

## Leads all North Carolina Dailies in News and Circulation

# WILLIAMSTON

**Situated at the Head of Navigation on the Roanoke, It Occupies a Commanding Location For Commerce and Manufacturing**

**AN AGRICULTURAL AND TRADING CENTER**

**The Destined Metropolis of the Roanoke, the Seat of Industries and of Agriculture, Entering Upon a New Era of Progress and Development—Opportunities for the Investment of Capital, Advantages Offered to the Home Seeker—Pictures of Her Past and Present, Prophetic of Her Future—The Largest "Spot" Peanut Market in the World.**

BY EDWARD L. CONN.

Among the dominant towns of the rapidly growing East that are being metamorphosed into prosperous, thrifty cities, none presents more striking evidences of the transforming power of industry and judicious enterprise than Williamston, set upon a hill, the most beautiful town on the Roanoke river. It occupies an advantageous point for commerce, its industrial position is commanding, and as an agricultural center it is without a rival in this section. The population of the town is 1,500, but it will be multiplied in a few years.

Hawks, the North Carolina historian, relates the adventures of an expedition in 1585 from Sir Walter Raleigh's colony at Roanoke Island under the command of Sir Ralph Lane which ascended the Roanoke river, then bearing its original name of Morotoe, to explore the country and to search for gold. A landing was made where Williamston now stands, so that it was here that the soil of Martin was first pressed by the feet of the conquering race. It was many years thereafter before settlements were established by the white men. Emigrants from the Chowan and Perquimans precincts, coming across Albemarle Sound, located in Martin and the adjoining counties. Prior to the War of the Revolution many of the wealthy citizens of the town of Edenton and the county of Chowan owned large plantations on the Roanoke in Martin and Bertie counties, among them being Governor Johnson. Subsequently a considerable company of these men made their homes in Martin county. The annals of the Revolution are replete with accounts of the distinguishing services of these patriots. In both civil and military life their conduct was exemplary, and their actions are today

markedly low and will compare most favorably with that of the highlands of the Piedmont. The water is pure and is taken from near the surface out of open wells or through the drive pump process. The sand and soil form a free filter, giving the water a crystal clearness and purity. There is no sewerage system, but the town is well drained naturally. The business houses are lighted with acetylene gas and a plant is to be installed for lighting the homes and the streets.

### Agricultural Advantages.

Martin county contains an area of 500 square miles. The soil is generally light and especially adapted to the growth of peanuts, cotton, berries, grapes and truck, but in every section cotton and corn are successfully grown. There are no natural rock formations, one of the elements that farmers in parts of the country must battle against, and the cultivated lands are well and easily drained. The 68 square miles of swamps in the county are so situated as to make their drainage feasible and profitable. They form a vast field for successful development, being among the most fertile lands known to exist.

Martin produces as staple crops cotton, corn, peanuts, and tobacco, but hardly a crop that is cultivated in the State may not be seen here. The natural home of the grape is Martin county. Nearly all kinds of truck crops and fruit grow to perfection here. The county is awakening to the importance of producing enough meat, corn and hay for home supplies

and there is a movement among the farmers to raise Martin a corn selling center. The people formerly depended entirely on cotton and peanuts, farm land was in many cases exceedingly cheap and a burden to those where it was not especially adapted to the growth of cotton and peanuts. In most every instance where it is not especially adapted to these it is to the growth of tobacco and these people, when they had once acquired sufficient knowledge and experience to cultivate tobacco, began to appreciate the value of their land from the income derived from the growth of the yellow weed. Those sections that were at the greatest disadvantage before in not having suitable soils for cotton and peanuts are now Martin county's most prosperous sections.

