

Officers Break Up Series Of Tobacco Thefts In County

Four Men Jailed and at Least Two Others Are Wanted In Connection With Case

That it is difficult to sell surplus tobacco on the 1940 marketing cards and not be caught was well proved in this county yesterday when irregular marketing was traced to Richard Bennett, colored farmer in Poplar Point Township. Bennett, his brother, M. K. Bennett, and Loely and Herbert Purvis are being held in the county jail and officers are looking for at least two other men in connection with a series of tobacco thefts.

Richard Bennett, operator of a small farm in Poplar Point, set a trap for himself when he started selling what appeared to be a surplus on his marketing card. Planting a lone acre, Bennett sold more than a thousand pounds, and workers in the office of the county farm agent noted the sales as they continued to increase. The case was called to the attention of officers and an investigation was started, a late report stating that the men had sold approximately 2,400 pounds presumably the production from one acre. Yesterday, Bennett explained that he wanted more poundage, that he had sold all the crop from the prolific acre.

Special representatives of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration were called in, and they ordered Bennett detained for an investigation. Questioned by Representative Aiken and county officers, Bennett following his arrest about 4 o'clock Monday afternoon by Deputy Bill Haislip, admitted that he had been selling tobacco for Loely and Herbert Purvis and Bob Smallwood. The two Purvis men, tenants on Farmer Bob Everett's farm in Poplar Point, were arrested within two hours, and they admitted they had been stealing tobacco from Mr. Everett and selling it on Bennett's card. They implicated M. K. Bennett and he was arrested at 7:30 last evening. Additional evidence was gained as each new arrest was made, officers stating that the ring had been operating on other farms in that section, including possibly Victor Champion's.

Richard, when questioned this morning, claimed that he had stolen no tobacco. He pointed out that the others stole the tobacco, placed it on the warehouse floors in his name and then a division of the money was effected. The ring was cracked yesterday before settlement was effected for sales made earlier in the morning.

Chief Wayland Jones, in charge of tobacco quotas for the AAA, is expected here today from Wilson to take charge of the case. No hearing had been scheduled for the accused men up until noon today.

According to reports reaching here, the sale of surplus tobacco on a marketing card is the first case

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Jas. Asa Griffin Dies In Griffins

James Asa Griffin, retired farmer, died at his home in Griffins Township yesterday morning at 11:30 o'clock of a stroke of paralysis suffered the evening before. In his usual health Sunday, Mr. Griffin started to retire about 8 o'clock. Taken suddenly ill he sat down on the bed and told members of his family that he was having a stroke. Within two hours he was unconscious, the end coming gradually.

The son of the late John Daniel and Charity Ann Griffin, he was born almost 70 years ago in the neighborhood where he spent all his life. About forty years ago he was married to Miss Mamie Gray Corey, who survives with six children, Daniel, of Cross Roads; James R., Mrs. J. D. Bland, Howard, Melton and Bettie Gray Griffin, all of Griffins Township. He also leaves a brother, A. Dawse Griffin, and three sisters, Mrs. Mary Griffin Corey, Mrs. James Griffin and Mrs. Clytie Griffin, all of this county.

Mr. Griffin, a victim of rheumatism, had been in feeble health for nearly 21 years. He was forced to retire as a farmer but was able to be up and about until his last illness. He was a member of the Primitive Baptist Church for about 15 years, holding membership at Lily's Hall at the time of his death. Funeral services are being conducted at the late home this afternoon at 2 o'clock. Interment will follow in the family cemetery, near the home.

Fire Department Receives First Call In Some Time

Starting from a spark, fire burned a part of one shingle on the roof of the E. Ramey home on West Main Street here last Saturday morning at 10:35 o'clock. The fire was just starting to spread to other parts of the dry roof just as the volunteer firemen reached the home and ripped off the burning shingle.

The call was the first received by the local fire company in several weeks.

SPECIAL DRAFT BOARD MEMBERS



Recognized as special members of the Martin County Draft Board, Dr. James S. Rhodes, left, will handle the physical examinations, and Attorney Wheeler Martin, right, will review appeals of draftees. The two local men, just as the three regular members of the board, will receive no remuneration for their services, the group of five accepting the unwelcome assignments as their patriotic duty.



SPEAKS THURSDAY



One of two political rallies in this county in connection with the approaching election will be held in Robersonville Thursday night of this week when Herbert Bonner, First District Congressional Nominee, will address Martin County Democrats. The date and place for the second rally will be announced shortly. Democratic Executive Committee Chairman Elbert Peel said today.

Fifty Home-Made Mattresses Ready

White rural families in Martin County made 22 mattresses during the first two-weeks period they worked and colored families made 28 mattresses in the past two-weeks period, completing four weeks the project has been in operation.

