

# Yadkin Man Who Threw His Three Children Into Well Is Found Insane

Yadkinville, Feb. 4. — Gene Scates, 30, Negro tenant farmer, was committed to the criminal insane division of the Negro State Hospital for Insane at Goldsboro here yesterday by Judge H. Hoyle Sink in Yadkin Superior Court after a jury had found him insane.

Scates was charged with murder in connection with the deaths of his three children, Dorothy, 8; Grace Helen, 6; and Alice Mae, 2. The State charged that he threw the three children into a well at his home near here and

then jumped in after them. He was not injured.

Former Solicitor J. Erle McMichael of Winston-Salem told the court that Scates was unable to plead to the bill of indictment charging murder.

Judge Sink ordered a hearing, and four witnesses testified during a 20-minute trial that Scates is insane and is becoming progressively more so. Those testifying were Sheriff Bill Moxley; Deputy Ed Wishon, who is jailor; Coroner J. F. Brown; and L. C. Scates of Tobaccoville, a brother of the defendant.

In contrast to his previous actions, Scates was calm throughout the hearing and made no effort to participate. Since the night his children went to their deaths in the well, Scates has been shouting and praying in a loud voice.

The jury was out five minutes before returning its verdict.

The defendant had been described by neighbors and residents of Yadkinville as a respectable, hard worker, one who attended church regularly and had never been known to drink. His father, John Scates of Tobaccoville, said, "I raised four boys, and Gene was the best of them."

According to evidence, Scates suddenly went berserk. Shouting "Jesus says we got to go," he grabbed up two of his three children, Dorothy and Alice Mae, rushed to the back of the house and thrust both little girls through a 12-inch opening into the well.

His wife and the children's mother, Ruth Louise Scates, picked up Grace Helen and followed him to the back porch. His wife told officers that he grabbed the third child and forced the child through the same opening, at the same time attempting to push in his wife.

When Ruth fought him, he himself jumped into the well,

where he was heard singing and shouting, "I got religion." Some time later he ascended the walls of the well, emerged, and calmly surrendered to the sheriff.

The Scates family lived on the farm of Paul Price Davis, about seven miles east of Yadkinville on Highway 421.

Bodies of the children were recovered by Will McCollum, a well-digger.

## NOTICE OF RE-SALE OF LAND

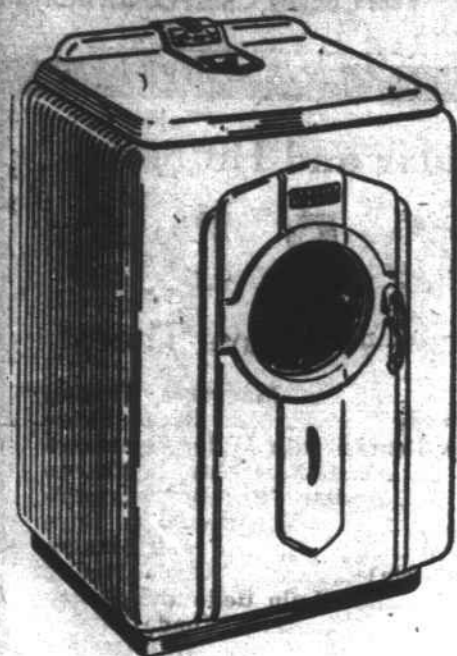
Under and by virtue of an order of the Superior Court of Wilkes county, made in the special proceeding entitled Mrs. Addie Johnson (widow) vs. Glenn Johnson, Denver Johnson, et al, the same being No. — on the special proceeding docket of said court, the undersigned commissioner will, on the 22nd day of February, 1947, at 12:00 o'clock Noon, at the Court-house door in Wilkesboro, North Carolina, offer for re-sale to the highest bidder for cash that certain tract of land lying and being in New Castle township, Wilkes county, North Carolina, and more particularly described as follows, to-wit:

Beginning on a red oak, then running west to a pine; then north with Honeycutt's line and McCarter's line to a black gum; then west with Dr. Heirl line to the maple corner; then west with Englen's line to a stake; thence south course with R. C. Johnson's line to a birch; then down the drain with said line to the creek; then down said line to G. J. Johnson's line and with said line to corner down the creek; then north to the beginning, containing 70 acres, more or less.

