

## Judge Nimocks In Address To Grand Jury Here Monday

### Expresses Hope This County Will Adopt "Permanent" Jury System

Addressing the March grand jury Monday, Judge Q. K. Nimocks expressed the hope that Martin County would adopt a continuous or "permanent" grand jury system, the jurist declaring that such a system had many advantages and that no additional cost would be entailed in maintaining it. "I believe it will prove advantageous," the judge said adding that a majority of the counties in the State had a continuing grand jury system.

Losing his way to the Martin capital, Judge Nimocks asked to be excused for being an hour late, and explained that his charge to the jury would be short. In the beginning he stressed the importance of jury service, explaining that when the rights of property and human beings are at stake it should be the will of business men and others to find time to serve and uphold those rights.

The grand jury is an integral part of the court machinery and without it no one can prosecute or try alleged offenders of the law; therefore, the peace and quiet and to a certain extent the prosperity of Martin County depends largely upon the manner in which the grand jury handles its work. Judge Nimocks said, adding, "If you fail in your duty you help bring the courts into disrepute."

That all men are equal in the eyes of the law was stressed by the judge who urged the jurymen to remember that no man is above the law, that regardless of standing or position everyone should be called to answer for an alleged infraction of the law.

Explaining that he had no pet hobbies or theories about any particular law, Judge Nimocks declared that so long as a law was on the statute books the court should see that it is enforced. If there are laws on the books that are not wanted, then let the people have them removed through their representatives, he declared.

Briefly outlining the various types of crime, the jurist particularly charged the jury with the duty of presentment of crimes that are violated to their own knowledge or are called to their attention by reliable informants. While this duty is often ignored, it offers one of the best methods of checking up on law violations. "If you have reliable information that a crime has been committed, take action and make presentment to your body. You can't shift responsibility, you can't shield friends and maintain respect for the law," the jurist charged the jurymen. "The manner in which you handle your duties will largely determine the peace status in Martin County," he added.

"Human nature is about the same north, east, west and south, and many are satisfied to let the officers enforce the laws, but you as members of the grand jury are sworn to take action in those cases where criminals are known to have been committed."

In charging the jurymen to inspect all public buildings owned by the county, Judge Nimocks said, "If you men make the periodic inspections and give praise where it is not due it will be better that you remain away. Much good can come from an honest inspection and an inquiring investigation, and praise should be given where it is due, but praise only if it is justifiable and condemn where it is not." (Continued on page six)

## Funeral Is Held For Well-Known Citizen

Funeral services were conducted last Saturday afternoon at 2:30 in the Skewarkey Primitive Baptist Church for Mrs. J. K. Gurganus who died last Friday in a Rocky Mount hospital following an operation for goiter. In good health despite her advanced age, Mrs. Gurganus was taken ill about eight weeks ago, spending most of that time in bed. She was moved to the hospital on Sunday of last week and was operated on the following Wednesday.

Miss Alice Bennett before her marriage to Mr. Gurganus nearly half a century ago, she was born near Williamston 67 years ago, the daughter of the late Calvin and Matilda Bennett. She lived in this county all her life and was highly respected by everyone. She was a faithful wife, and for nearly a quarter of a century she patiently looked after her husband who was blind. She was a devoted mother and a good woman, one who appreciated the simple yet finer things in life. About 40 years ago she joined the church at Skewarkey, remaining a loyal member and one who walked humbly before the Creator. Interment was in the churchyard there beside her husband who died hardly a year ago. Elder Cowin conducted the last rites.

She is survived by five children, Mrs. Charles Coltrain, of Robersonville; Marion Ross Gurganus, Mrs. Charles Keel, of Everetts; Simon Gurganus, of near Hamilton, and Norman Gurganus, of Snow Hill. She also leaves two sisters, Mrs. Luther Nicholson and Mrs. John Harris, both of near Williamston.

