

# First Won Support At Home

## Judges Had Major Roles In Carolina

By WILL AREY.

"What is back of the wisecrack that North Carolina governors are elected from the east one term and from Shelby the next?" former Governor Oliver Maximilian Gardner was asked on the occasion of a recent visit to his home town.

Judges James L. and Edwin Yates Webb are primarily responsible for the force of the pun, thought Mr. Gardner, who recalled a cartoon in a Charlotte paper in 1920 which pictured four of the Cleveland county leaders each earnestly applying himself to a test of a cow representing the electorate. Gardner, who was lieutenant governor at that time, in the way of a reply remarked how contented the cow looked.

The former state's chief executive, now making his home in Washington, D. C., interprets the philosophy of the Shelby and Cleveland county section political leaders as being founded on principles of "starting out young and first gaining complete confidence of the home people." Mr. Gardner pointed out that no Cleveland county man has ever been repudiated at the polls by his own people, that none has ever interfered in home elections, and that there have been no factions between them—that they have always worked in perfect harmony. He stressed the fact that the one thing all political leaders agree upon in politics unless he has the absolute confidence and loyalty of his home people." He said the "Webb boys" had created these ideals in Cleveland county.

A study of the careers of the two men who are credited with the moulding of the successful political concepts of Cleveland county leaders brings to light, Gardner says, two active North Carolinians whose faith in democratic processes was absolute and who believed that the best government is a government economically administered. Both were distinct disciples of Thomas Jefferson. However, both were quite different in their public and judicial lives.

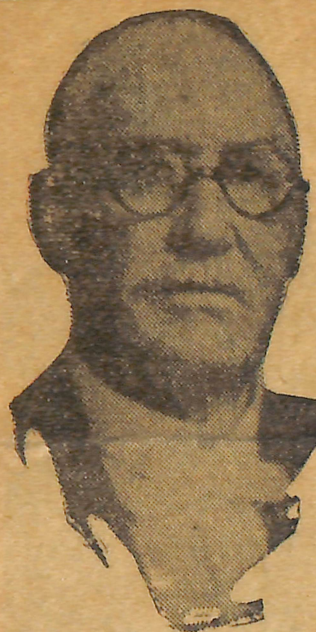
The late Judge Jim Webb was born at Shelby on November 12, 1854. His parents were George Milton and Priscilla Blanton Webb. Both his father and grandfather, the Rev. James Webb, were distinguished Baptist ministers. He attended Wake Forest college for two and one-half years, returning home to begin publishing the Shelby Banner. Later he studied law in the office of Capt. Plato Durham in Shelby until he entered the private law school of Chief Justice Pearson in Yadkin county. Judge Webb received his license in June, 1877.

### Owned First Typewriter.

Until 1893 he was a partner of Capt. J. W. Gidney; that year his brother returned home from school and the office of Webb and Webb was opened, with the first typewriter ever operated in Shelby.

He married Miss Kansas Love Andrews in 1878. Surviving him and his wife are two daughters, Mrs. O. Max Gardner and Mrs. Madge Webb Riley.

His public life began in 1880 when he was elected mayor of his home town. In 1883 he went to the state senate and in 1887 served as president pro-tem of that body. Acquaintances agree he was "a useful and strong member and grew in the esteem of those with whom he was thrown." He was prominently mentioned for lieutenant governor in 1899, and an Asheville paper at the



JAMES L. WEBB.



E. YATES WEBB.

Yates Webb, was a college athlete, lawyer, orator, legislator, congressman and is now a federal jurist. He was born May 23, 1872, the youngest child in his family. He still lives at Shelby. The Webb brothers' homes are side by side on one of the most beautiful and historic streets in western North Carolina.

### Active In Sports

Yates was educated at the Shelby schools, including the Shelby Military institute, and at Wake Forest college, the University of North Carolina and the University of Virginia. At Wake Forest and Chapel Hill he was an active baseball and football player.

