

**Died Yesterday**  
**Feb 22, 1939.**



**JOHN R. GURLEY**

**CHIEF OF POLICE**  
**DIED YESTERDAY**

**John R. Gurley, Wilson's Police Chief for 12 Years, Succumbed in Local Hospital Late Yesterday After Illness of Several Days; Served Under Pershing in Three Campaigns.**

Funeral services for John Rufus Gurley, 54, for 12 years chief of the Wilson police department, who died in a local hospital at five o'clock yesterday following an illness of about ten days, were conducted from the Primitive Baptist Church here this afternoon at two o'clock. The services were conducted by Elder S. B. Denny and interment was made in the Pikeville cemetery, in Wayne county.

Active pallbearers were the following members of the Police Department: Messrs. Theo. Barnes, Claude Fulghum, Frank Williams, Edgar Winborne, Albert Privette and J. A. Baker.

Honorary pallbearers were: Messrs. Bud Cooper, O. B. Beland, Luther Barnes, J. R. Garris, Ray Hartis, C. P. Hocutt, O. J. Skinner, H. A. Warren, Ned Wheeler, Rossie Gay, L. V. High, J. D. Lewis, Thurman Flowers, Dick Watson, Carl Fulghum, J. A. Fulford, L. R. Ramsey, John Gill, Wade Gardner, John W. Woodard, A. C. Hinton, Sheriff W. A. Weathersby, Mayor Charles B. McLean, Dr. Ralph Fike, Dr. M. A. Pittman and Sam Whitehurst, of Greenville, N. C.

Flower bearers were: Mesdames L. R. Ramsey, Rossie Gay, C. P. Hocutt, Bud Cooper, Claude Fulghum, O. B. Beland, Ray Hartis, O. J. Skinner, Theo. Barnes, Ned Wheeler, L. V. High, J. A. Baker, Thurman Flowers, Luther Barnes, J. R. Garris, H. A. Warren, Edgar Winborne, J. D. Lewis, A. A. Privette, Frank Williams, J. R. Minshe, J. A. Fulford and Pauline Miller.

The deceased is survived by his widow and three children, Wallace, Velda and Annie; three brothers, Walter, Aldon and Andrew and a sister, Mrs. Viola Pipkin, all of Wayne county.

Chief Gurley was born in Wayne county in 1884, the son of the late N. D. and Evelyn Woodard Gurley, of Pikeville. After spending his boyhood and early manhood on the family farm in Wayne county, Mr. Gurley joined the United States army on May 8, 1911. He saw service in three campaigns under General Pershing, first in the Philippines, when the man who later became the commander-in-chief of the American Expeditionary Forces in France was a captain, later in Mexico in the chase after Villa, when he served General Pershing as an orderly and still later in the World war in France.

Twelve days after being discharged from the service on May 7, 1914, Chief Gurley reenlisted in the ambulance corps from which he was honorably discharged as a sergeant on September 3, 1919. He served in the Philippines from July 3, 1911 to February 11, 1912, and returning to this country was a member of the Mexican expedition.

After returning to this country at the end of the World war and being mustered out of the army, he joined the Greenville, N. C., police department, and in 1925, he came here as a member of the local department. After serving as motorcycle and traffic officer he was elevated to the position of sergeant and in March, 1927, was made chief of the department, which position he held until his death.

Chief Gurley, considered by po-  
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lice officials throughout three states as the organizer of an efficient police department, was extremely active in numerous law enforcement and veterans organizations. He was at one time a vice president of the North Carolina Sheriffs and Police Chiefs association and at the time of his death was an honorary vice president of the International Association of Police Chiefs. He served for a number of years as commander of the local unit of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and was an active member of the local post of the American Legion.

During Chief Gurley's illness, Detective C. P. Hocutt has been acting as head of the local police department.

All city offices and offices in the court house closed this afternoon during the services.

The entire membership of the local police and fire departments and also members of the Robert B. Anderson Post of the American Legion attended the funeral in a body.

There was no Recorder's Court today, Recorder Charles B. McLean closed the session of court for the day out of respect to Chief Gurley.

At Police headquarters this afternoon Mrs. Jeanette M. Grainger, Town Welfare head, took charge of the department's office while several outsiders were called in to help with temporary police work in the town assisted by the officers of nearby towns who were dispatched here to relieve local officers during the services.