## Machinery Being Set Up for Handling Elections in County

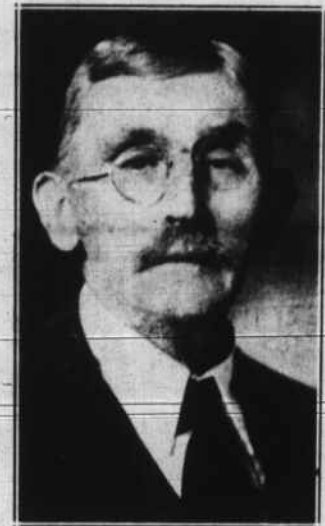
The main cogs in the machinery for handling the 1940 elections in this county were carefully installed by the State Board of Elections in Raleigh last Saturday when Messrs. Sylvester Peel, J. R. Winslow and Wade Vick were appointed to the Martin County Board of Elections. Mr. Sylvester Peel, for twelve years head of the board of elections in this county, is expected to continue as chairman of the body when the three men meet in the courthouse next Saturday to perfect their organization and decide the registration problem facing him. Mr. Winslow, Robersonville man, succeeds himself as a member of the board. Mr. Vick, also of Robersonville, represents the Republican party and enters upon the duties of the board as a new member. He succeeds A. T. Perry, resigned.

It is fitting here to state in connection with Mr. Peel's appointment that during his 12 years as head of the board there has been no question raised as to the methods employed in handling elections in this county. Political corruption has been aired in other counties, but at no time has members of either party questioned his honesty and fairness in handling the job, and in the present board Martin voters are certain their wishes will be recognized.

All members of the board could not be reached, but one of them after discussing the plans for bringing the registration books up to date stated that he believed a re-listing of the names would prove more satisfactory than a complete new registration. "Our registrars know their people, and they can revise the books with a marked accuracy," the member explained.

## Large Number Forego Trial By Jury In The Superior Court Here

### REAPPOINTED



Recognized for his integrity and honesty in operating the election machinery in this county, Mr. Sylvester Peel, Griffins Township citizen, was reappointed to the county board of elections for his seventh term last Saturday.

## County Woman Dies At Home In Griffins Township Monday

### Unexpected Death of Mrs. Fannie D. Hardison Saddens Community

The entire Hardison Mill community was saddened last night when Mrs. Fannie D. Hardison died unexpectedly at her home there. Although she had been in feeble health for about five years and for two or three days had been very ill, her family and her physician did not consider her condition serious until a short while before the end.

Mrs. Hardison was born a short distance from where she had lived ever since her marriage on April 15, 1873, the daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Daniel Whitley. Her forebearers were among the original settlers in that section of the county. When quite a young woman she was married to George Hardison, who died thirty-three years ago. To this (Continued on page six)

## Williamston Gets Into The Nation's Political Spotlight

Williamston broke into the political limelight last week-end when First District Republicans met here and instructed its delegates to support Senator Robert A. Taft as their party nominee in the national convention at Philadelphia. The district meeting here was the first to formally instruct its delegates for Taft. The action of the local convention received special notice in Taft campaign headquarters in Washington where the presidential candidate, hailing the action, declared, "Republican sentiment is strong in North Carolina this year, and increasing opposition to the New Deal is raising hopes that the State will bolt the Democratic ticket in November."

Wheeler Martin, local attorney, and John L. Phelps, Creswell, will represent the first district as delegates at the Philadelphia convention.

## Trial Of Criminal Docket Is Nearing Close Late Today

### Defendants in Larceny Cases Throw Themselves Upon Mercy of the Court

Facing a strong chain of evidence many defendants facing Judge Q. K. Nimocks in the Martin County Superior Court this week are foregoing trial by jury and throwing themselves upon the mercy of the court. Pleas of guilty featured the entries in nearly every case called during the first day of the court, the clerk stating that only one defendant had denied connection with the crime charged against him and the court summoned a jury and started the trial of the case late in the afternoon.

With the possibility that the solicitor will accept a plea of second degree murder in the case charging Joe Willie Moore with the killing of Cheatham Ray in Jamesville last month, the court is likely to complete the trial of the criminal docket late this afternoon. It was first thought that the tribunal would spend a greater part of the week handling the criminal docket but when the defendants saw it was useless to contend their innocence against the strong chain of evidence woven against them they pleaded guilty, threw themselves upon the mercy of the court and made possible the early disposition of most of the criminal cases.

Early today Judge Nimocks had not expressed himself in the term of months or years, and the defendants, pleading guilty yesterday, had a nervous period last night and today awaiting judgment at the bar of justice.

It was quite evident from the sentence imposed in the case against Curtis Rhodes that the jurist has little use for the drunken automobile driver. Rhodes, appealing from a judgment in the county court in the case charging him with drunken driving, was sentenced to the roads for four months and had his license revoked for a period of three years.

First-day proceedings in the court are, as follows: Vernon Whitehurst, charged with forgery, was sentenced to the roads for three months.

The case charging Randall Jones with an assault with a deadly weapon was not pressed with leave for the charge to be renewed. This action was taken when the prosecuting witness failed to appear in court.