In November, 1894, when he began practicing law with his "big brother," he was married to Miss Willie Simmons, daughter of Prof. W. G. Simmons, of Wake Forest college. He soon made his initial attempt at the polls in the race for mayor of his home town. His failure in that mayoralty election is now considered by Judge Webb as a blessing, because he believes that success in that election day probably would have served as a checkmate to his career. From 1898 to 1902 he was chairman of the executive committee of the Democratic party in Cleveland county. In 1900 he was elected state senator, and in 1902 was elected representative from the ninth North Carolina district, a position he held for the next 17 years.

He was the author of a number of laws which had great influence on the nation, among them being the Webb-Kenyon act, which protected dry states from liquor shipments from wet states; the war-time ship bill, and the act erecting the present monument on the site of the Battle of Kings Mountain. In connection with that and numerous other legislative acts, Representative Webb delivered eloquent addresses and often led the fight for or against bills pending before the national Congress. His 17 years service in Washington can be followed by newspaper stories and editorials of that period.

He was first vice chairman and made the keynote speech of the Democratic convention in 1900 when Aycock was nominated for governor. From 1914 to 1919, which included the period of the world war, Judge Webb was chairman of the powerful committee on the judiciary, which had to pass on much legislation.

On November 5, 1919, President Woodrow Wilson appointed Congressman Webb United States district judge for the western district of North Carolina, the position he has held since. He frequently sits with the circuit court of appeals at Richmond, Va. In western North Carolina Judge Webb is said to handle more cases than are disposed of in any one southern state. Ranking as one of the most brilliant and most serviceable Carolinians of his day, there are few in the state better known or admired.

### Honored By Colleges

Judge Webb has been made a doctor of laws by both Davidson and Wake Forest colleges.

On November 18, 1923, Mrs. Willie Webb died. She is survived by three children, Edwin, Jr., Elizabeth (Mrs. Roy N. Veatch), and William Y. Webb. Edwin is now in Atlanta, Ga., and the other two children in Washington, D. C. On October 28, 1928, Judge Webb was married to Mrs. Alice Pender Taylor of Tarboro.

Judge Webb pitches no worse baseball games—a habit of his when in Congress—doesn't greatly mind missing a football game or two a season and by no means accepts every invitation to make a speech, but he hates to lose his golf. He is the author of two holes-in-one.

The chief difference in the lives of these two moulders of one section of the state's leaders is that Judge Jim's experience was purely

North Carolina experienced while Yates has been purely federal. Both men looked and acted like judges and spoke with force and precision. They were extremely popular and held the complete confidence of the public at large.

As judges, Jim was probably more tolerant in punishments than Yates although the latter is not excessive in his sentences. Both of the brothers, Gardner says, always looked behind the life of a man before them to see what made him go wrong in crime, no matter how hopeless he seemed.

### Active Against Liquor.

Judge Yates has been especially active in his warfare against intoxicating drinks. He has delivered many addresses on the subject, and has been perhaps the greatest single force in keeping liquor stores out of the entire western part of the state. He regards liquor like a rattlesnake, holding that it should be killed. Judge Jim held that whisky could never be wiped out entirely and believed in temperance.

Textile John Schenck of Lawn-dale says: "Judge Jim was the most remarkable man I have ever known. He was level-headed, sensible, tolerant, and manly. His strongest characteristic was liberalism and he had a good feeling toward everyone that lived. I never heard him utter an unkind word about any man. He was my ideal man."

These two men who apparently had much influence on the activities of Shelby's Governors Hoey and Gardner never had a suspicion or scandal attached with their names.

So, today Gardner claims these two brothers replace the "why" in the Cleveland county philosophy of political leadership at a time when the present state's chief executive is from Shelby, and when the son of the last western governor, also of Shelby, has taken this year his seat in the state legislature at the age of 27. This young senator, Ralph Gardner, polled 1,610 votes out of a possible 1,700 in the voting district of his father's textile mill, sticking to the family strategy of first securing absolute confidence and loyalty of home people.

along in life today than in the midst of their years, they occupy distinguished positions, they possess the confidence of the people of the State and elsewhere, they have been successful in the mere matter of acquiring material wealth and better than all of these, they have become an ornament to the name of an honored, but humble parentage. They have fought their way through without the "pull" for which so many are looking today, without the "luck" upon which so many others are depending, without trying to find the short cuts which yet others are seeking, but by the irksome tedium of toil, by honest, persevering endeavour, by fidelity to every duty which faced them and by their high moral idealisms, they have come to the top,—a route which is never closed to any young man and a crown that is assured every one of them who make up their minds to follow this same path.

