

Conjure Doctor Gets 8-10 Year Sentence

Ada Bell Bennett Offers Masterful Testimony In Case

Estimated Johnny Simmons Had Fleeced Victims Out Of \$10,000.

Johnny Simmons, alias Johnny Williams, the self-styled faith healer who went about with roots and herbs, colored pills and medicine belts fleecing more than twenty victims in this county out of approximately \$10,000 over a several-year period, was sentenced to serve not less than eight and not more than ten years in State's Prison, Raleigh, by Judge J. Paul Frizzelle in the Martin County Superior Court last Thursday afternoon.

The trial, attracting hundreds from all over the county, was the most unusual and brought out the most masterful testimony heard in the Martin County court room in many years. While the evidence centered on herbs, roots, sulphur water, bear grease rags, "medicine" belts that sold for as much as \$85, it branched off into the heavens and brought forth words not found in the dictionary. The star witness for the State, Ada Bell Bennett, quoted the conjure doctor as saying, "I will have to look into the 'consunicker nicer-phone' before I can work my way into a dark spot that appears in your case".

It was brought out in evidence that the "healer" had held at least two or three young colored girls under his spell, that they were afraid to leave his care in a Wilmington house and return to their homes in this county.

Some of the victims admitted that they had responded to the quick treatment, but most of them said their hospital conditions were no better. It was also brought out that some of his patients had died, and that two or three others had died mysteriously allegedly under his "spell".

There were nineteen cases lodged against Simmons, but Solicitor Geo. Fountain had time to present only four to the grand jury. The other fifteen were taken into consideration when Judge Frizzelle pronounced sentence. The fifteen cases were not presented in three of the cases which were tried, Simmons was sentenced to serve not less than three and not more than five years in each, the sentences to run concurrently with the sentence meted out in the first case.

Testimony was completed in the case at 3:15 o'clock Thursday afternoon. The defense waived argument, and Judge Frizzelle made his charge and the jury returned its verdict by 3:30 o'clock.

Simmons, dispossessed of all his roots and herbs and apparently without his conjure powers, held his pocket handkerchief to his face and gloomily heard the verdict and sentence.

Just before the jurist pronounced sentence he recalled the star witness for the State, Ada Bell Bennett, to the stand to clarify the words "consunicker nicer-phone", the meaning of which was not definitely determined. When asked if Simmons could look into the "consunicker nicer-phone" he said he was going to receive, the witness replied.

Union Meeting At Smithwick Creek

The Smithwick's Creek Primitive Baptist Church will entertain the union meeting there this week-end, it was announced by Judge Frizzelle by the pastor, Elder P. E. Getsinger. The first in the series of services will be held Friday evening at 8:00 o'clock, followed by service Saturday morning at 11:00 o'clock and again Sunday. A picnic lunch will be served Sunday.

Elders C. W. Miller, T. E. Majors and H. C. McMillan and others will participate in the service. The public is invited.

NO RESIGNATION

Being transferred to Washington to fill the position made vacant by the death of James H. Roberson as Coast Line freight agent in the Beaufort capital, Judge Raymond T. Johnson said this week that he is not planning to resign as Martin County recorder, at least, not in the immediate future.

He is to enter upon his new duties in Washington tomorrow, but will continue to make his home here for some time. A Colerain man is being transferred from Plymouth to fill the position made vacant by Mr. Johnson's withdrawal.

Tobacco Growers To Attend Meet

Flue-cured tobacco producers from Florida, Georgia, Virginia, North and South Carolina will be on hand for the sixth Annual Stockholders Meeting of the Flue-Cured Tobacco Cooperative Stabilization Corporation, which will be held here at the Sir Walter Hotel, June 27, at 11:00 A. M.