Alphonso Moore, charged with larceny and receiving, was sentenced to the roads for ninety days.

The case charging Columbia Rogers with bastardy was nolprossed.

Lin Williams pleaded guilty in the case charging him with drunken driving. Sentence was delayed pending a review of the defendant's record. Immediate pronouncement of judgment was not expected since the man is alleged to possess a long court record and that some little time will be required to review the cases.

Hubert Page, charged with the larceny of an automobile, was sentenced to the roads for ninety days. Paul Terry was ordered into the custody of the juvenile court judge for trial. The case against a third defendant, Dennis Crisp, was nolprossed.

A major part of the criminal docket was handled in a record time when Dennis and Bill Wynne, young white boys, and Grandy Pemberton and Lawrence Wiggins, colored, pleaded guilty in a series of cases charging him with breaking and entering and larceny. The two Wynne boys pleaded guilty of breaking into and stealing tires and other properties from filling stations in Everetts and Williamston. Pemberton and Wiggins (Continued on page six)

## Fire Wrecks Second Colored Home Here In Past Four Days

### Aging Couple Lose Savings of Life Time When Their Home Burns Monday

James and Delia Wilson, fast-aging colored couple, stood helpless yesterday afternoon when fire wrecked their home carrying up in smoke the savings of a life time. But somehow or other after the damage was done and as the couple looked around for places to lay their heads during the rapidly approaching night there still burned a spark of hope in the two person's minds.

Believed to have started from a spark picked up by the wind from around a wash pot in the neighborhood, the fire was first discovered under the house which stands just off Washington Street and three doors below the New Carolina Tobacco Warehouse. Fanned by a strong west wind, the fire gained headway rapidly, neighbors finding it impossible to bring it under control at the start. A brief delay was reported before the fire company was called and when the apparatus was carried to the scene fire covered the building on all sides, the fat lightwood seasoned since before the Civil War sending up large volumes of smoke and sparks. Two lines of hose were laid by the firemen, but it was almost an hour later before the fire was brought under control. Fire in a water-soaked mattress broke through and rekindled the fire about an hour later, and the fire company answered another call to the scene. All the damage was done by the first fire, and the second call amounted to nothing.

At one time the fire threatened to spread to the old stockyard building, a few feet away, but the fire fighters were able to confine it to the home and a small shed in the yard where the Wilson woman operated an electric ironing board and kept store on a small scale.

Owned by Mr. Sid Mobley, the home was valued at about \$400. No exact estimate on the loss of the furniture could be had, but it ranged from \$600 to \$1,000, including the clothes of several families. No insurance was carried on the contents, and Mr. Mobley could not be reached for a statement in connection with insurance coverage on the one-story four-room house.

## Court Business Is Picking Up Locally

Following alleged violations of the laws after a wholesale action, the tribunals of justice experienced a busy day yesterday in the county. The activities were not limited to the "big" court by any means, Justice J. L. Hassell reporting several cases in his own court.

A serious charge was brought against Linwood Speight, colored deaf mute, by Governor Carson and his wife, Margaret, colored couple who live down the river hill. In the complaint, Cason charged Speight with badly beating him and attempting to rape his wife. The woman was said to have been painfully beaten. Speight was arrested Sunday by Chief W. B. Daniel and Officer Haislip. At the hearing yesterday he, by his own rights, waived preliminary examination.

Charged with public drunkenness, Jake Norfleet was sentenced to jail for 30 days, the justice suspending judgment upon payment of \$5.50 costs.

Charged with operating motor vehicles with improper lights, James M. Jennings and Samuel Kanje were each fined \$10 and taxed with the costs.

Charged with speeding through Jamesville at a 40-mile clip, Wilmon Pierce was fined \$5 and taxed with the cost.

## Fire Destroys Country Home Near Here Monday

Its origin unlearned, fire destroyed the home of Ames Archer, colored, near the Williamston fair grounds yesterday afternoon. Most of the contents were burned.

Reports stated that a nearby house caught fire from the sparks of the burning house, but no great damage resulted to the second building.

The Archer home was a small one and was located just across the railroad on the McCaskey Road.

### SCORES A HIT

Delayed almost an hour when he got lost on a "cut-off" road coming here from Fayetteville yesterday, Judge Q. K. Nimocks scored a hit with the common people when he apologized for being late and explained that he would readily excuse others who had a similar experience. "I left home in ample time to reach here and open court at the appointed hour, but I attempted to make a short cut and learned later that I was headed in the wrong direction," the jurist said.