Rural families who received a gross income of \$600 last year are eligible to receive these mattresses for \$1.00 if they will help make them at the center in Everetts. Applications for mattresses may be secured from the home or county agent's office at the agricultural building.

Few Register For November Election In Martin County

After showing no interest whatever, on Saturday, October 12, in the just-around-the-corner election, a number of county citizens had their names entered on the registration books last Saturday, according to incomplete reports coming from most of the precinct election officials. The registration for political elections was handled almost in its entirety last May when Democrats asserted their strength by placing more than 5,300 names on the books against 94 placed there by the Republicans.

The Republicans might increase their number to 100, but added strength for both parties in the general election November 5th, over that shown in the last primary is expected to be small. Most of the new names placed on the books recently are those of persons who recently became of age or who moved into the county. Next Saturday is the last day for registering. Any one who registered last May does not have to register again to vote in the presidential election next month.

Well-Known Citizen Passes In Hospital After Brief Illness

Funeral Services Were Held Yesterday Afternoon for Theodore Roberson

Theodore Roberson, prominent local citizen, died in a Washington hospital last Sunday noon following an illness of short duration. Apparently in his usual health, Mr. Roberson went into Bertie County with Mr. Jesse Ambers Saturday morning about 11 o'clock to purchase a few fresh eggs and chickens for his family at a small country store. While there he hemorrhaged from the stomach. Returning here he visited a doctor's office for treatment and expressed a wish against being sent to a hospital. Going to his home in New Town, he gradually became worse and consented to enter a hospital. Several hemorrhages followed, and he told members of the family that while he was without any pain he was so weak that he knew death was a matter of only a short time.

Mr. Roberson had been in declining health for some time, suffering with enlarged veins. However, he never complained and even as the end rapidly approached he declared he was without pain.

The son of the late Harmon Thomas and Clementina Coltrain Roberson, he was born in Griffins Township, not far from the Farm Life School, 61 years ago. He spent his early life on the farm, attending the few months of schooling provided each year. When a young man he moved to Williamston and entered the employ of the late C. D. Carstarphen as a clerk. A number of years later he entered the clothing business for himself with P. H. Brown. He also operated a market for a few years and later built and operated an inn on the edge of town, near Skewarkey. Failing health forced him into retirement, but he was able to be out most of the time and was fairly active until he was fatally stricken last Saturday.

About thirty years ago he married Miss Annie Lee Roberson, of Robersonville, and established a home in Williamston. He was well-known throughout this section, and enjoyed an extensive friendship. His walk through life was marked for its friendliness and cheerfulness. He knew no enemies and he enjoyed the fullness of each new day. Worries, while he must have had his share, were never reflected in his friendly greetings to the many hundreds of customers he served as an employee and as the owner of a business.

Besides his wife he leaves five children, Mrs. J. B. Barnhill, Jr., of Everetts; Marvin, George Lee, C. T. and Dallas Roberson, all of Williamston. He also leaves four brothers, J. J. Roberson, of Griffins; H. Thaddeus, Joseph and Claudius Roberson, all of Williamston, and two sisters, Mrs. Ephraim Peel and Mrs. Abe Corey, both of Griffins, a half brother, David Roberson, of California, and a half sister, Miss Mary E. Coltrain, of Griffins Township.

Funeral services were conducted at the home on Williams Street here yesterday afternoon at 3 o'clock by Rev. John Coffey. Interment was in the local cemetery.

Eye Clinic Is Held For School Pupils

The State Commission for the Blind in cooperation with the County Health and Welfare Departments last week conducted a one-day eye clinic for the benefit of 76 children whose vision as determined by tests made in the schools last year was defective. Of the 76 children examined, 14 were eliminated upon preliminary examinations, 33 were found to be badly in need of glasses and 38 needed to have their tonsils and adenoids removed at once. Three of the children are in need of operations in order to remove cataracts from one or both eyes. One child must be removed from the public schools and sent to the State School for the Blind in Raleigh.

Dr. Matthew S. Brown, of Roanoke Rapids was the examining physician. He was assisted by Miss Ruth Penny, medical social worker from the State Commission for the Blind, Mr. Wynn from the American Optical Company, members of the staffs of the Welfare Department and the Health Department, County School Superintendent J. C. Manning and Mrs. Dorothea Tucker, district supervisor for the blind commission. These clinics will be held periodically throughout the year until all of those children who need to have their eyes examined and whose parents are not able to send them to private specialists have the privilege of this service, Miss Mary Taylor, welfare department head, said.

Wage-Hour Law Change Effective This Week

Effective this week, a change in the Wage-Hour law will reduce the work week from 42 to 40 hours and boost the hourly wage scale from 30 to 35 cents. No noticeable change in employment is expected in this immediate section.