The principal speaker at this year's meeting will be N. C. Commissioner of Agriculture L. Y. Ballentine. Other highlights of the meeting will be the annual address of Stabilization's President Carl T. Hicks, of Walstonburg, N. C., and the report of General Manager L. T. Weeks, of Raleigh. The Stabilization Corporation, which many people think is a government agency, is an independent organization made up of over 438,000 stock-holder members in the five flue-cured states. Since the giant co-op began operations in 1946, it has taken over loan more than 728 million pounds of its members' tobacco which did not sell for 90 per cent of parity on the warehouse floor. The organization later re-sells this tobacco at a profit to its members which is distributed in the form of cash dividends.

Growers may place tobacco under loan by purchasing one share of common stock in stabilization. This entitles them to permanent membership in the organization and permits them to use the loan facilities during each selling season.

Complete records of every grower-member and each pound of tobacco taken under loan are maintained by Stabilization and may be examined at any time. Stabilization borrows working capital from Commodity Credit Corporation, which is an agency operated by the Department of Agriculture. Since the Co-op began to do business, it has paid the federal government over \$8 million in interest plus the principal sums borrowed.

Smoked Out By Burning Mattress

LeRoy Wright, colored man, was literally smoked out of his room in the home of his brother-in-law, Noah Wiggins, on Faulk Street at 5:00 o'clock Sunday morning. Possibly starting from a cigarette, a mattress, bedclothes and almost suffocated Wright.

Seeing smoke pouring from a window, neighbors turned in an alarm and a full complement of volunteers reported, but there were few spectators at that hour.

Youth Gets Air Force Promotion

Curtis Biggs, son of Mrs. Sallie Biggs of Portsmouth and formerly of Robersonville, was recently promoted to the rank of first-sergeant in the Air Force. Now in Japan he engineers a C-54 in flying supplies to Korea and ferrying troops out for rest periods.

Mrs. Biggs and their son, Alvin, are now in Honolulu, but will join Sgt. Biggs in Japan about the first of July. Mrs. Biggs is a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Revels of this county.

Superior Court In Final Session Of Term Thursday

Twenty-one Cases Continued for Trial at the Term Next September

After disposing of only a few criminal cases and failing to reach the civil calendar, the Martin County Superior Court abruptly ended a one-week term last Thursday, leaving twenty-one criminal cases for trial at the next September term.

The court officials, one suffering with the toothache and another suffering from exhaustive duties during the extremely hot weather, called a halt to the proceedings at 5:00 o'clock that afternoon after handling all the "jail cases." Charged with the shooting of E. Gray Modlin in Jamesville a few weeks ago, William T. Currie continues in jail, but his trial is being delayed pending the outcome of Modlin's condition. Last reports indicated the victim was not getting along very well in a veterans' hospital at Fayetteville where he was removed for treatment.

After pleading guilty of violating the liquor laws, Morris Riddick was apparently left holding the bag. When no one came forward to pay or underwrite his \$250 fine, Morris was removed to the roads where he is to serve eighteen months. It was said that Morris wanted to talk when he was left "holding the bag," but it was too late to start talking, officers explained.

The case in which George Willis Lee was charged with failing to yield right of way, was not prosecuted.

William Grimes, charged with an assault with a deadly weapon and carrying a concealed weapon, was sentenced to the roads for twelve months.

Facing the court on two assault with deadly weapon charges, Mamie Patrick pleaded guilty in one and judgment was suspended upon the payment of court costs. A verdict of not guilty was directed by the court in the other case.

Pleading guilty of drunken driving, Walter Bailey of Bear Grass was fined \$125, plus costs.

The case in which Maggie Eason was charged with violating the liquor laws, was not prosecuted.

Johnnie Smith, alleged to have violated the terms of probation, had a twelvemonth road sentence invoked. He was charged with drunken driving and damaging property in Parmele.