Failed away from their work farmers were heard to complain after they had waited 30 minutes or more for the judge, but they were ready to excuse him after he voluntarily offered an apology.

## Office of County Treasurer Is Retained by Commissioners Who Order Drastic Salary Reduction

### Retained By Board, Office of Treasurer Invites Candidates

The action of the county commissioners in retaining the office of county treasurer yesterday brought a concerted action on the political front, an incomplete count made early today showing three candidates already in the race and the likelihood that two more would enter shortly. The commissioners threw a bombshell into the camp, however, when they ordered the salary cut into half, but the \$50 still looks attractive, and, too, it might be that the candidates recognize the honor and distinction in holding the position.

John R. Peel, Williamston man, announced his candidacy week before last subject to the action of the board in special session Monday and of course, subject to the wishes of the people in the May primary. Early today he had not done anything more to advance his candidacy.

and it is not known whether the salary reduction will alter his position in the race or not.

H. M. Burras, one-time treasurer years ago, announced soon after the commissioners' meeting his message to the voters appearing in this issue along with that of Warren H. Biggs, who announced his intention of seeking the office this morning.

In a statement released late Monday, Mr. J. E. Pope stated that he would not be a candidate for the office. The announcement was contrary to rumors heard from some of those promoting the proposal to have the office abolished.

No official statement had been filed early this morning, but reports state that Benjamin Courtney was considering entering the race. Filing time does not close until April 13, and it is possible that still more candidates will appeal to the voters.

## Man Is Critically Shot in Mysterious Way Late Sunday

### Identity of Man Who Shot John Lawrence Not Yet Known

John Lawrence, young colored man, was critically wounded when an unknown assailant fired a load of gun shot into his back near the Spring Green Church in Hamilton Township about 10 o'clock last Sunday night. Removed to a hospital Monday afternoon, the man was said to be spitting blood, the reports indicating that his condition was critical.

Lawrence had carried his wife to a doctor in Hamilton a short time before, and she had just retired when he went into the kitchen and sat down to eat a bite of supper. He had hardly seated himself to the table when someone fired a gun through the window, the entire load of No. 6 shot striking him in the back just below the shoulders. The gun was fired from a distance of not more than eight feet, Deputy J. H. Roebuck said after investigating the shooting.

After Lawrence was shot down, he called two young men who were in the house at the time and asked them to move him to safety to another room. The request was granted and the two men with Lawrence's wife left immediately for a neighbor's house, leaving the man there to live or die. It was explained that the man's wife was suffering with heart trouble and that she was moved for her own safety. Neighbors, learning of the shooting, told officers they were afraid and did not go to the house. About an hour later, Lawrence struggled to his feet and walked to the highway where he was picked up by a motorist and carried to a doctor for treatment. The shooting was reported to officers Monday morning and Deputy J. H. Roebuck started an investigation.

Suspicion centered on Guy Rollins, Lawrence's brother-in-law, and he was arrested by the deputy at 9 o'clock last night and placed in jail where he is being held until the investigation is completed. Rollins and Lawrence are said to have had some trouble last fall when Lawrence cut him. Last Sunday, Rollins went to Lawrence's home and they quarreled, Rollins stating that Lawrence ordered him away at the point of a pistol. Rollins and his family had deserted their home and were at the home of his wife's sister when he was arrested. Denying any connection with the shooting, Rollins says he was at his home at 8 o'clock Sunday night. His wife says he came in at 7 o'clock.

## Man Is Jailed After Hour Of Freedom

Released late Sunday after serving a sentence in the Martin County road camp for trespassing, Charlie Bonds, colored man, was jailed an hour later on a similar count. At one time a suitor of the cook in the household of Mrs. Eloise Bennett on West Main Street, Bonds had worked a bit around the house. He had been open for trouble on several occasions, but he generally escaped the roads. Last fall Bonds was found in a room in the home, and booked on a charge of trespassing, he was sentenced to the roads.

## Will Receive Seed Loan Applications At Specified Time

Finding business a bit slack when spread throughout the week, workers in the Martin County seed-feed loan office in the agricultural building will receive applications only on Tuesday and Saturday mornings beginning week after next, W. B. Wats, application-taker said yesterday. Farmers, planning to float loans through the organization, are urged to keep the date changes in mind.

According to registrations in the office of the register of deeds, Martin farmers have floated 84 loans through the seed and feed or emergency loan organization representing a total of \$10,985, advanced to date. The loans average \$130.77. Last year more than 100 loans were made by the organization in this county.