Funeral Services Interrupted When Church Floor Collapses

Gathering in the little colored Baptist church at Parmele to pay a tribute to the memory of four friends whose lives were snuffed out in an automobile accident in Virginia nearly a week before, an unusually large crowd was thrown down when the floor timbers collapsed, throwing a good number to the ground. The services were just getting underway. The bodies of Leo Sherrod, his wife and their two children were before the altar, and the minister, receiving an undivided attention in the still room, was just starting his sermon. The floor timbers, overtaxed by the large crowd that had gathered there for the first multiple funeral held in the county in recent years, crashed to the ground. A scream was heard and then another, some went down with the floor to the ground. Others started a stampede to the door. For a moment another tragedy was in the making, but gentle persuasion on the part of the minister and a few others quieted the crowd and restored order.

A few were bruised and battered, but none was badly hurt. The minister resumed his touching task, that of preaching a funeral for four at one time and under such conditions.

The funeral services completed, the funeral coaches bore the bodies to a little cemetery near Parmele where they were laid side by side to offer mute evidence against reckless driving on our highways. Sherrod, his family and a friend, Erwin Simmons, were on their way to Richmond after attending a church meeting at their old home. Sherrod's mother was hurt and Simmons still lingers between life and death in a Roanoke Rapids hospital. A Maryland truck driver is in jail awaiting trial for hit-and-run and manslaughter.

Drawing First Men for Military Duty Tuesday

Members Of Draft Board In Edenton Today for Meeting

List of Registrants Has Been Sent To Authorities In Raleigh

After getting off to a slow start, the Martin County Draft Board is rapidly catching up with its work and will have everything in readiness several days before the national drawing in Washington next Tuesday, the 29th. All members of the board have subscribed to the oath of duty and are attending a school of instruction in Edenton today. Offices for the board in this county will likely be located on the second floor of the old Martin County Bank building, the chairman stating that the board had applied for occupancy and that headquarters would be established there on or about the first of next month. The board clerk, Marion Cobb, is located temporarily in the office of Clerk of Court L. B. Wynne in the courthouse.

Although their official appointments were delayed, the members of the board in this county have just about caught up with its work schedule and is ready to cooperate with the government in every way possible in handling the huge task ahead. All of the more than 3,200 registration cards have been separated, shuffled and numbered. Those cards belonging to other counties have been forwarded to the proper authorities. A list of the registration is being prepared today. One copy will be posted possibly at the courthouse door for the present, one copy will be released for early publication, another will be forwarded to Raleigh and still another will be retained in the board files.

Following the drawing next Tuesday, those who are included in the first call will receive questionnaires. The questions are to be answered and returned to the board within five days after they are mailed to the registrant. The board will then start its classification work. Those men falling into the No. 1 class will be called in immediately for a physical examination. The first group will possibly leave for camp on or about November 18.

"Strange as it may seem, several youngsters have asked that they be allowed to be the first to leave," Board Chairman R. H. Goodmon said yesterday. "The boys are anxious to enter the service, but they do not want to sign with the regular army for a three-year period," the board chairman explained. The chairman pointed out that the board has no power of choice, that the numbers are drawn in Washington and that orders are issued there. "We merely follow instructions and handle."

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Nineteen Men In Court For Alleged Disorderly Conduct

Charged with disorderly conduct, nineteen colored men were carried before Justice Hassell last Saturday night following two raids, one at the home of Dave Melton on Elm Street, and the other at Gullford Brown's barbershop on Washington Street.

The trial justice taxed the first group of nine \$6.50 each and the second group \$8.50 each. The names of the defendants: Brack Rascoe, Orlander Roberson, Clarence Purrington, James Thompson, Johnny Slade, Dave Melton, James Bagley, Miles Grimes, John Dixon, Overton James, Oscar James, James Nichols, Roosevelt Fagan, Harry Lanier, Jack Knight, Walter Fisher, Louis Augustus, Jack Lanier and "Frog" Spruill. Officers C. B. Roebuck, J. H. Ailsbrooks, John Roebuck, Bill Haislip and Whit Saunders made the arrests.

Total Warfare Is Carried Home To Germans In Berlin

Possibility of Invasion Is Still Talked; Tension in the Balkans Grows

German people, rejoicing over the suffering inflicted upon the British people by Nazi bombers during recent weeks, were given a big dose of their own medicine night before last when members of the Royal Air Force carried out a nine-hour attack on Berlin. Scenes, similar to those depicted in London in past days, were reported in the German capital as the British airmen loosed hundreds of tons of bombs on important buildings and military objectives. Mussolini's yellow Wops were given a taste of the medicine they have been helping to pour down the throats of helpless Britons.