One farmer last year raised 40 acres of tobacco with an average yield of 1,200 pounds to the acre and sold it at an average price of 12 1/2 cents per pound on the Williamston market. There is another instance of a farmer who grows four acres every year and makes an average of 1,000 pounds per acre that sells upon an average of 15 cents per pound. There are many advantages in the cultivation of tobacco in this section that are not enjoyed by other communities, especially in the Piedmont. It is easy to get a sufficient quantity of plants to start the crop and it is easily transplanted because the soil is easily handled, being of a loamy light nature with no rocks. This kind of soil makes tobacco easy to cultivate and its growth is very rapid; therefore not so long at the mercy of the cut worm it develops rapidly, which makes cultivation fast and soon complete. The farmers begin the housing about the middle of July, and begin selling by the first of August. The quantity produced depends largely upon the quantity and character of the fertilizer used and the skill exercised in cultivation. The method of housing the crop makes it easy to grade. The average farmer does not

carefully, I would say that no soil and no conditions are more favorable to the varieties of crops he would be able to grow here. He could arrange his rotations and labor so that he would be employed the year round in doing the necessary work to some crop at the required time.

Martin county has a great number of small farmers who are among the most prosperous of her citizens and who derive the greatest profit from their efforts. The peanut is especially adapted to cultivation by the small farmers because it is easily cultivated on suitable soil and is picked by machinery.

**The Tobacco Planter's Bonanza.** Williamston is located in one of the best bright tobacco belts in North Carolina, and produces more fine wrappers, cutters and export leaf than any other territory in the State. The soil of Martin county is especially adapted to the culture of fine tobacco. Nature has so endowed it with all the necessary soil, climate and seasons. It has a fine loamy sand soil with a clay foundation. The land is well and easily drained, and level, and one man and a team can tend as much tobacco here as two men and two teams can tend in Piedmont Carolina.

Williamston is surrounded by a well-to-do class of farmers, full of energy, kind and accommodating, honest, straightforward and progressive, who have made greatest progress in this section of the country, where the soil is better suited to the growth of tobacco. Since 1902 the progress of the farmers in Martin county has been remarkable. Land that was formerly worth \$4 an acre is now worth \$30, and this is but one instance that I cite which comes under my immediate observation, and although there are others yet the country is large and there are many good farms now for sale that can be improved and increased in value by the

have to exceed six grades and these grades almost invariably conform to the time of housing. The farmers house their tobacco by stripping the cured leaves off the stalk in the field; these leaves are stripped every week to ten days as they ripen until the whole crop is housed. This usually takes upon an average of four to six weeks. In this way grading is facilitated, because each stripping is practically a grade to itself and is thus kept together, handled in bulk together, bleached together and marketed together, whereas the old method in the Piedmont section was to cut the whole stalk and cure the whole stalk at one time, making every grade come in one bulk. Another advantage in this method of curing tobacco is that the farmer has a longer time to grade and if labor is short he can extend his grading through the whole year, beginning immediately after curing the first barn. Many small farmers take advantage of this and when the weather is bad, grade tobacco in their pack house with their families and every member of the family can do some part of the work.

### Tobacco Warehouses.

Williamston is the market for the tobacco of all this section and is well equipped for the handling of large crops. There are three warehouses, three large houses and a well equipped steam plant for redrying tobacco; and a hoghead factory, with excellent transportation facilities by boat lines and railroad.

The Williamston market is fortunate in having tobacco warehousemen who know how to get the best prices for their patrons, in that they know the crop, the market conditions and the value of the tobacco. This market has buyers from all the big manufacturers and jobbers of leaf tobacco, among which are the American,



RESIDENCE OF ELDER SYLVESTER HASSELL.

next year and the years to come the increases will be still greater.

### Miscellaneous Enterprises.

Besides the tobacco market enterprises Williamston has a Peanut factory, Woodard Cultivator Factory, a buggy and carriage factory, the Wicomico Lumber Company, the last being a new plant, the mill of which is soon to be erected; a cotton gin, three blacksmith shops, a bottling works, three livery stables, two hotels, a wholesale grocery store, two department stores, a hardware store five general supply stores, two drug stores, four retail grocery stores, a newspaper and job printing office, and two banks.

