bright last Sunday. She apparently enjoyed the event greatly, and rejoiced in the family gathering.

The daughter of the late William and Sallie A. Godwin, Mrs. Peel was born in this county near here. Her father, shortly after moving from Hertford County to teach in the early schools of this county, married Miss Sally Ann Roberson, and located near Williamston. When the armies of the north invaded the country, Mrs. Peel then a little girl sought refuge with members of her family along Albemarle Sound. Her young mind impressed by the events of that early day, Mrs. Peel ever remained loyal to the South, developing into a typical Southern woman who commanded the friendship and held the love and esteem of everyone.

In 1876 she was married to Jesse Biggs Peel, the event marking the beginning of a devotion that grew for her family as the years past. She made her life secondary to the welfare and happiness of her family, and no mother could have held a great devotion of her loved ones that they held by her.

In 1917 she joined the Primitive Baptist church with her husband at Bear Grass, and in the years that followed she was an obedient follower of that faith. Her life was marked by its friendliness, and there was a liberal understanding for the rights and feelings of others. Her daily walk through life exemplified the finer ideals, and in the kindly and thoughtful acts done for others she found a great happiness. Mrs. Peel was appreciative of the opportunities of life and seemed to enjoy life itself so much.

Following the death of her husband on September 4, 1918, Mrs. Peel continued to make her home on the old Peel plantation, but always interested in the welfare of her children and grandchildren she often visited with them until about a year ago when her health began to fail and she returned to the old home to spend the remainder of her days.

She is survived by the following children, Messrs. Herbert D., J. Lawrence, Ben F., W. G. and Oscar H. Peel, all of this county, and Mrs. Ollie Nelson and Mrs. Sallie Coltrain, also of this county. She leaves eighteen grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Mrs. Peel was the last member of her immediate family, a brother, Ben F. Godwin, for a number of years mayor of Williamston, preceding her to the grave a few years ago.

Funeral services were conducted at the late home yesterday afternoon at 3 o'clock by Elders B. S. Cowin and A. B. Ayers, of the Primitive Baptist church, assisted by Rev. J. H. Smith, pastor of the local Baptist church. Interment was in the family plot near the old home in Bear Township.

Active pallbearers were Messrs. Archie Peel, Herbert Peel, Charles Peel, Edwin Peel, Jesse Coltrain, of Rocky Mount, Alfred Bowen, of Suffolk, Alex Thigpen, Ralph Nelson, of Raleigh and Hugh Roberson, of Oak City.

Honorary pallbearers were Messrs. Vernon Lewis, Charles Godwin, C. D. Carstarphen, Dred Darden, Garland Barnhill, J. E. Pope and G. A. Peel.

Among those from out-of-town attending the last rites were, Misses Rachel, Sarah, Clara and Dorothy Godwin, and Messrs. Ben and Will Godwin and Mrs. Clara Godwin, of Tarboro; Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Bowen of Suffolk; Mr. and Mrs. Lomar Peel and John Leggett, of Plymouth; Mr. and Mrs. State Peel, of Belhaven; Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Godwin, of Farmville; Mrs. Grover C. Godwin, of Sanatorium, and Mr. and Mrs. James Gatling, of Windsor.

Work Started On Rural Electric Line Extension

Construction work was started on a rural electric extension line in Griffins Township this morning by forces of the Virginia Electric and Power Company. Branching off the Farm Life extension at the home of Miles Lilley, the two and one-half line will reach to the Arthur Revels home, serving ten customers in between the two points.

Work will be completed by next Wednesday when the line will be made ready for use, Bill Glover, construction engineer for the company, said this morning.

Plans are being considered for extending the line an additional two miles or more to serve about the same number of customers.

Public Urged to Participate In Campaign Against Typhoid

On the eve of another campaign to reduce the number of typhoid fever cases to an absolute minimum, county health forces are appealing to the general public for a strong cooperation in making the drive a success.

Where the county once had scores of cases of typhoid and numerous resulting deaths annually, the fever has been brought almost under control, health records showing only three cases of the fever in the county last year. For about the first time in many years, no deaths were attributable to typhoid fever in the county.

While conditions, inviting to typhoid have been improved to some extent, it is entirely possible for the fever to flare up again under existing conditions. Immunization is the only sure way to eradicate the fever, and the public is urged to visit the nearest vaccination point during the campaign.

During the first four weeks, the campaign will be centered in the lower half of the county. Following a two weeks' interval, the campaign will be carried into the other half

RENEWS HOPE

Hope, abandoned for the execution of a \$122,000 Public Works Administration improvement program here a few months ago, has been renewed, local officials stating this week that there is still a possibility of promoting the street-sewer-water project.

