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Few things are really lasting, yet Time makes little change in those good old western movies, filmed on a back-lot range. Each cowboy has a pair of guns that need re-loading never—they just go on a-shooting forever and forever.

The stage coach always runs away, along a mountain trail, and trapped inside is some poor gal—hollering and so pale. Our hero, in the nick of time, comes riding up like mad, and stops them stage-coach horses, and everybody's glad.

All westerns have their barroom fights, a balcony is near from which the hero takes a leap and grabs the chandelier. He kicks six rustlers in the jaw, then drops to the floor, where he starts his fists to flying and whips a dozen more.

Then a nasty doggone mean man, in that corner over there, comes rushing. Two Gun Willie and smacks him with a chair. He then picks up a table, and hits poor Will again. He chucks a whiskey bottle that sails through a window pane.

But Willie weathers everything, justice will prevail, and in the end he gets the gal, the rustlers go to jail. Such is the way of westerns, yet everywhere you go, you'll find that grown folks more than kids are thrilling to them so.

"Wagon Train" and "Gun Smoke" are a pretty certain bet to keep that man around the house—right by the TV set. And of course, "Have Gun Will Travel" is a cinch to hold him home, in fact most any western kills the plans he had to roam.

These new stars ain't much different, in acting out their part, from guys like Dustin Farnum, Tom Mix or old Bill Hart. The guns today look just as big, the horses run as fast. The villains have them sneaky scowls we hated in the past. It's true few things are lasting, the world succumbs to change, but a cowboy's still a cowboy as he rides his movie range.

The above rhymed lines are rather corny, but they do point up the overwhelming popularity that the horse operas are enjoying all over the land. It's a national craze, and will continue as long as countless millions clamor for such programs, and buy the sponsor's product.

If ratings mean anything—and the television industry swears by them—New Bernians are about on a par with other Americans when it comes to being enthusiastic over westerns. We might add that here as elsewhere many of the fans are people who would qualify for the highest bracket in anybody's intelligence test.

Strangely, the craze for westerns is comparatively new in every section of the country except the South. A few decades ago, movie producers accepted the fact that the only place you could sell a horse opera at any price was in seven Southern states.

However, it didn't cost much to make such pictures, and the demand in Dixie was so great that Hollywood studios recognized these films as their surest money makers. If you recall your own childhood, and those crowded Saturday matinees at New Bern theaters, you can appreciate this point of view.

In those days, we were laughed at below the Mason-Dixon line for being "backward" in our movie taste. Now, at this late date, it is quite clear that instead of being backward we were actually ahead of our time.

For better or for worse, Southern movie-goers were the first to discover that westerns are exciting entertainment, if you let yourself go. It just took those Yankees up North a good 40 years to wake up to the fact.

Maybe some of you are like us, you'd rather see something else. But we might as well face it, those horses and guns are here to stay



REALLY LIVING—Who wants to head for distant places, when there's fun to be had on the Neuse and Trent? New Bernians make no idle boast when they point with pride to

our coast country as the Land of Enchanting Waters. Nothing beats a cooling river on a sultry Summer day, and these local youngsters know it.—Photo by Billy Benners.

Judge Don Gilliam's Fairness Endeared Him to New Bern

It can be said without exaggeration that every New Bernian who knows Judge Don Gilliam of Tarboro was proud and happy this week when his portrait was unveiled to hang with honor in Eastern District Court at Raleigh.

Looking down from the bench and meting out justice in 15,000 Federal cases could hardly be counted on to make any mortal a beloved figure. Yet beloved the retired Tarboro jurist is, as few men are in public life.

If ever a human lived up fully to the admonishment of Rudyard Kipling to walk with kings nor lose the common touch, Gilliam qualifies. Perhaps his most admirable of many fine traits is the fact that his high position and great authority didn't tempt him into a state of aloofness. He met the lowly, the friendless, the foolish and the woefully ignorant on a level that all could understand and appreciate.

New Bern lawyers, court officials, defendants and witnesses, law enforcement officers and the press have been deeply impressed with his complete sense of fairness during his 15 years on the bench. It mattered not to Judge Gilliam whether a man was rich or poor, dumb or smart, he was dealt with impartially.