There are six physicians, six lawyers and one dentist in Williamston.

### Postal Statistics.

An incontrovertible proof of the growth of the town is shown in the following statistics from the Williams-

The money order business has more than doubled since 1904. The Enterprise, in 1904, was dispatched in three sacks, now it takes four. The Gospel Messenger, in 1904, used 10 sacks, now 18. In 1904 the postoffice made up two pouches for the freight train; local mail was sent to Parmele, North of Parmele, another pouch was used labeled Norfolk & Wilm., R. P. O. Tr. No. 192. The Sunday mail was sent to Wash. & Charles R. O. O. No. 32. Now there is a postal clerk on the train on Sundays.

There are four daily mails on week days, with a mail clerk in charge. The mail going North, South and West leaves at 8:28 a. m. and 4:31 p. m.

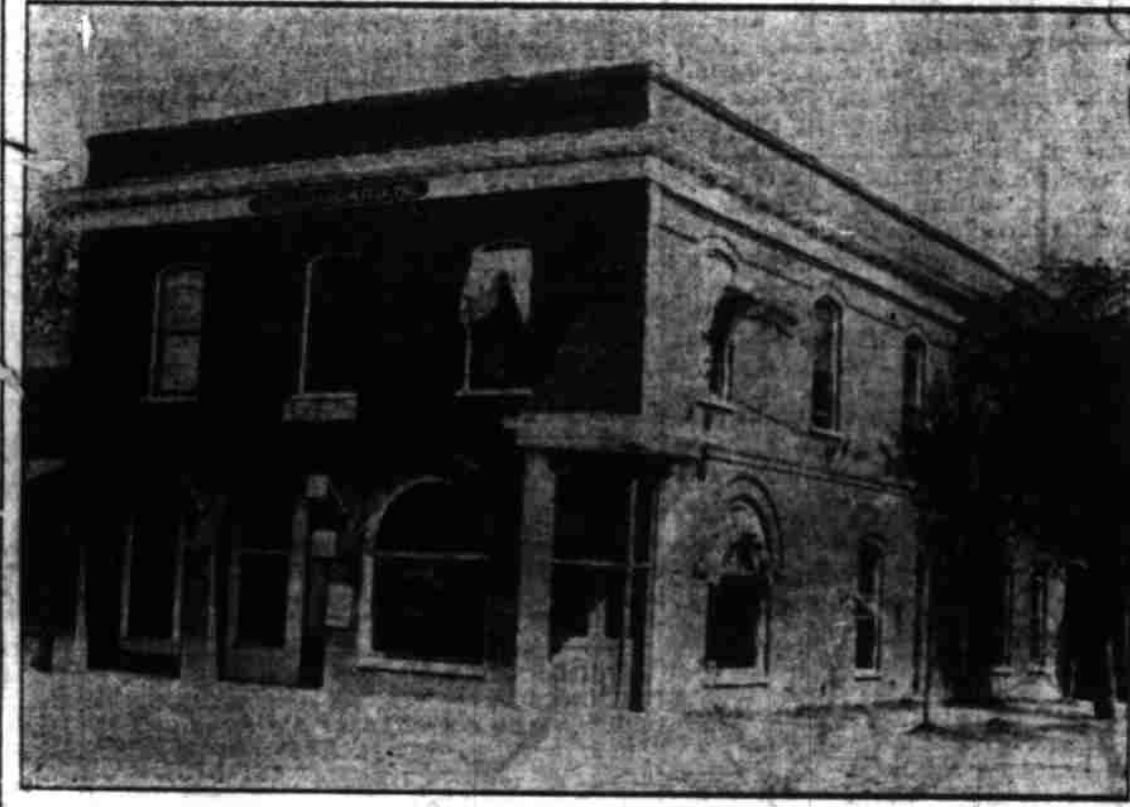
The mail going East leaves at 1:16 p. m. and 6:05 p. m. The mail leaves here at 1:16 p. m. eastbound over the Norfolk and Southern railway for Washington, New Bern, Beaufort, etc.