Twenty-one cases were continued for trial at the September term, leaving the court rather behind than at any other time in many years. The following cases were continued, including eleven in which the defendants are charged with drunken driving:

Jim Bell, assault with a deadly weapon; Elton Perkins, drunken driving; Cushion Allen, drunken driving; Hiram W. Ford, drunken driving; Chas. G. Murray, drunken driving; George Cutler, assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill; Kelly Crandell, breaking and entering and larceny; Eddie Johnson, drunken driving; James Perkins, arson; James H. Wiggins, drunken driving; J. R. Roach, drunken driving; Floyd Grimes, drunken driving; Fate Little, drunken driving; J. H. Griffin, drunken driving; Joan Battle, breaking and entering and larceny; Grady K. Lamm, larceny and receiving stolen goods; John Riddick, violating the liquor laws (two counts); and Charlie Joyner, violating the liquor laws.

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Plans Are Completed For \$15,000.00 Scout Building

Plans for a \$15,000 scout building have been prepared, and actual construction work on the local project is scheduled to get underway at an early date according to a joint statement released today by Presidents Ben D. Courtney and J. Reg Simpson of the Lions and Kiwanis Clubs underwriting the project. At present, the Lions Club has \$7,000 available for the project, and the Kiwanis Club has \$3,000, and the clubs are to share equally in raising the additional funds.

The building to be of brick veneer construction backed up by cement blocks, initially will have two scout rooms, a kitchen and an assembly hall of ample size to comfortably handle 150 guests, banquet style, or 225 people seated auditorium style. Each of the designated rooms will have entrances so designed that they can be utilized simultaneously. Provision is also provided for two additional scout rooms whenever there is need for them.

Project steering committees for the two clubs include D. V. Clayton, J. H. Edwards and R. D. Elliott representing the Lions, and Hugh Wyatt, R. J. Peel, Jr., and R. P. Monteith representing the Kiwanis. Wyatt, a local contractor, will probably supervise the construction of the building which will occupy the Smithwick Street lots located between the railroad and the Christian church.

Courtney and Simpson stated in their announcement that their respective clubs believe that the completion of the building will mark a notable milestone in the community's youth program.

RAINS

Following weeks of extremely dry weather, rains fell in this section Sunday afternoon, partially relieving a condition that was exacting a heavy toll in crops.

The rains fell in streaks, some communities reporting as many as two inches or more while others reported hardly enough rainfall to lay the dust. Bridgekeeper Hugh Spruill on Roanoke River here reported .78 of an inch. The Oak City area reported little rain that afternoon and sections of Griffins Township reported little or none, and the crop plight in the latter area is said to be critical.

A short distance south of Williamston there was a cloud burst, and something akin to a tornado struck the Jones farm near the Big Mill, twisting a few trees and damaging the lower end of one tobacco field, it was reported.

Court Stumped By New Words

The false pretense case against Johnny Simmons in the Martin County Superior Court last week, although it attracted day after day hundreds of colored citizens from various parts of the county, was just another action to be heard by the court until new and unheard of words were pulled out of the heavens and introduced in evidence.

No official record was made of the case, but the court stenographer, Miss Virginia Vincent, took her pencil and notebook and started running down the words, "consunicker nicer-phone," introduced by Ada Bell Bennett, star witness for the State. Judge J. Paul Frizzelle, presiding over the term, recalled the witness to get a better pronunciation and possibly a definition of the words.

The spelling is not definite, and the meaning possibly is clear only to the witchcraft and witchcraft victims.

A reporter went to Simmons for enlightenment, but Simmons said they were magic words made up by the prosecution witness, that he had never heard of them.

Simmons did not register at all when asked if the terms had reference to the constellation, but when Venus, Jupiter and Mars were mentioned, he lightened up. "Mars, you know, has more control of a man's body than any other planet," he said. Realizing he had given himself away, he made no further comment.

Moving To Port Of Embarkation

Two Martin County young men, Sgt. Pete Brown, Jr., and Pfc. William Hollis, both of Oak City, have been ordered to a port of embarkation for overseas duty, according to information coming from Headquarters 47th Infantry Division, Camp Rucker, Alabama. Both young men had been serving at Camp Rucker with the 47th "Viking" Infantry Division. The embarkation port was not identified.