Following a proposal of Senator Meade to appropriate a half billion dollars to complete those PWA projects proposed but not included in the last program, the application for a \$52,000 grant and \$72,000 loan to the town is again being considered, it was learned.

If the half billion dollar appropriation is made by the congress, it is believed that the proposed project here can be included and work started within a short time.

Tag Day Proves Very Successful

Tag Day, Wednesday, May 17th, sponsored by the Junior Woman's club for the benefit of the library fund, proved to be quite a success. Total receipts realized from the sale of tags amounted to \$49.74, with the cash awards for the girl scout selling the most tags going to Ann Meador and to the boy scout, J. B. Taylor. Faye Gurganus and Della Jane Moley were runners-up for second and third places respectively for the girls, with John Goff and Collins Peele runners-up for the boys.

Much credit for the success of the project is due to the untiring efforts of the boy and girl scouts, who worked the entire day.

Mrs. Jim Cook, chairman of the project, announced that the money gained from this sale will be used to buy books suitable for the boys and girls of the scout age.

Strike Continues To Hold Mill Idle

Closed a week ago last Monday by a strike in the plant of the Kieckhefer Company in Delair, N. J., the plant of the North Carolina Pulp Company continues idle in this county, late reports from an authoritative source indicating that no definite agreement has been reached and that a date for reopening the local mill cannot be determined.

The strike is said to involve no controversy over wages, that the strike was ordered to gain recognition for various locals representing the American Federation of Labor.

A meeting was scheduled in the New Jersey town early this week, but one of the plant owners was said to have been in this section and no meeting was held as far as it could be learned here. Another meeting was scheduled to have been held in New Jersey yesterday, but it could not be learned if an agreement was reached.

The closing of the plant in this county is affecting about 750 families, about one-half of whom are employees of the company. The others are employed in the woods, the combined groups receiving about \$15,000 weekly under normal operating conditions.

Several Marriage Licenses Issued In Past Few Days

Reduced to an almost negligible number following the passage of the health laws governing the issuance of marriage laws, the number of licenses is beginning to show a slight increase at the bureau in this county. Several licenses have been issued during the past few days, including one to Charlie Beacham and Daisy Bullock, both of this county, and one to James Milton Mizelle, of Jamesville and Lillian Riddick, of Washington County.

Alfred Pettiford, Victim Of Knife Attack Succumbs

Booker T. Williams, Assailant, Evades Strong Arm Of Local Law

Savagely attacked by Booker T. Williams in Ward's Store on East Main Street here on Sunday night, April 30, Alfred "Preacher" Pettiford, colored man, died in a Washington hospital early Wednesday morning of this week. Stabbed twice in the head with a pocket knife, Pettiford was paralyzed, and when doctors examined him soon after the attack they expressed the opinion that death was only a matter of a few days or weeks.

Pettiford, an employee of the Saunders and Cox lumber mill here, was said to have been dancing with his girl friend when Williams slipped up behind him and without warning stabbed him in the head twice. The first blow did not penetrate the skull, but on the second blow Williams drove the knife to the handle in the man's head, Pettiford falling to the floor.

Reaching the scene of the attack soon after it took place, officers were unable to establish the identity of the attacker at first and when they did Williams was gone. After removing Pettiford to a doctor's office for treatment, the officers returned to the scene of the attack and finally learned from James Henry Hill, a boy, who wielded the knife. Friends of Williams refused to reveal his identity and no accurate account of the attack could be had. The young boy who talked was later attacked by Annie Duncan, sister of Williams and she was carried into court for the attack and after she cursed and threatened the boy's father, Henry Hill.

Unable to get any cooperation from any of the witnesses to the attack, officers have met with one obstacle after another in their search for Williams. They have traveled into two counties and investigated numerous clues that were proved unfounded.

"It is characteristic of local colored people to feign ignorance of a crime that is enacted even before their very eyes, and it is very seldom that any of the race will cooperate with the law in running down a criminal or in prosecuting a case," Chief of Police W. B. Daniel commented after members of the local police force and the sheriff had failed to find the murderer.

The Pettiford murder is the second here within about one year in which the murderer escaped.

Short Session Of County Court Is Held Last Monday

Only Three Cases Called By Judge Herbert O. Peel During Period

The summer slump, starting possibly a little earlier than usual, tightened its hold on the Martin County Recorder's court when Judge H. O. Peel convened the tribunal in regular session. Short dockets are the order, as a general rule, in June, July and a part of August, and seldom do the case counts get as low as three in May or any other month except in the summer time. It is reasoned that a return to the activities on the farm and the resulting quiet times in the towns and villages has caused a slump in general crime activities.