### TWO BROTHERS.

The Charlotte News

The two courts that are now being held in this city, Federal and State, are made unique by reason of the fact that they are being presided over by two brothers, Judge Yates Webb of the United States court and Judge James L. Webb of the State court. No two jurists in North Carolina, it can be safely hazarded, are held in more popular regard or have measured more efficiently up to the standards required of them in their lofty profession, than these two brothers. They have been signally honored by their people, they have never betrayed the trust which was popularly placed in them.

Judge Yates Webb has been wearing the ermine of the Federal court for over three years, during which time he has come into wide favor for his conduct of this court, for his fearless defense of the laws of the land, for the brilliancy of his charges, for the uniform kindness which he has exhibited to members of the bar, for his humaneness and charity, for his sympathy toward all defendants, notably the young, and for his determination at all times to mingle mercy with judgment.

For sixteen years prior to his appointment to the Federal bench by former President Wilson, Judge Webb was Congressman from this, the Ninth district, and during that time, he was all but idolized by the thousands of his party within the district as well as respected and honored by the opponents within the other party. His record was clean; his official life was above reproach; he ever held the interests of the people to be the charge placed upon him and his representation in Congress might have been perpetuated for many years but for the honor which Mr. Wilson offered to confer upon him.

Judge James L. Webb has an even more singular record in some respects than his younger brother, particularly in the matter of his political career. He has held office continuously for approximately 30 years. In 1893, he was appointed solicitor of the ninth district by the late Governor Hoke which office he held without opposition until 1905 when he stepped up from the solicitorship to the Superior court bench and for these seventeen years that he has held the judgeship, he has never had an opponent, giving him the record of never having been opposed during the entire 30 years of his public and official life.

The story of the rise of these two men from our neighboring county of Cleveland, the career they have carved out and the success they have attained, the honors which have been multiplied upon them and the distinctions which they have earned, is illustrative of the possibilities which are offered every young man in this commonwealth, and under the form of government in our republic, to make the most of themselves.

The father of these two jurists was an humble Baptist minister, whose life providence decreed should be lived in the most unfortunate period in the history of the South, right at the close of the Civil War, when the South was prostrated financially and economically, and when it was more difficult to "get along" than it ever had been before, or ever has been since. The father, struggling against the adversities of that period and having chosen a profession, the most underpaid of all with which educated and leading men have ever become identified, raised a family of children who, with the inheritance only of his own good name and the strength of character which was pre-eminent in him, stepped out in the arena of the world's work and, although no further



# Judge Webb Ends 20th Year On Federal Bench

Nov. 16 - 1939

Judge Edwin Yates Webb, whose service as United States congressman and federal jurist extends almost back to the turn of the century, will observe on Saturday the 20th anniversary of his inauguration as a United States judge.

It was back in 1919, when Woodrow Wilson occupied the White House, that the Shelby attorney, then a congressman, resigned from the federal law-making body to accept the presidential appointment as federal judge. His appointment by Wilson came on October 31, his confirmation by the senate a day or two later, and his commissioning by the wartime president on November 5.

Congressman Webb, about to become Judge Webb, journeyed to Richmond, and there was sworn in by the late Judge J. C. Pritchard. After sitting on the circuit court of appeals for a week, he went to Asheville the following week and held his first regular term of United States district court in the mountain city.

## 'Dean' of Circuit

He stands today as the oldest man in the circuit in point of service, including both circuit and district judges. Many men have died in federal judgeships since Judge Webb entered the bench, and many new faces have made their appearance among the comparatively small group of jurists who serve as federal judges.