### WILL SPEAK HERE



Dr. Olin T. Binkley, head of the Department of Religion at Wake Forest College, will conduct a series of services in the local Baptist Church which will begin next Sunday morning at 11 o'clock. Dr. Binkley is one of the most distinguished ministers of the Baptist denomination.

Following the regular Easter morning service he will speak each evening at 7:30 through Friday night. A cordial welcome is extended to everyone.

## Larger Attendance Is Reported At Church Services On Sunday

### Increased Interest Is Being Manifested in Religious Activities Here

By REV. JOHN L. GOFF

The first of the union Lenten services in the Watts Theatre was held Monday afternoon with Rev. J. H. Smith speaking on the first words uttered from the cross by our Lord, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing." There were about sixty-five in attendance. These services will be held in the theatre each day this week through Friday. The seven sayings from the cross will be followed by the ministers of the city.

Rev. Z. T. Piephoff reports the beginning of a series of services each evening at Roberson's Chapel with Rev. J. W. Vinson doing the preaching.

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## Complaints Against Tax Valuations Are Filed Before Board

### Authorities in Special Meet Cut Salary To \$50 A Month

Finding public opinion divided, the Martin County Commissioners meeting in special session as a board of equalization and review Monday solved the problem surrounding the office of county treasurer by slashing the monthly salary by half and reserving the duties for the individual who survives the primary and general elections this summer and next fall. While the proposal to abolish the office and turn it over to the banks had received a strong support in some quarters, there was a divided opinion in the matter, and the board in its action reasoned that it would prove satisfactory to all. A spirited political race for the office is now predicted even at the reduced salary.

Upon the motion of Commissioner R. A. Haislip which was seconded by Commissioner Fleming, the board unanimously agreed to reduce the salary from \$100 to \$50 a month. The action was taken after Messrs. J. T. Barnhill, V. G. Taylor and Joseph S. Griffin had voiced their support of the proposal to abolish the office. H. M. Burras, who a short time later filed his candidacy for the office, urged the commissioners to retain it, explaining that he understood the banks did not want the job and that to abolish the office would promote the centralization of the people's business. Economy in county government was pointed out by the supporters of the proposal to abolish the office.

Those expressing their opinions before the commissioners explained that they were not there in the interest of the office or of abolishing the post, that they were there to appeal to the commissioners as a board of equalization and review.

Unexpected action toward a possible step in economy was taken by the board at the meeting when Chairman J. E. Pope named Commissioners R. L. Perry, C. A. Roberson and R. A. Haislip on a committee to review the salaries of officers, all agents and employees and report their findings with recommendations to the full board at its next regular meeting on April 1. The motive behind the action was not disclosed.

Turning to its regular assigned job, the board received quite a few complaints directed against assessed property valuations as recorded in January of this year. Comparatively few adjustments were effected and in most of those cases where the values were altered the property owners pointed out errors in listing. Hearings were granted in the following cases:

The assessed valuation on Paul D. Roberson's residence in Robersonville was reduced from \$2,800 to \$2,700.

Apparently Mr. Dennis A. Roberson did not appear before the board of equalization and review because the value on a vacant lot owned by him in Robersonville was raised from \$200 to \$300.

Representatives of the Harrison estate appeared before the board and (Continued on page six)

## Dr. Frank Graham Is Finals Speaker

Dr. Frank Porter Graham, president of the University of North Carolina, will deliver the principal address of the graduating exercises at the Williamston High School on the evening of May 1, according to information coming from Principal D. N. Hix today. Dr. Graham is known throughout the nation as an able speaker and one of the more progressive college presidents, and his many friends in this section will welcome the opportunity to hear him.

The schedule of events to be held during the remainder of the school term are as follows:

Tuesday, March 19: The Senior Play, "Nothing But the Truth."

Friday, April 5: Junior-Senior banquet.

Friday, April 12: Grammar Grade Operetta, "Little Red Riding Hood."

Sunday, April 28: Commencement sermon, Rev. J. H. Smith, pastor of Williamston Baptist Church. Music by the Glee Club.

Tuesday, April 30: Senior Class Day Exercises.

Wednesday, May 1: Graduating Exercises, principal address by Dr. Frank Porter Graham, president of University of North Carolina.

Out-of-town events in which Williamston students will participate are the District Music Contest in Greenville, March 28 and 29, and the triangular debates in Scotland Neck and Washington.