Judge Peel and Solicitor D. E. Johnson completed their work last Monday in short order, the records showing only three cases were called.

Leamon James, young colored fellow who fell into the hands of the law in the Free Union section of Griffins Township last Friday afternoon, was sentenced to the roads for a period of six months. He pleaded guilty of violating the liquor laws. James, walking along the country road in an intoxicated condition, stumbled into the hands of the law with seven and one-half pints of liquor on his person. Accepting a lift from the officers, James was riding to the county jail before he recognized Special Enforcement Officer J. H. Roebuck and Deputy Bill Hailsh.

Albert Sparrow, charged with a knife attack several weeks ago on the person of C. B. Roberson, was adjudged guilty, the court directing him to pay \$25 to the prosecuting witness' doctor in addition to a fine of \$25 and the payment of the cost. Scores of stitches were required to close the gashes made in the attack on Roberson which took place on Roanoke River.

The case charging William Ward with drunken driving was continued under prayer for judgment until the third Monday in August.

Officers Destroy Four Liquor Plants

After a period of little activity in their department, liquor law enforcement officers swung into action this week and wrecked four liquor plants in the county. However, reports from the field indicate that there is little progress being made by the illicit manufacturers in the county at the present time.

Two of the plants were wrecked in the Free Union section of Jamesville Township last Tuesday. About 900 gallons of beer was poured out, the officers confiscating a 50-gallon capacity copper kettle. The still had been removed from the other plant.

On Wednesday, the officers captured a 40-gallon capacity copper kettle near the Ball Gray farm in the same township and poured out about 200 gallons of beer.

In Bear Grass Township yesterday the officers captured a copper kettle of about 100-gallon capacity and poured out 200 gallons of beer.

Special Officer J. H. Roebuck and Deputy Roy Peel made the raids.

Reviews Forestry Project In The County This Week

Bill Barker, assistant extension forester of State College, was in the county this week checking a forestry project this is being carried on in Griffins Township by B. F. Lilley, jr. The club boy's project there is one of only one of a few that are under observation in the county at the present time.

Barker's findings were not released during his visit in the county.

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Rural Employment Reaches High Peak

A high point in farm employment was reported a few days ago when planting time arrived throughout the agricultural belt. A recent estimate of the United States Department of Agriculture placed the number of those employed on the farms at 11,362,000. Last year about the same number of workers was busily engaged in farm work.

The estimate was based apparently on surveys made just prior to the big drive by farmers to get their tobacco transplanted. Reports state that numbers of men and women have been called from the unemployed ranks of semi-industrial workers to the tobacco fields. In some instances unexperience labor was placed on the machines used in transplanting the crop.

Reliable reports maintain that 200 persons were counted at a single tobacco bed in the county this week. The bed, said to have held enough plants for possibly 100 acres, had been abandoned by the owner, and the '49 gold rush could not have been more crowded than the little spot in Poplar Point Township after news of the "strike" had been broadcast in that and neighboring sections.

Unemployed in the agricultural ranks was reduced to a minimum when farmers who had planned to plant no tobacco changed their minds and then found it necessary to call in outside help to rush arrangements to completion at the last minute.

Their fields bulging with tobacco, farmers over the bright belt can hardly wait to start plowing and fertilizing the golden weed, reports from various sections in three counties state.

Completing the transplanting work in the county this week, Martin farmers started sharing their surplus plants by the tens of thousands with their Bertie neighbors, many of whom are said to be going into the tobacco business for the first time. It was estimated that 200 outsiders were pulling plants from a single bed in the county at one time this week.

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Beer Retailers About Taxed Out of Business in County

The federal, state, county and municipal governments with their combined power to raise revenue have just about taxed beer retailers out of business in this county, preliminary reports from the sale of renewal licenses indicating that possibly twenty or twenty-five dealers will stop handling the beverage during the next fiscal year.

Faced with a combined tax of \$65, small retailers are finding it prohibitive to handle beer, the accumulative profits during a year failing in some instances to offset the cost and combined taxes. While the decreased number of dealers is likely to effect a decrease in beer sales, it is possible that the beer drinkers will switch to soft drinks and possibly a few will turn to hard liquors to quench their thirst or to get their "kicks".

