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THE RAINS CAME - Blue Springs farmers, after saving their sandy land tobacco crops throughout the drought with sprinkler systems, couldn't seem to depend on the weatherman's predictions last week and even as clouds formed overhead their sprinklers continued to run.

Granny Graduate After Long Layoff

A Raeford grandmother who dropped out of high school 26 years ago to get married recently took up where she left off and breezed to a diploma.

Mrs. Vance Wiggins, widow of a former Raeford superintendent of streets, stunned teachers at Fayetteville Technical Institute with her mental dexterity, according to reports reaching Raeford.

She breezed through courses in math, algebra, history, science, English, biology, chemistry and geology, recording an A-plus average. She completed the one-year course in three months.

High school diploma in hand, she promptly enrolled in a one-year practical nurse course at Fayetteville Tech and Cape Fear Valley Hospital. She will begin classes there in September.

A daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. V. Miller, Raeford Rt. 3, Mrs. Wiggins moved to Hoke County at age five. Her father, a farmer, previously had farmed at Dillon, S. C.

Twice married, Mrs. Wiggins has five children by the first union. The five offspring have provided her a total of six grandchildren.

Her children include Ray



MRS. VANCE WIGGINS

and Jimmy Dickens of Oakdale, La., Mrs. Brenda Townsend of Raeford, Mrs. Carolyn Stephens of Maxton.

While waiting for the practical nurse course to begin, Mrs. Wiggins said she is taking other nursing courses at FTI.

In the fall, she will be a full-time student, as she was during the high school phase of her recent training. Then, she carried a five-class load, with 30 hours of classroom study a week.

Thieves struck at Dundarrach Trading Company sometime between 1 a. m. and 3 a. m. last Tuesday and may have been in the building when a Hoke County deputy sheriff passed by at 1 a. m.

Sheriff Dave Barrington said Deputy Harvey Young checked the building at 1 a. m., then doubled back for a recheck two hours later. The second visit disclosed the break-in, because the intruders had broken out of the building in a manner visible from the outside.

Barrington said it is possible the thieves were inside the building the first time Young drove past. Entry was made through a side window.

He said some \$200 to \$300 merchandise was taken after the intruders broke into a storage room. They broke open an office door and departed.

Barrington said the loot included nine Timex watches - six for men and three for women. Some of the watches had cloth bands and others had gold-colored link bands.

Also stolen were five boxes of sockets for socket wrenches; a one-half-inch Black and Decker drill; a three-eighth-inch B & D drill, and a one-half-inch Skill drill.

Proponents of a private school at Rockfish for students in grades one through eight continued their efforts this week to enrol enough students to get the institution started. Wednesday morning, they declared they still needed about 60 students to open the school and extended the deadline for registration until Saturday at 5:30.

If the minimum number of 200 students is not reached by Monday, the project will be abandoned for the time being, they said.

Hoke Man Is Testing State Law

A convicted rapist who was sentenced to life imprisonment here six years ago after pleading guilty to a capital charge is asking for a new trial on grounds that, in effect, the procedure under which he was convicted is unconstitutional.

He is Preston McPhaul, who was tried in Hoke Superior Court during the January, 1962, term and sent to prison for life for criminally assaulting Mrs. Sadie Jordan, believed to have been an itinerant working with a carnival which was stopping here at the time of the crime.

Phil Diehl, Raeford attorney appointed by Judge Coy Brewer to handle McPhaul's appeal, said a writ of habeas corpus is being studied at this time by Judge Brewer. A new trial is sought on grounds McPhaul, in pleading guilty to the capital offense, automatically was given a life imprisonment sentence (as required by the applicable North Carolina law) and thus was denied any method of trial to contest his guilt.

Diehl said the petition for new trial is, in effect, a challenge to the constitutionality of the death penalty in North Carolina.

He said the case will be advanced all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, if necessary. In the interim, it might go from Superior Court to the N.C. Intermediate Court of Appeals, then to the N.C. Supreme Court, then to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Diehl said it appears unlikely that the state would be able to prosecute McPhaul in a new

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Younger Snead Jr., chairman of a steering committee making plans for the school, said students from Hoke County still are being sought, although an unofficial deadline for registration has passed.

The committee said two weeks ago that a minimum of 200 students would be required to open and operate the school for the first year.

This week, members of the committee declined to reveal the exact number of students already enrolled in the school, but indications were that the

number was less than 140. That number, with the additional 60 they now say is needed, would total the 200 minimum.

Snead said there is a possibility that two grades will be combined if the numbers enrolled in each were no more than 20 or so. That would eliminate the need of one teacher in each instance of two grades being combined. The salary saved could then be deducted from the \$80,000 minimum the committee declares necessary to assure

first-year operation.

Indications were that heaviest enrolment has been in grades one, two, three, six, seven and eight. There is still plenty of room in all classes, Snead said, particularly in grades four and five.

"We have talked with people from communities in neighboring counties, and the response has been satisfactory," Snead said. "It looks like we can count on getting 50 to 60 students outside the county."

Registrars for the school will

be available all day Saturday at the former Dr. Matheson office next door to Wood Furniture Company on East Elwood Avenue. Students may be signed up there from 9 to 5:30 p. m.