Prominent Citizen Died In Hospital Saturday Morning

Funeral At Home on Beach Street Sunday For Samuel C. Ray

Samuel C. Ray, retired business man and a veteran of the Spanish-American War, died in a local hospital at 7:00 o'clock last Saturday morning. He had been in declining health the greater part of two years, but continued fairly active until seven weeks ago when he entered the hospital. His condition had been serious since that time.

The son of the late Horace and Alvania Ray, he was born near Williamston 77 years ago on October 19, 1874, and spent his early life on the farm. In 1895 he volunteered for service in the United States Army, serving two and one-half years at Fortress Monroe before being transferred to Cuba where he participated in San Juan Hill battle near Santiago. The war over, he was sent to Long Island, N. Y., where he saw an automobile for the first time. Mr. Ray had little to say about the war, but the few who went from this county to Cuba for the war often referred to him as a good soldier.

His enlistment ended he returned to this section about the turn of the century, married Miss Sudie Strawbridge and located in Scotland Neck where he engaged in newspaper work and the photographer business for several years. Returning to this county, he located in farming and the mercantile business until failing health forced his retirement about two years ago. He is believed to have been among the last if not the last Spanish-American War veterans in this county.

Finding enjoyment and peace in the quiet out-doors, he fished a great deal in the small streams throughout this section. He found company in his pipe, but in later years he was accompanied by his grandchildren on many fishing trips, and they learned first-hand much about the ways of fish and nature itself. His words, softly spoken, were marked for their kindness. He lived at peace with his fellow man, enjoying the simple but basic ways of life, and going about doing good deeds for others.

Surviving are three daughters, Mrs. James A. Leggett and Mrs. Henry Oakley, both of Williamston, and Mrs. William Perkins of Chapel Hill; one son, Horace Ray, of Williamston; one brother, Paul W. Ray, of Roanoke Rapids; eight grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

He was a member of the Memorial Baptist Church here for about half a century, and his pastor, the Rev. E. Gordon Conklin, conducted the funeral at the home on Beech Street Sunday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock. Interment was in Woodlawn Cemetery.

Infant Died In Local Hospital

Michael Glenn Snead, four-day-old son of James W. and Bettie Louise Hudson Snead, died in a local hospital last Saturday morning at 9:30 o'clock. The infant had been ill since birth.

Surviving besides his parents are two brothers, James W. Jr., and J. M. Thomas Snead.

Funeral services were conducted at the home on Williams Street Sunday afternoon at 5:00 o'clock by the Rev. R. E. Walston, pastor of the local Methodist Church. Interment was in Woodlawn Cemetery.

ROUND-UP

Even though there was a carnival and other scheduled events in this community last week-end, the number of persons arrested and jailed held to a low number. Only five persons were detained, two each for public drunkenness and assault, and one for drunken driving. Two of the five were white and ages of the group ranged from 19 to 42 years.

Order Consolidation Of Farm Life School

COUNTY BOARD

Meeting in special session Thursday morning, the Martin County Commissioners will wade into budget figures for the 1952-53 fiscal year. No other business is scheduled to be considered at the meeting, opening at 9:30 o'clock, Board Clerk J. Sam Getsinger said.

Most of the departments are completing their cost estimates, but no official report has been released on their requests.

Funeral for Beloved Citizen Will Be Held Wednesday Afternoon At Home

Mrs. Carroll G. Crockett, Sr., beloved local citizen, died suddenly at her home on West Church Street last night at 11:45 o'clock. Surmounting one physical obstacle after another, including a heart attack suffered eight years ago and a leg amputation more recently, she had been getting along unusually well during recent months. Only last evening she visited relatives and friends and rode around with Mrs. R. H. Clayton until about 10:20 o'clock, declaring that she felt fine and added that she was looking forward to a visit today with relatives and friends in Yorktown, Va.

Going to her bedroom, she suffered a heart attack while making ready to retire. She died a short time later and soon after medical aid reached her, death coming peacefully.