During the past fiscal year, Martin County collected \$1,162,500 in beer taxes. An additional \$125 was col-

Farm Conditions Are Better Under The FSA

Note Improvement In This County In Recent Years

Nearly 300 Farmers Aided In This County, Recent Survey Shows

Results of a nation-wide survey received from Washington by County FSA Supervisor D. G. Modlin, of Williamston, show that farmers farming under the rehabilitation program of the Farm Security Administration are gaining in net worth repaying their debts and making a better living.

The survey which included progress figures from the 263 FSA borrowers in Martin and Edgecombe counties, as well as from other counties throughout the nation showed that 232,000 typical farm families are worth \$61,000,000 more now than they were worth when they came on the FSA program. The average per family gain in net worth—over and above all debts—was \$265.

Farmers have already paid back \$77,000,000 out of a total loaned of \$261,000,000, although much of the money loaned will not be due for four or five years.

The survey further showed FSA farmers are now growing three times as much food for home use as they produced before they came on the program. Fruits and vegetables canned increased 331 per cent; milk 370 per cent; eggs 275 per cent, and meat 344 per cent. A substantial increase was noted in farming equipment, and the average borrower now has two horses where he formerly had only one. There was also a considerable increase in acreage, per family, in food and feed crops.

A total of \$4,500,000 in back taxes was paid to counties and other political subdivisions as a result of the friendly adjustment of debts for the 100,000 farmers.

The first of the year Mr. Modlin and other county supervisors furnished data for the Washington office taken from county records and farm plans. The figures are average for the county.

Commenting on the progress made Secretary of Agriculture Wallace said the survey shows that FSA farmers are "gaining strength to pull themselves higher up the economic ladder, instead of slipping further down." He said the figures prove conclusively the economic as well as the social wisdom of the FSA program.

"But there is still much to be done," County Supervisor Modlin pointed out. "On an average FSA farmers have made much progress, but most of them have not yet reached the top. Many still are near the bottom of the ladder."

"The Farm Security Administration," he explained, is not only helping its borrowers to do better farming but it is also helping them to improve the soil and build up their farms. And when it comes to building up a farm, that often is a slow process."

The survey shows that 22 per cent still lacked adequate beds; 16 per cent had inadequate stoves; 34 per cent lacked adequate medical attention; 22 per cent did not have protected water supplies; 38 per cent lived in unscrubbed houses; and 58 per cent of the families still were without sanitary toilets.

"In some cases conditions are such that a long time will be required to show marked improvement, but by and large FSA families show a willingness to try and the average progress they are making is very encouraging," Mr. Modlin said.

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lected by the county from wine dealers. Licenses were issued to forty-seven beer and five wine dealers. In addition to the \$1,162,500 license fees, the forty-seven beer dealers were required to pay six cents a crate which amount represented a quarter of a cent crown tax. A similar amount was collected jointly by the federal and state governments, and the town collected \$15 from each dealer.

Starting the sale of the new fiscal year licenses a few days ago, Sheriff C. B. Roebuck stated that eight or ten had advised him they would not handle beer during the new fiscal year. Based on these reports present indications are that possibly twenty or more beer retailers will quit handling the light beverage. Sheriff Roebuck stated as his opinion yesterday that revenue to the county from the sale of beer licenses will hardly exceed \$600 during the new fiscal year.

Farm Conditions Are Better Under The FSA

MORE CHECKS

Although they are coming in rather slowly in late days, soil conservation checks are still being distributed to those Martin County farmers who participated in the farm program last season. Approximately \$1,000 was distributed among about a dozen farmers this week, bringing the total payments up to \$133,324.09 for the season.

These payments, representing 1,138 applications, average about \$117. It is estimated that the applications of 150 farmers are still pending and that when they are finally approved, the total conservation payments in this county will exceed \$150,000.

Start Action For Divorce In County

Charged with bigamy, Mrs. Effie Cook immediately started an action for an absolute divorce when she appeared in the courts here this week to answer the charge at a preliminary hearing held before Justice Hassell.

Marrying a second time apparently in good faith with the understanding that her first husband had produced a divorce, Mrs. Cook, upon learning that no such action had been taken, immediately brought suit against Grocer Cook, Roanoke Rapids man, for an absolute divorce.

In the complaint filed in the superior court of this county last Tuesday, Mrs. Cook alleges cruelty. Pointing out that the couple were married in April, 1935, the complaint alleges the defendant "was cruel to her, abused her, choked her and greatly injured and damaged her to the extent of endangering her life."

It was also pointed out in the complaint that several months after their separation, plaintiff received a letter from Cook stating that he had obtained a divorce, that she just recently learned he had "lied" to her.

The opinion was expressed here that Cook wanted a divorce for himself, that by swearing out a warrant charging her with bigamy, Mrs. Cook, who later married Eli Roberson, of this county, would apply for a divorce and finance the cost of the action and save him the expense.