### Wholesale Trade.

Williamston as a distributor of goods for the wholesale and jobbers' trade has no superior east of Rocky Mount. Freight rates are as low as any town in the State and her transportation facilities are exceeded by none. Williamston has railroad and boat lines for all points North, South, East and West, the competition by transportation companies between the railroads and the boat lines being such that in any instance the freight rate is 50 per cent that of its neighboring towns, and in addition to the rate the service and schedule are convenient and inductive to this class of business.

### County Schools.

There are 70 schools in Martin county, of which 47 are white. The average term, rural, is 86 days. There are four special tax districts. The value of the rural school property in the county is \$21,000. The value of the school property created by special act of the legislature is \$10,000. The school tax is 18 cents and \$1.50 on the poll, exclusive of special tax districts. In the building of new school houses for the past two or three years the citizens and patrons have been generous enough to give, out of their own pockets, one-half and have not shortened their terms; \$4,600 expended in improving and building school houses last year, about \$2,000 of this amount was contributed by the various districts, and the money coming from private sources, and did not in any way affect the school terms. Three of the poorest districts in the county today are contributing one-half of the expense of a building, and the average school house will cost \$600, exclusive of the school ground. The school fund for last year exclusive of the special tax school districts was \$17,510.88. The number of white rural school teachers employed was 47, of those 13 have Normal training; 33 have had four years and over in experience; 7 of them have college diplomas. Ten teachers are employed in the city schools. There are two



THE BANK OF MARTIN COUNTY.



LOTUS CLUB'S RECEPTION ROOMS.

Imperial, Continental and a number of independent order and contract buyers. The warehouses are the Roanoke, Dixie and Farmers.

### Fruits and Grapes.

The soil and climate of no country is more suitable to the growth of fruit and grapes than that of Martin county. Trees grow rapidly and develop quickly and when properly protected from the insects bear bountifully and luxuriantly and no one traveling through this section can pass without observing the great number of fruit trees which are as profitable for the amount of energy and time devoted to them as any phase of agriculture. The grape is indigenous and grows wild and when cultivated is every phase of the Eden. Great quantities of wine are made from the Misch, the James, sepperrong and Concord grapes. Every farmer and every person who owns a home with space enough for a back yard has a grape vine. Large quantities of grapes are shipped annually in the uncured form, barreled to wineries in Norfolk and Virginia and some sections of the State. Some of the citizens make large quantities of wine either to sell locally to the retail trade or to ship. There is one firm which makes large quantities of wine and has in store over 9,000 gallons. It took a Maryland man to see the great profit afforded the citizens of this community to squeeze this plentiful grape into a very delightful wine. Any one interested in this business can get full information from Leggett & Barnes, of Williamston, who are familiar with every phase of the culture and crushing of the grape.

### Live Stock.

I have had much to say concerning the peanuts and its growth in this section, but no one who has not lived in this section can realize the vital connection between the prosperity of this community and the growth of the peanut. Every part of the peanut vine in all shape and form is an excellent feed for stock, for work animals and for fattening cattle. There are excellent pasture lands and there are many people who do not feed their stock at all, and some few only during the extreme cold weather of the winter. The reeds of the branches and the low grounds are green the year around. The grasses grow in abundance and stock living entirely on pastures remain in good condition and with a few peanut vines in the winter make excellent meats. The peanut left in the ground at the digging is the chief source of food for the purpose of fattening pork. Hogs thrive, grow and fatten more rapidly upon the peanut than any food that could be fed them. These conditions are inductive to stock raising and dairying and make meat cheaper.

same method, the proper application of skill in the growth of tobacco. In certain sections of the county, where the people formerly depended entirely on cotton and peanuts, farm land was in many cases exceedingly cheap and a burden to those where it was not especially adapted to the growth of cotton and peanuts. In most every instance where it is not especially adapted to these it is to the growth of tobacco and these people, when they had once acquired sufficient knowledge and experience to cultivate tobacco, began to appreciate the value of their land from the income derived from the growth of the yellow weed. Those sections that were at the greatest disadvantage before in not having suitable soils for cotton and peanuts are now Martin county's most prosperous sections.

