

TROUBLE SUFFERED NO SLUMP IN WISE COUNTY DURING PAST YEAR

Report of Deputy Clerk of the Circuit Court at Wise Indicates That People Were Busy Getting in and Out of Trouble

By C. A. JOHNSON, Deputy Clerk Circuit Court of Wise County

It may be of interest to the public to know something of the state of business in the Circuit Court of Wise County, the past year.

The clerks of the several courts of the state, as provided by law, shall annually before the 1st day of November, make to the Clerk of the House of Delegates at Richmond, a report of the number of days court was in session within the year ending on the last day of August preceding, and the state of business in the court during the said year; and the Clerk of the House of Delegates is required to make out and report to the General Assembly a condensed abstract from the report made to him by the several Clerks of the courts of the state, and cause the same to be published in the Journal of the House.

I might state in this connection, that the report made by the Clerk of Wise County, the first of last November, to the Clerk of the House of Delegates, showing the state of business in the Circuit Court of Wise County, had great weight with the Committee on Courts of Justice, etc., in creating the 33rd Judicial Circuit, composed of Wise County alone. The committee seeing from said report the great volume of business transacted in said court reported favorably the passage of the bill to establish the 33rd Judicial Circuit, which bill was passed by the Legislature last winter.

Of the 33 Judicial Circuits of the state, only two circuits are composed of one county. The first circuit composed of Norfolk county, and the 33rd circuit composed of Wise county, all the other circuits are composed of from two to six counties, or one county and one city, or in the case of the 10th Judicial Circuit, which is composed of the county of Henrico and the City of Richmond and the 11th circuit composed of Elizabeth City county, and the City of Newport News.

The Bill creating the 33rd Judicial Circuit (Wise County) provides for five terms of court a year, commencing on the 2nd Monday in March, May, July, September and November.

The report to the Clerk of the House of Delegates which I have just completed includes the business of the court at the October term, 1921, (under the old law) and the March, May and June terms, 1922, under the new act. This report does not show the number of cases of the different classes of cases that were on the docket at the beginning of the October term, 1921, but only shows the number of cases of the different classes, commenced with in the period stated.

Court was in session covering this

period 123 days, and I might say, real busy, hard working days; court convening at 9, sometimes 8, a. m., and adjourning at 6 and sometimes 7 p. m. with an occasional night session lasting until 10 or 11 o'clock.

962 pages of court order averaging approximately 450 words to the page were entered.

280 common law (jury) cases were commenced and 294 decided, some of which were very important and long drawn out cases, one of which lasted 12 days in the trial and in which many close and fine points of law were involved and argued, 3 common-law cases were removed to other courts and 85 left pending on the docket at the end of said period.

169 suits in Equity were commenced, 126 decided, 3 removed from other courts and 127 interlocutory decrees entered. 51 absolute divorces were granted, 28 of which were brought by husband and 23 by wives. 2 divorces were granted from bed and board. 354 suits in equity were left pending on the docket at the end of said period.

607 prosecutions were commenced. 361 decided, 190 dismissed and 86 left pending on the docket at the end of said period. Of the number dismissed, several were dismissed because the parties had left the state and were never in custody. Several cases were also retired from the docket for this reason. Fines were assessed aggregating \$21,000, and jail sentences were imposed mostly in liquor cases except women and boys exempt under the law by age, the parties were sentenced to work on the state convict road force. 24 automobiles, 3 horses, 4 mules and one wagon were forfeited to the Commonwealth and sold under order of the court for illegal use in transporting liquor, and the proceeds of sale, after the payment of costs, paid into the state treasury. Many other like cases were disposed of by payment of costs, where it was clearly shown to the court, by proper evidence, the owner had no knowledge of the automobile being used for the transportation of liquor.

41 persons were sentenced to the penitentiary, the terms ranging from 1 to 20 years and aggregating 129 years.

Lots of other business not enumerated above, was transacted. Many ex parte motions were heard—appointments of administrators, guardians, committees, receivers, county policemen, adoptions, pension applications, exoneration of taxes, and many other things too numerous to mention.

The untiring energy used by Judge Skeen, in dispatching the business

of his court, with the able assistance of C. R. McCorkle, Commonwealth's Attorney, is gradually diminishing the criminal docket, which was very much congested at the beginning of this year. While the docket is yet large, there was a fall off of approximately 200 cases the past year, on the criminal docket.

Beginning with March term, 1922, the first term held after the establishment of the new circuit, court has been in session every month, and will continue to be during the rest of the year, for the coming November term will last perhaps until the middle of December.

VIRGINIA MAKING RAPID STRIDES

In the Consolidation of Schools and in Matters Educational

Virginia is making rapid strides in the consolidation of schools. In discussing this important consideration, Dr. W. T. Sanger, Secretary State Board of Education, lately explained, "Obviously there are isolated communities in Virginia which for a number of years will not be able to support the consolidated school. Small standardized one and two-teacher schools will serve these communities effectively, as better housing, better equipment, and better teaching can be secured. Again, there are sparsely populated areas provided with fairly good roads which may be able to support consolidated schools of the usual type, but the movement in Virginia is to ward judicious consolidation, I am glad to say.

"Consolidated schools," Secretary Sanger continued, "naturally involve the transportation of pupils. In the older days transportation was effected by the use of horse-drawn school wagons. These are rapidly being replaced by motor trucks with well constructed and comfortably equipped school bus bodies. This form of transportation is almost as comfortable as the railway coach. The State Board of Education last year began the appropriation of \$100 toward the support of school wagons maintained in Virginia. Three hundred and forty-eight such wagons last year operated under this plan. This aid is offered again this year.

"One is often asked for a brief statement of the advantages of the consolidated school as over and against the one and two teacher schools. To my mind, Secretary Sanger stated, these are some of the outstanding advantages of the consolidated school: There is a better building and equipment, with a janitor to care for the building; less tardiness because of transportation of pupils; stronger school organization; longer school term; better qualified teachers and superior instruction; more adequate grading of pupils; sufficient teachers to give proper instruction; better playground facilities, with organized athletics; less sickness through better school supervision, improved sanitation, of pupils without exposure to the weather; often there are high school privileges stimulating children of the grades to prolong their schooling; about the same opportunities provided as for children living in towns; larger classes contributing to superior class spirit; supervision of play; improved attendance and strengthened school morale; a stimulating school atmosphere; a greater livelihood of developing community leadership because of stronger school leadership; the cost is ordinarily less than similar advantages provided in the city; a greater likelihood of segregating the backward pupil for special instruction; better living conditions may be provided teachers through a teacherage; an enriched course of study can be provided, with vocational instruction in agriculture and home economics.

"In addition to these advantages accruing from a consolidated school, there are several other noteworthy advantages; for example, farm values are increased through the development of the consolidated school. Statistics show that the consolidated school is an incentive to home ownership in the school area. Children attending the high school department of the consolidated school are enabled to live at home instead of boarding in town. The school becomes the center of community life in all of its aspects, with music and recreation emphasized. This school produces a salutary effect upon road building and maintenance.

"Whether these advantages will obtain in every community," said Secretary Sanger, "will depend upon the character of the community, and the size of the school population, and the cooperation that the school receives at the hands of the school patrons."



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