About to round out his "first 20 years of service," Judge Webb today recalled vividly much of the detail that has paraded before him and his federal courts during these 20 years. Outstanding is the memory of the presidential commission, the day of being sworn in, that first court of appeals session, that first federal court he held in Asheville, and various incidents that have loomed from time to time in the court terms that have followed each other with precision-like regularity. He recalls, too, the personalities it has been his pleasure to know—and in these personalities Judge Webb finds some of his fondest recollections.

During these 20 years Judge Webb has held 40 regular terms each in Asheville, Charlotte, Statesville, Shelby and Bryson City, making a total of 200 regular sessions. In addition, he has conducted something like 40 special sessions during the 20 years, has held approximately 2,500 chambers hearings in Shelby, and passed judgment on approximately 12,000 criminal defendants, and presided over the settlement of many thousands of civil matters.

Judge Webb's public career started when he was elected to the North Carolina senate in 1908, after having been educated at Wake Forest college, the University of North Carolina and the University of Virginia. He had begun the practice of law in Shelby, his home town, in 1894, after he had gone to the University of Virginia for a special three-months course in 1896.

In 1902, following two years in the state senate, he was elected to the United States congress, served continuously until he resigned to accept the federal judgeship. At the time of his resignation was a member of the judicial committee, of which he had been chairman, and was given honor at a banquet tendered after he became a judge. One of his prized possessions is a valuable watch presented him on that occasion by members of the judicial committee.

## Judge And Mrs. Webb Celebrate Their Golden Wedding Anniversary

Feb. 27 - 1930

Tonight at 8 o'clock Judge and Mrs. J. L. Webb were married fifty years ago.

They were married at the home of the bride's parents, Dr. and Mrs. W. P. Andrews on S. Washington street. The home stood on the lot where Mr. and Mrs. D. W. Royster now live. The only person now living in Shelby who attended the wedding was Mr. Sam Andrews, a brother of Mrs. Webb.

A great many will remember attending the 50th wedding anniversary of Judge Webb's father and mother, Rev. and Mrs. G. M. Webb.

What richer joy could ever be  
Along life's happy way

Than to send this greeting to you  
On your Golden Wedding day.  
May every glad thought flow to you,  
May every good wish go to you,  
May love abide with both of you,  
And gladden all your way.

Best wishes and love  
From "Patt" Alexander

CHARLOTTE NCAR 747P FEB 28 1930

JUDGE AND MRS JAMES L WEBB

SHELBY NCAR

CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES ON THIS DAY OF DAYS MAY THE YEARS  
TO COME BE FILLED WITH AS MUCH HAPPINESS AS THOSE PASSED MUCH LOVE

JERRY AND JOHNSIE

CHARLOTTE NCAR 1030A MAR 1 1930

JUDGE AND MRS JAMES L WEBB

SHELBY NCAR

WE HEARTILY CONGRATULATE YOU ON YOUR FIFTY SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF

YOUR WEDDING MAY A KIND AND MERCIFUL PROVIDENCE BE WITH

YOU UNTIL THE JOURNEYS END

MR AND MRS HERIOT CLARKSON

Judge and Mrs. J. L. Webb,  
Shelby, North Carolina,  
My dear Friends,

Fifty years of wedded  
love is an unanswerable  
argument for the beauty and  
vitality of the home, in this  
day of hasty marriages  
and quick separation.

Wisely and substantially  
you have built your home  
and reared the brilliant  
children with which God  
has endowed it; and  
with both wisdom and



distinction each of you have  
served in the different fields  
and Capacities to which duty  
has called, and throughout  
your useful and beautiful  
lines you have been  
true to the Lord Jesus  
Christ.

Permit me, therefore,  
to join your children and  
many friends in extended  
hearty congratulations on  
this happy occasion, with  
the hope and prayer that  
you may be permitted to  
walk "hand in hand yet  
many years," and that "oh  
evening tide there may  
be light."

Sincerely,  
Jens Hall,

Shelby, N.C.  
Feb. 27. 1928