Monday night, there will be a meeting of school planners and parents who already have enrolled students in the school, plus parents willing to enter their children in the classes. The meeting will be held at Hoke Civic Center and will get

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LIBRARY COMMITTEE - A steering committee to spearhead a club for the betterment of Hoke County Library is made up of: seated, Mrs. J. M. Andrews and Mrs. J. K. McNeill; standing, Mrs. Roy Lent, Miss Josephine Hall, Mrs. John R. Davis, Mrs. Sam Homewood, Mrs. Richard Neeley, Mrs. Marshall Newton and Mrs. John Balfour, and not shown, Mrs. Wilton Wood and Mrs. Paul Dickson.

Assistant Pastor To Be Ordained

The congregation and friends of First Presbyterian Church of Raeford will participate Sunday in the ordination of the Rev. Douglas Kelly.

The Rev. Mr. Kelly, assistant pastor of the church, will be ordained in a service beginning at 8 p. m. Following his ordination, the Rev. Mr. Kelly will be installed as assistant to

the Rev. Cortez Cooper.

A number of churchmen from this area and from outside North Carolina will take part in the ordination service.

The Rev. Mr. Cooper will preside and propound the constitutional questions.

The Rev. Robert F. Sloop, pastor of First Presbyterian (See KELLY, Page 9)



REV. DOUGLAS KELLY

Citizens Form Library Unit

A steering committee to make plans for an organization of Hoke County "Citizens for Better Libraries," held its first meeting Friday at the library.

An organizational meeting was planned for early fall. All persons interested in the library are invited to attend. The date, time and place will be announced later.

The new group will be affiliated with North Carolina Citizens for Better Libraries, whose aim it is to improve library facilities.



DAVE BARRINGTON

Doubt They Would Lessen Crime

Proposed Gun Controls Not Needed In Hoke

The gun control laws proposed in Washington have failed to impress local law enforcement officers, who generally concede that the drawbacks to such controls would far outweigh the advantages.

They agree, also, that existing North Carolina laws regulating the sale of concealed weapons (including pistols, brass "knucks," overlength knives, blackjacks, etc.) have been ineffective in eliminating serious assaults - such as murder, assault with deadly weapon with intent to kill, and AWDW without intent to kill.

"Of course there is no way to determine how many killings or wounding did not take place because the law made it hard for certain people to buy pistols and other concealable weapons," Sheriff Dave Barrington said. Nonetheless, the present law - which requires a permit for purchase of a pistol, etc. - failed to head off at least 136 serious crimes involving firearms since 1963.

That was the date the sheriff's department started keeping comprehensive records of local law enforcement activities.

The records show that during that span, there were 25 murders in the county (23 involving firearms). Moreover, there were 29 firearm assaults with intent to kill and 83 assaults with deadly weapon involving use of firearms.

Ironically, the county seldom had an armed robbery until recently. Barrington said he remembers only one between the time he began working as a deputy sheriff in 1956 and last year. Suddenly, there came a rash of stickups totaling about 20 in 1967 and 1968.

"I thought stricter laws would result in better control and possibly a reduction in the rate of crimes involving firearms," Barrington said. "After checking my records, however, I've changed my mind."

Not one of the guns used in the 136 violent cases heretofore mentioned was purchased with a required permit issued

by Barrington's office.

"Most of the guns used for murder and/or assault in Hoke County have been of the cheap, small caliber variety," the sheriff said. "Foreign-made .22 and .25 caliber pistols seem to have been favored by people who got into this sort of trouble."

The shotgun - usually a rickety, cheap, singleshot weapon - also has been the choice of many murder and assault antagonists here.

Contrary to popular opinion, the knife runs a poor second to firearms in murder and assault in Hoke County. Fully 80 per cent of the murder, ADW with intent to kill, and ADW cases reviewed by Barrington involved firearms.

"My records and my experience strongly support the theory that criminals do not buy guns through legal channels, where records of the purchases would be made," Barrington said. "Stricter controls, including registration of all firearms, would not eliminate illegal possession, but would make it more

inconvenient for reputable citizens to acquire guns."

Even if possession of guns of any type was outlawed, there still would be an illegal traffic in weapons enabling the criminal to secure a gun.

"If they couldn't be bought, they could be made," Barrington said, pointing out that crude, homemade weapons are no novelty as it is.

Barrington estimated that his office issues some 100 permits to buy concealed weapons each year. The permit merely allows purchase of the weapon, and does not authorize the owner to conceal and carry the weapon on his person or away from his property.

The sheriff said that few persons arrested for violations other than those involving guns are found to have concealed guns in their possession when searched by officers.

"Of course, we know that many people

who go out for a night of honkytonking may carry guns in their cars or pockets, but the laws of search and seizure make that problem difficult to deal with," he said.

Barrington said the rate of gun-buying (requiring permit) has increased during the past several years.

"For one thing, people are afraid that the threatened federal controls will later make it difficult to obtain a gun. They are opposed to the proposed laws, too, because they think registration may be the first step toward confiscation."

Jesse Lee, Barrington's chief deputy, said he believes stricter controls would actually bring an increase in burglary, rape, and some other crimes.

"An armed citizenry (at home) is a deterrent to many crimes," he said. "The burglar and other intruders are hesitant to act if they think the occupant of a home is armed," he said.

If the danger of being shot were lessened, there undoubtedly would be an increase of housebreaking, Lee declared.