The attack on Berlin raised the wrath of those who had been promised immunity by Hitler and his air ministry head. "We will pay London back a thousandfold," they shouted. But it is virtually agreed that Hitler and his barbarians have lost the deadliest of the deadly attacks. More is to come, but Churchill in an address to the world yesterday said that Britain would have command of the air in 1941.

Talk of another invasion attempt to follow that of a little over a month ago was heard in unoccupied France today, according to late newspaper reports. British airmen continue to pound the Channel ports, and if Hitler makes another attempt it is believed that he will have much repairing to do before he places himself in a position equal to that held by his forces a month ago.

While the total warfare in the air gains momentum, tension in the Balkans continues to grow. An invasion of southeastern Europe and a drive for control of the Mediterranean area by the Axis powers are said by some to be imminent. No startling developments have been reported in that area during the past few days, but there is an increased activity on the diplomatic front. It is the general opinion that the little countries are hostile to Hitler and his hordes, but whether the small kingdoms can combine their forces and oppose the Nazi machine or whether they will submit to invasion remains to be seen.

No new developments have followed the opening of the Burma Road in the Far East. Attention is being centered on the Netherlands Indies at the present where Japan is demanding oil. It was reported today that the Dutch had notified Japan that no oil would be made available until British contracts had been filled, meaning that if there was any left, Japan possibly could get it. Claiming that she was demanding only a normal commerce with the Indies, Japan is declared to have demanded that shipments of oil to her be increased three times.

There is much political intrigue in the air today, Germany openly

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TO BE HONORED



Lindsay Warren will be signally honored by First District Democrats in Washington Friday when several thousand will express their appreciation for his sixteen years of service in Congress at a big celebration. Many Martin people are planning to attend the program which gets underway at 11 a. m. Jesse Jones, member of the President's cabinet, will speak.

Tobacco Sales On The Local Market

Tobacco sales continue to climb on the Williamston market, with prices holding firm on a grade-for-grade basis. That the common average is somewhat lower than the peak reached a few days ago is quite evident in the late reports. This is explained, in part at least, by increased offerings of inferior quality tobacco. There is no noticeable decrease in current prices when compared on a grade basis with the receipts reported a few days ago.

According to a report released by Supervisor K. B. Crawford, the market here has sold more than five million pounds for an average of \$18.83 to date. Yesterday, the market handled \$207,852 for a reported price average of \$23.41. It is now estimated that nearly 85 per cent of the crop has been marketed in this section.

Martin Farmers Are Harvesting Sweet Potatoes

With their tobacco marketed almost in its entirety, their peanuts dug and cotton virtually picked, Martin County farmers have started digging for their sweet potatoes. The task will be well advanced by tomorrow or Thursday.

Conflicting reports have been received relative to the condition of the crop. In some sections the growers state they have quality crops, but that production will not come up to normal. Judging from the fairly representative reports the quality of the crop, as a general rule, is much better than it was a year ago, especially for advantageous marketing. Those crops transplanted reasonably early are producing heavily. Farmer A. Dawson Lilley, basing his calculations on one row, allows he'll get 400 bushels to the acre, and that's a big yield in any year.

Horace Corbett, who plans to return to the market here this season is of the opinion that the price trend will be upward.

Farm Bureau Adds 59 New Members

The drive for Farm Bureau members continues at a fairly rapid pace in this county, the secretary, John Eagles, stating today that 59 additional farmers and business men had pledged the organization their support. All of the canvassers have not reported their activities, but names of all members will be published just as soon as the membership receipts are received.

Names of recent members follow: Williamston: W. C. Manning, J. C. Eubanks, Roy C. Griffin, H. A. Bowden, Branch Bank, Woolard Hardware, F. U. Barnes, Charles Bowers, Martin Supply Co., Farmers Supply Co., Williamston Hardware, Moore Grocery Co., N. C. Green, J. H. Keel, A. D. Cherry, Jasper Everett, V. W. Perkins, W. A. Ross, Herbert S. Johnson, Hassell; J. W. Eubanks; Palmyra: Tom Williams, W. J. Johnson, Joe Bunting, Wilbur Barrett, Luke Harrell, John Belflower, Arch Harrell; Jamesville: C. C. Fleming; Hobbgood: Roy Savage, D. L. Howell; Oak City: S. V. Sills, George Mobley, H. E. Brown; Scotland Neck: Bank of Halifax, Shields Co., P. & D. Motors, Farmers Hardware, White's, Dixie Theater, City Auto-Service, Anderson and Co.

Aged Negress Died In Oak City Last Week

Louisa Bryant, 80-year-old Negro woman, died at her home in Oak City Monday, October 14th. She was highly respected and honored in the community in which she was born, reared and died.

She was a member of the St. Mark church near Littleton for 59 years and in addition to several children and grandchildren, she is survived by three great-great-grandchildren.