One farmer last year raised 40 acres of tobacco with an average yield of 1,200 pounds to the acre and sold it at an average price of 12 1/2 cents per pound on the Williamston market. There is another instance of a farmer who grows four acres every year and makes an average of 1,000 pounds per acre that sells upon an average of 15 cents per pound. There are many advantages in the cultivation of tobacco in this section that are not enjoyed by other communities, especially in the Piedmont. It is easy to get a sufficient quantity of plants to start the crop and it is easily transplanted because the soil is easily handled, being of a loamy light nature with no rocks. This kind of soil makes tobacco easy to cultivate and its growth is very rapid; therefore not so long at the mercy of the cut worm it develops rapidly, which makes cultivation fast and soon complete. The farmers begin the housing about the middle of July, and begin selling by the first of August. The quantity produced depends largely upon the quantity and character of the fertilizer used and the skill exercised in cultivation. The method of housing the crop makes it easy to grade. The average farmer does not

carefully, I would say that no soil and no conditions are more favorable to the varieties of crops he would be able to grow here. He could arrange his rotations and labor so that he would be employed the year round in doing the necessary work to some crop at the required time.

Martin county has a great number of small farmers who are among the most prosperous of her citizens and who derive the greatest profit from their efforts. The peanut is especially adapted to cultivation by the small farmers because it is easily cultivated on suitable soil and is picked by machinery.