That there has been filed with the Clerk of the Superior Court an upset bid on said land in the sum of \$25.00. The bid on this land will begin at \$25.00, and the terms of the sale are cash upon confirmation.

This 6th day of February, 1947.  
TOMMYE M. CARTER,  
Commissioner

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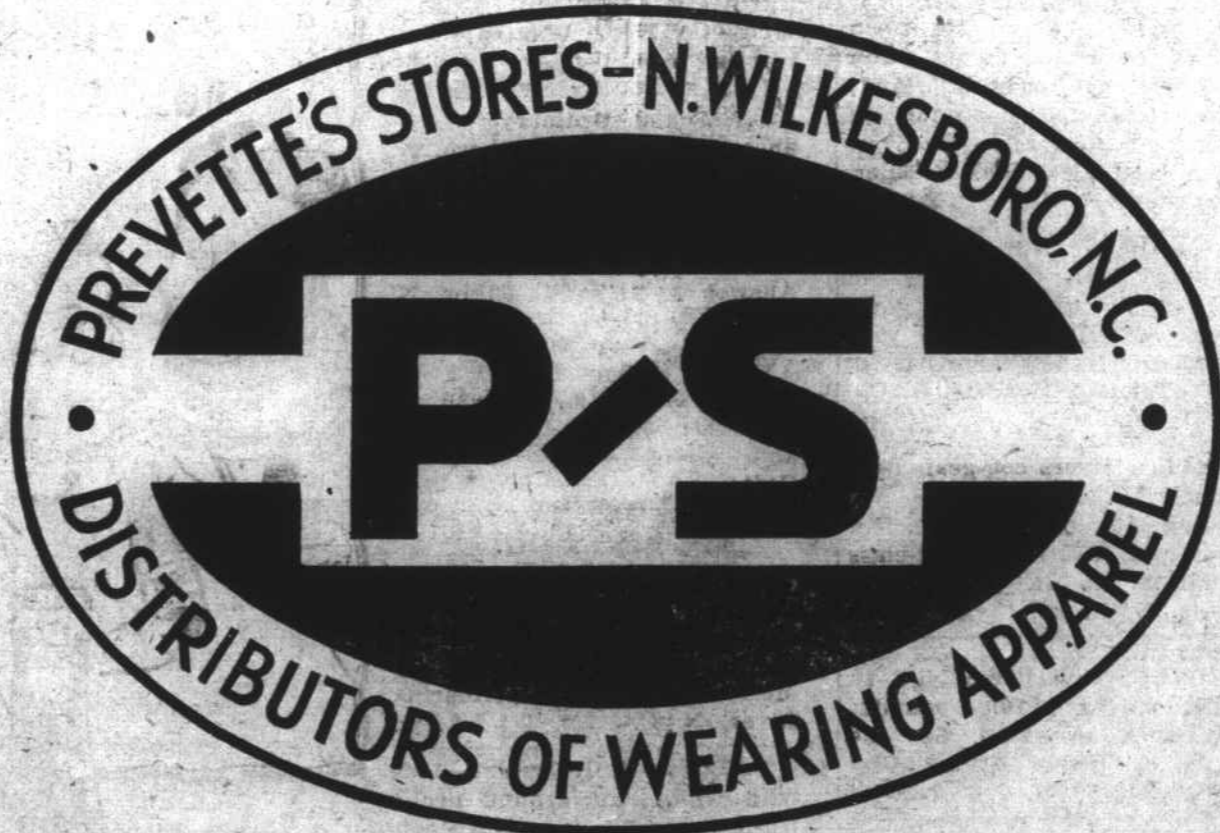
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