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Early Days

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land County was carved out of Lincoln and Rutherford, there were two especially brilliant young lawyers in Lincoln county, according to stories in Griffin's History and Sherrill's Annals of Lincoln County.

One of these young men was Thomas Dews, Jr., who was born in the Isle of Gurnsey. (Incidentally, he was the great great uncle of Mrs. C. J. Woodson.) He taught for a while at Pleasant Retreat school, later, at the age of 24 he represented Lincoln county in the Legislature, and after that served as solicitor. The other brilliant attorney was Co. Jas. R. Dodge, a nephew of Washington Irving.

At the April term, 1832, of the Rutherford Superior Court, Judge David Swain, who was afterwards Governor, and later was president of the University of North Carolina, was presiding.

In the bar were Samuel Hillman, Tom Dews, and J. R. Dodge.

Punning Epitaph

While Col. Dodge was addressing the jury, Judge Swain wrote on a slip of paper a punning epitaph and passed it among the lawyers to their great amusement. When Col. Dodge had finished his speech he found lying on his table:

"Epitaph of James R. Dodge, Esq., Att'y at Law. Here lies a Dodge who dedged a deal of evil. Who after dodging all he could, he could not dodge the Devil."

Mr. Dodge read the paper, turned it over and wrote on the other side: Epitaph of Three Attorneys. Here lies a Hillman and a Swain, whose lot let no man choose; They lived in sin and died in pain, and the Devil got his Dews (dues)".

Thomas Dews, Jr., was drowned when he was 30 years old, in 1838.