Among out of town persons attending the funeral services were Chief J. R. Thomas and eight officers of the Rocky Mount police department; Chief E. J. Tew and Detective Chink Rhodes and several officers of the Goldsboro police department; Solicitor Don Gilliam, Sheriff Ed Bardin and several officers of the Tarboro police department; Chief L. T. Lucas, of the Farmville police department; Chief George Clark and several members of the Greenville police department; Chief A. L. Singleton, Officer Jack Pittman and several other members of the Washington police department; several highway patrolmen, Atlantic Coast Line and Norfolk-Southern railroad detectives, three Greensboro officers and many others.

MEMORIAM TO  
JOHN R. GURLEY

Fifteen years ago John R. Gurley was appointed to the police force of the Town of Wilson as a patrolman, and within a short while was promoted to a sergeant—and in 1927 was appointed Chief of the Department. At the time he was appointed Chief of the Department it was a disorganization instead of an organization, however within a period of six months he had straightened the department out and had it functioning in a proper and business like manner—and so directed it to the time of his death. He organized and has maintained a police department which is considered by the police agencies in three states to be as good as any in the three states, and far better than some of them in towns and cities of equal population. John Gurley loved the men working under his command—and they loved him. No man ever lived who had a higher regard for his subordinates than John Gurley had—and no man ever live who would do more for his men than John Gurley would in time of need, trouble, misunderstanding, frictions, etc., which arises often in any organization. John Gurley had no pets among his men, he thought just as much of one as he did the other—and treated all of them alike in any and all dealings with them.

When John Gurley was appointed Chief of Police of the Wilson Police Department in 1927 I was appointed Desk Sergeant under his command, which position I have held since, so naturally I have been affiliated with him in a manner to know his principles and personality, and I wish to say that no man I have ever come in contact with had any better principles and personality than John Gurley had. There was absolutely nothing crooked about him; it was ever his desire to treat everyone he came in contact with right—and give them a square deal in every way, whether it be an enemy or friend; a stranger or otherwise. All the police officers who have served under his command are mourning his departure—Because they have lost not only a boss they loved and were anxious to serve efficiently at all times, but a friend who has been a friend indeed to them in every way it was humanly possible to be.

Sgt. J. R. Garris.

# WILSONIA

By JOHN G. THOMAS

There were men, perhaps, with more "book learning" than he, but there were few that I have known who had a better "common sense" knowledge.

He had been all over the world and done many more things than most of us. His life had been full of romance in the stricter sense and there was color there and life as it is lived by the adventurer. He covered four continents in his travels through life and he knew what this world was all about.

Not suspicious of his fellow man he was, however, careful, and he knew exactly what he was doing.

He abhorred politicians and at the same time loved his fellow man.

He was not talkative to strangers but there were times, with friends, when he would unbend and a series of tales would pour forth that would hold the listener's interest for hours.

I can remember the first time I ever saw him. I was new at this reporting game then. I walked into the police station here one morning, the first after I came to Wilson five years ago, and went to the desk. He was sitting back reading a morning newspaper. I asked for him, not knowing who he was, and he introduced himself.

"I just want to say 'hello,'" I said. "I'll be around to see you every day or so to see what's doing."

After that I came around three, four, five, sometimes ten times a day and got to know him well.

To a young man just starting out I was, to him, just an innocent kid. He had known Lowell Thomas and Floyd Gibbons at the front in France and in Mexico, but to him all newspapermen were alike and he shied clear of them—which was perhaps right.

But he was cordial to me and to everyone who approached him unless others did something wrong and then he was unbending. He never allowed any fooling in his work nor would he allow any annoyance from any outsider. He went ahead and did what he thought best and "to h— with everyone else."

He was full of tales of his Texas days and stories about the Texas Rangers. He would talk by the hour of his trips into Mexico with Pershing after Villa and would revile the newspaper crowd that followed the army.

His best stories were about the news hounds who sat in the hotels in El Paso during the Villa mess and who wrote of what was happening 100 or so miles away without even knowing what it was all about.

His love of horses was unbounded and he looked well on such an animal and would ride through this section in the early morning as he used to ride the hills around El Paso and down in Mexico.

He has led a life that most men would envy. He was good, and kind and lovable.

There is not a person today in Wilson who can say an unkind word about him.

There are many more persons in this world, in higher positions than he held, who are nowhere near as good as he.

But yesterday Chief John R. Gurley passed to his reward and Wilson lost a good citizen and a friend.