The former Marie Book, she was born in Blaine, Perry County, Pennsylvania, on September 22, 1892, the daughter of the late David and Catherine Dobbs Book. Following the death of her mother, Mrs. Crockett went with an aunt, Mrs. Rowe, in Hagerstown, Md., where she spent her early life and where she affiliated with the Presbyterian Church.

Following her marriage to Mr. Crockett on October 25, 1911, she made her home in Charlotte and Durham, in this State, and later in Williamsburg, Va., before locating in Williamston in 1927. During the quarter century she had made her home here, she had come to love Williamston and its people, and the town and its people had learned to love her for her goodness and helpfulness. She was active in the circles of the Presbyterian Church, and extended a sympathetic understanding to all those in distress or need.

Possessed of a courageous spirit, she encouraged others to cope with the problems of life, always striving to make today a little better and happier than the yesterday.

She was interested in her adopted community, and contributed freely of her means and time in behalf of its progress and the welfare of its people, thinking little about her own welfare and giving in full measure of her being in support of life's finer ideals. She was devoted to her home and friends, and was thoughtful of others at all times, searching out the brighter side of life in periods of stress and strain.

Surviving besides her husband are two sons, Thomas Crockett of

Traffic Deaths In Nation Increasing

Traffic deaths in the first four months of 1952 totaled 10,650—a one percent increase over the 10,510 deaths reported in the first four months of last year. The figures were made public by the National Safety Council, which said most of the increase was due to leap year's extra day—February 29.

Urgent Appeal By School Committee Rejected By State

High School Department to Be Consolidated With Williamston

Turning back repeated pleas and protests by the local committee and a large delegation, the North Carolina State Board of Education last Thursday ordered the consolidation of the Farm Life High School with the one in Williamston. The action literally doomed at least nine other small high schools in the State.

To continue the departments, the State Board members, voting unanimously for the consolidation in this county, said they would not be keeping faith with the school children, adding that the law rules against the allotment of teachers to high schools with an average attendance of less than sixty pupils except in those cases where consolidation is impracticable.

Citizens of the Farm Life Community and others made a strong case before the State Board, and it is believed that the school would have been continued at least another year or two had it not been for nine other similar cases that were up for consideration at the same time.

The State Board, in its special session, acted only after ordering a second survey made by a panel of school officials.

The consolidation plan removes three teachers in the Farm Life School, and will add two to the Williamston High School faculty. Approximately fifty-four pupils are enrolled in the Farm Life High School. Thirteen are entering the high school for the first time, and there are eleven in the 1952-53 senior class.

Complete details for the consolidation have not been announced, but it is expected that all high school pupils will ride to the Farm Life School and there board a special express bus for the trip to Williamston, following the Holly Springs-Hardison Mill route.

While the move for consolidation was questioned by nearly everyone affected by it, reports seem to indicate that school officials, patrons and pupils will cooperate in every way possible to iron out the problems and make the best of the new plan.

Williamston school officials and citizens, sympathizing with the community because of the loss of the high school there, will extend

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Rain-Making Big Business In West

It is beginning to look like rain-making is going to have another big year in the Western states this year. Already contracts have been signed totaling \$800 thousand dollars, and at the present cost of rain-making of about one cent an acre this provides for 80 million acres of land.

It has been estimated that the total land that will be subject to rain-making this year is about 400 million acres, which will be about one-third or one-fourth more than last year.

Some of the people who backed commercial rain-making last year state that they don't know whether cloud seeding increased precipitation, but that it probably increased rainfall.

Child Painfully Burned In Accident Near Here

William Borden Ennett, Jr., 18 months old, was painfully burned when a pan of hot grease toppled over on him at the home of his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. W. Mayo Hardison, near here last Friday evening. His face and shoulder badly burned, he is responding to treatment in Martin General Hospital, and continues very bright and cheerful. Mr. Ennett is in school at Chapel Hill while Mrs. Ennett and son are making their home with her parents.