

# PERSONALITIES of the NORTHWEST



**MISS VERA SOYARS**

Muddy roads, and even fire and flood, have failed to stop Miss Vera Soyars, veteran rural mail carrier, who for 20 years has gone out almost daily from the Westfield post office to extend Uncle Sam's postal service to hundreds of families in Surry and Stokes counties. A native of Patrick county, Virginia, Miss Soyars has spent much of her life in Surry county, her family having owned extensive farming interests near Dobson. She still looks after those farming properties and others in Wythe county, Virginia, although she makes her home at Westfield. It was almost 20 years ago that Miss Soyars first started on old Route 1 out of the Westfield post office, carrying the mail over the rough Chestnut Ridges, traveling over roads that were impassable except by horse and buggy, and there were times when even a buggy could not get through. That route was later consolidated with the other Westfield rural route, and in recent years she has covered the longer route in an automobile. However, the route is even yet too rough for the most recent model cars, and she is forced to use a 10-year-old model. It was during the "horse-and-buggy" days that Miss Soyars faced her most exciting experience. Sometimes the smoke hung low over the roads from brush fires, and sometimes sudden downpours of rain sent streams out of their banks. It was in one of those quick floods that Miss Soyars' buggy was swept down stream, her horse being drowned. She herself was barely able to reach the bank by grabbing at overhanging bushes. Miss Soyars has a neat little home at Westfield, a home almost entirely surrounded by flowers. These flowers are her hobby, and much of her spare time is spent working in her neatly planned flower beds.