Plan Vote On Grading Tobacco At Greenville

Government tobacco grading on the Greenville market next season will likely be determined by a vote of the market's patrons this summer, according to unofficial information received here this week. Martin County farmers who sold on the Greenville market last season will be eligible to participate in the referendum, it is understood.

The government grading service, held valid by the supreme court was available on several markets in this State last year.

Materials Not Available For Road, Reports State

The fate of the proposed Old Mill Inn-Farm Life road project again bobbed up in the uncertain column today when it was learned that materials for the construction of the road had not been made available. Later reports received this afternoon indicated that it would be possible to go ahead with the road, that highway authorities had been asked to include the project in the next contract letting to be held next Tuesday.

GUEST OF MISS BARBER

Miss Ruby Herman, of Goldston, is the guest of Miss Ernestine Barber today.

Plenty Of Money For Slot Machine In North Carolina

Craven County Said to Feed \$2,000 into Machines Almost Daily

There isn't enough money to pay the tax bill, the fellows who hold to the business pulse of the nation declare. Current bills cannot be met, and quietness surrounds the business front generally. Accompanying these reports comes some startling news on the slot machine front in this State.

Legalized by the last legislature, the slot machine is flooding the State, recognized reports coming out of Craven County this week stating that more than 1,000 slot machines of nearly all types had been "planted" there and that it was estimated more than \$2,000 in nickels were being fed into the hungry slots daily. The estimates were advanced following a survey by Harlowe C. Waldrop, editor of the Times, New Bern, newspaper.

No machines have been licensed in this county, and it is believed that the county commissioners are not inclined to permit the operation of the machines within Martin boundaries. No requests for licenses have been made by the machine owners, and a definite stand by the commissioners on the operation of the machines cannot be determined until the problem is dumped into their laps.

In connection with the return of the slot machine, the following story came out of Raleigh yesterday. Thousands of illegal slot and pinboard machines are being operated in North Carolina and many of them will be illegal after June 1, when the new State law regarding the devices becomes effective, Revenue Commissioner A. J. Maxwell said yesterday.

"The State certainly ought not to be subjected to wide-open gambling devices in all sections of the State," Commissioner Maxwell said, "but it is up to local enforcement officers to prevent that."

The commissioner commented on prevalence of the devices while disclosing the rigid regulations worked out for licensing machines legalized by the 1939 legislature. The legislature provided that machines played for amusement only may be licensed while all devices of that type were banned by the Flannagan act of 1937. Since its passage, North Carolina has not licensed any such machines.

Mr. Maxwell reiterated that no pinboard or slot machine license would be issued by the State until after June 1, when the new law becomes effective. Until that time, machines which will be legal under the new law are operated illegally.

Even after June 1, he said, machines which pay off in merchandise, tokens or money still will be illegal and the State will not license them.

The question of which machines are gambling devices and which are not will plague the revenue department and the attorney general's department for some time to come. The solicitor of a county court asked a ruling yesterday on whether a pinboard machine allowing free games to persons making certain high scores could be called a gambling device.

Assistant Attorney General Robert H. Wettach said that such a machine violated the spirit of the law and might violate the letter of the law.

"We're doubtful about it," he said. "The court will have to rule on the legality. I told the solicitor I'd like to see him prosecute the case."

Assistant Attorney General Wade Bruton said no device was legal until licensed by the revenue department and that the department had been advised to issue no licenses until June 1.

Commissioner Maxwell said no license will be issued directly to operators of the machines. Each application for license must be accompanied by a full description of the device, its serial number and where it is to be located.

Revenue department officials will study each application to determine whether the device involved is legal and if it is held to be so, the license will be mailed to a revenue department field deputy. He will then inspect the machine and if he finds it to be of a legal type, will stick the license to the machine with the glue of a type which will prevent removal of the license to another machine.

Commissioner Maxwell said each license will bear the notation that it is not valid for any machine which operates in violation of the law. That notation, he said, is designed to prevent manufacturers from installing new works inside the case of a machine which bears a license.

"We are trying to handle this in a way that will leave us in the clear," he said.

All field deputies will come to Raleigh May 29 and 30 for a discussion of revenue law changes made by the last legislature. Commissioner Maxwell smilingly said he imagined discussion of licensing slot and pinboard machines would occupy a great deal of the conference time.

Miss Allie Harden, Mrs. Clinton House and son, John Clinton, of Robersonville, and Mr. Fred Law, of Greenville, were the guests of friends here last night.