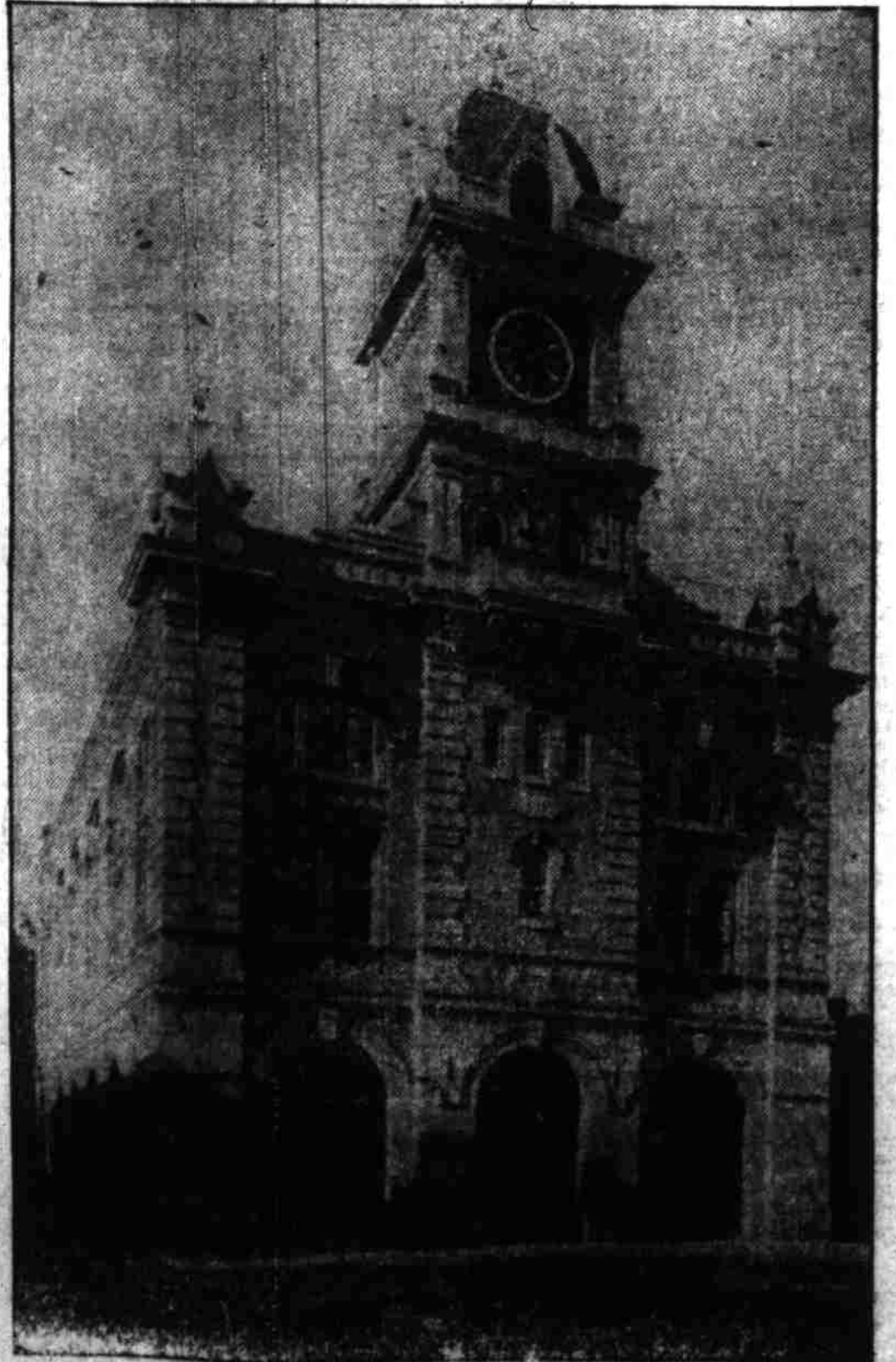
Williamston is located in one of the best bright tobacco belts in North Carolina, and produces more fine wrappers, cutters and export leaf than any other territory in the State. The soil of Martin county is especially adapted to the culture of fine tobacco. Nature has so endowed it with all the necessary soil, climate and seasons. It has a fine loamy sand soil with a clay foundation. The land is well and easily drained, and level, and one man and a team can tend as much tobacco here as two men and two teams can tend in Piedmont Carolina.

Williamston is surrounded by a well-to-do class of farmers, full of energy, kind and accommodating, honest, straightforward and progressive, who have made greatest progress in this section of the country, where the soil is better suited to the growth of tobacco. Since 1902 the progress of the farmers in Martin county has been remarkable. Land that was formerly worth \$4 an acre is now worth \$30, and this is but one instance that I cite which comes under my immediate observation, and although there are others yet the country is large and there are many good farms now for sale that can be improved and increased in value by the