As a matter of fact, if the kindly jurist had a judicial failing it was his tendency to go easy on sentences that could have been much heavier. Aside from his sympathetic realization that human frailty is common to us all, he has always exhibited an abiding faith in rehabilitation.

At times no doubt his gentleness

has been exasperating to Federal officers, but in numerous instances the break he gave to a defendant has resulted in a grateful man going straight and becoming a useful

and respectable citizen.

Don Gilliam didn't covet the role of judge. On two occasions before becoming a Federal judge he declined appointment as a Superior

Court jurist. Finally, when Judge I. M. Meekins of Elizabeth City passed away in 1945, he was prevailed upon to accept appointment to the bench in Eastern District Federal court.

Gilliam was stepping into the shoes of as colorful a judge as ever presided in a Tar Heel courtroom. Not only had Meekins been able and emphatic, but as witty as a half dozen comedians bundled into one.

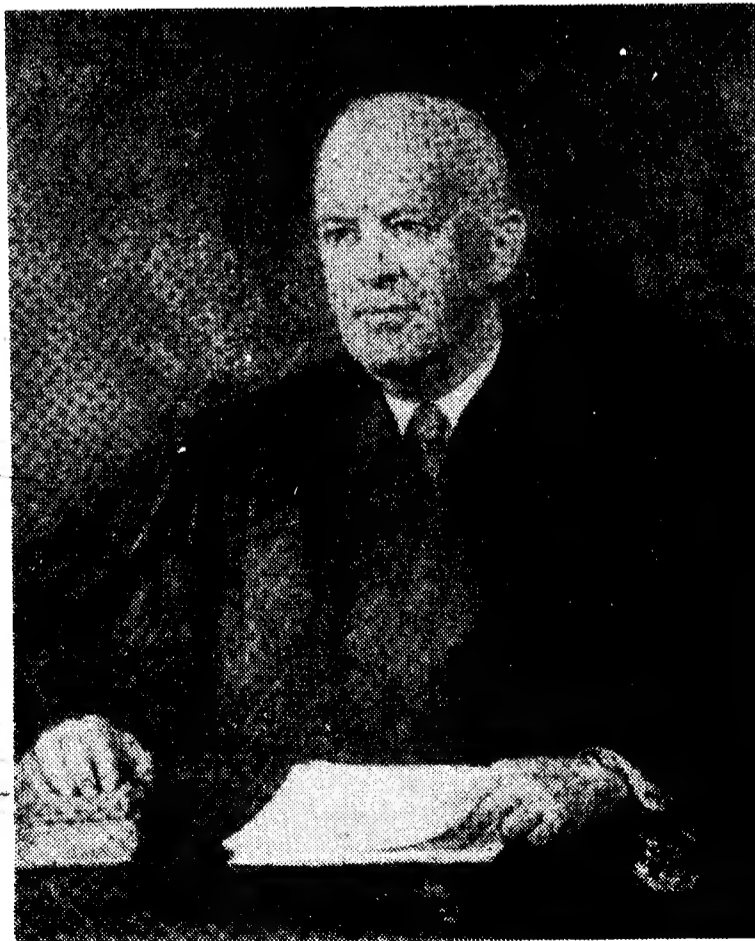
As a rule, the Elizabeth City judge was inclined to be somewhat caustic in his comments, and attorneys and defendants alike endeavored to tread lightly in his court. None, however, doubted his sagacity nor his sincerity.

He could see through a phony bit of testimony like a hungry tomcat peering at a caged canary. Likewise, he tolerated no shenanigans from lawyers, and was quick to squelch any Federal officer who appeared to have exceeded his authority in apprehending or interrogating an alleged lawbreaker.

To the surprise, perhaps, of many, Judge Gilliam proved to be colorful in his own right. Entirely without intent, his mild and almost fatherly attitude on the bench gave him a tremendous dignity. Indeed, few jurists in all the land have looked more "in place" as a judge.

And when it came to wit, his courtroom humor was priceless. Seldom did it carry the sting that some of his predecessor's barbs possessed. In some respects he compared with the tolerance and philosophy of the late Will Rogers, when it came to the inoffensiveness of his impromptu quips.

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DON GILLIAM