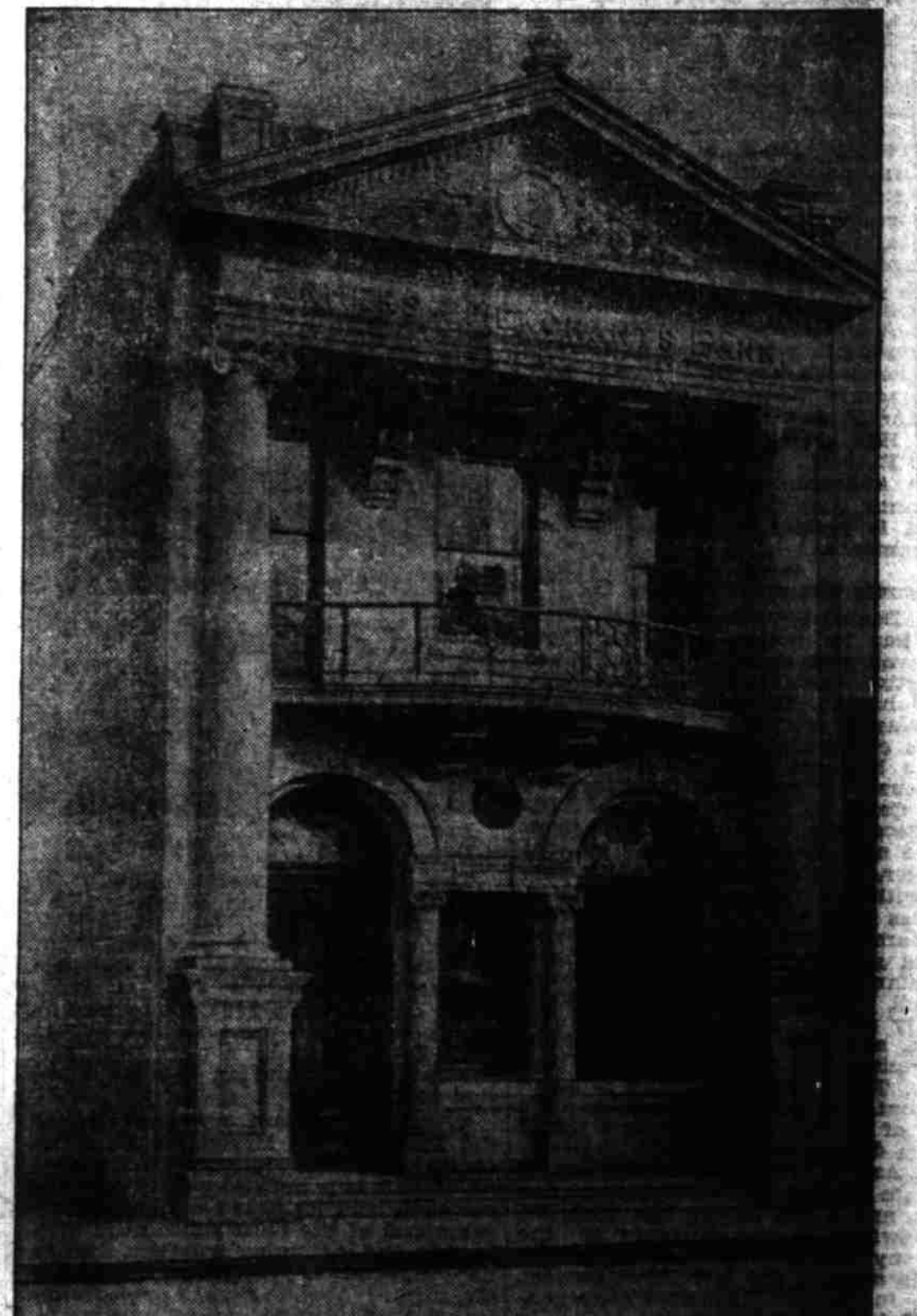
have to exceed six grades and these grades almost invariably conform to the time of housing. The farmers house their tobacco by stripping the cured leaves off the stalk in the field; these leaves are stripped every week to ten days as they ripen until the whole crop is housed. This usually takes upon an average of four to six weeks. In this way grading is facilitated, because each stripping is practically a grade to itself and is thus kept together, handled in bulk together, bleached together and marketed together, whereas the old method in the Piedmont section was to cut the whole stalk and cure the whole stalk at one time, making every grade come in one bulk. Another advantage in this method of curing tobacco is that the farmer has a longer time to grade and if labor is short he can extend his grading through the whole year, beginning immediately after curing the first barn. Many small farmers take advantage of this and when the weather is bad, grade tobacco in their pack house with their families and every member of the family can do some part of the work.

Williamston is the market for the tobacco of all this section and is well equipped for the handling of large crops. There are three warehouses, three large houses and a well equipped steam plant for redrying tobacco; and a hoghead factory, with excellent transportation facilities by boat lines and railroad.

MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE.



THE CITY HALL.



THE FARMERS AND MERCHANTS BANK.