

Missing Man Found Dead In Tranter's Creek Last Tuesday

Last Rites For Edgar Ayers Held at Rose of Sharon Church Wednesday

Missing since Sunday afternoon, Edgar Ayers, former Bear Grass man, was found dead in Tranter's Creek swamp about noon Tuesday by a searching party numbering from 60 to 75 men including officers from three counties and citizens in the community. Apparently the man had been dead thirty hours or more, one report stating that the body was in a preliminary state of decomposition.

While it is still believed by some that Ayers, 31 years old, came to his death by foul means, a jury, investigating the case under Acting Coroner Wilkerson from Pitt County, rendered a verdict Wednesday afternoon stating that Ayers came to his death from some unknown cause but possibly from exposure or heart trouble. The verdict was rendered after a two-hour examination of six witnesses, the testimony throwing very little light on the man's untimely death.

According to information reaching here from Pitt County, Ayers' body carried no scars or signs of foul play. An autopsy was performed and no water was found in his lungs, indicating that the man died of exposure or heart trouble. It was declared at the investigation which was held in Willis Bullock's filling station on the Bear Grass-Stokes Road that Ayers had experienced heart trouble just a short time before.

Willis Bullock, the first witness called by the coroner's jury, stated that Ayers came to his filling station shortly after the noon hour Sunday. About 4 o'clock he borrowed a rifle and stated he was going off to look a drink. He saw him no more.

Marvin Farmer, Beaufort County farmer who lives possibly three-quarters of a mile from the spot where the body was found, stated that he heard someone yelling in the swamp between 8 and 9 o'clock Sunday evening. He thought some one was hunting there and paid no attention to the calls.

Charles Hoell, operator of a filling station in Beaufort County where the boundaries of Martin, Pitt and Beaufort converge, heard some one yell in the swamp about 8 o'clock, but paid no attention to it. After closing the station about 10 o'clock he heard the yelling again and with W. E. Gurganus got a boat and paddled up Tranter's Creek about two or three hundred yards and found Ayers. At the hearing, Hoell stated that they found Ayers in a "very drunken" condition. "I have lost my rifle and I am lost myself," Hoell quoted Ayers. "Mr. Gurganus got out of the boat and Ayers got in. I paddled him across the creek and put him out. He told me that he knew where he was, that he saw the opening ahead and that he could get out all right. I paddled back across the creek, picked up Gurganus and returned home," Hoell testified to the jury.

Hoell said that he put Ayers out on dry land, but admitted that there was much water in the swamp between the creek and high land. Hoell also stated that Ayers was wet from his belt down, and that his elbows were wet where he had fallen down. He did not offer to take the man home, and judging from his story there was very little conversation carried on between the two men. Gurganus told about the same story as that told by Hoell.

James Moseley, young man who found the body, was questioned briefly, and Paul Whitchard answered a few questions.

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Blow Liquor Stills In County This Week

Two large liquor stills were burned and blasted to pieces on Wolfpit Island in Bear Grass Township by county officers led by ABC Officer J. H. Roebuck Wednesday morning. The Wolfpit plant was in the center of a disturbance that led to the untimely death of Edgar Ayers, former Martin County man, last Sunday. Threats of evidence are being woven together by officers, and it is now considered likely that the disturbance at the plant will be brought into the open. Several men, alleged to have participated in the fight or observed the brawl, are said to have made certain remarks that are expected to open the case. Officers are of the opinion that there will be a break within the ranks of those connected with the operation of the plant or among those indirectly associated with the illicit business in that section.

It is certain that the deplorable conditions existing in the area where the boundaries of three counties converge will be made subject to a strict law enforcement drive in the future. Wednesday afternoon, Officer J. H. Roebuck and his deputy, Roy Peel, raided in the Free Union section of Jamesville Township and wrecked a plant, capturing a 30-gallon capacity copper kettle and pouring out 150 gallons of beer.

Property Revaluation Reveals Gross Inequalities in County

While there is little hope of solving the tax problem, early reports from the field indicate that quite a few gross inequalities are being eliminated. Some startling facts in Martin County's taxing system are being brought to light through various sources. It has been established in at least one case that the net taxes on certain properties were actually greater than what the properties would sell for on the open market. It has also been pointed out that in addition to inequalities within the townships there are marked variations in values in one township as compared with values in another township. According to the best information available just now, Goose Nest Township properties, as a whole, are possibly on the books at a higher valuation than properties in any of the other townships. It has also been learned that property owned by those whose educational opportunities have been few is listed

at higher figures than in most other cases. As a whole the revaluation to date is showing a ten per cent gain over the 1937 listings, but there have been some sharp reductions in individual cases. One board of assessors states that values have been lowered as much as \$1,000 in some cases and increased by \$1,500 in other cases. It is certain that the revaluation work will not be completed in the county by the first of next month.

Personal property listing is progressing slowly, too. In this township, List-taker H. M. Burras said this morning that not more than one-third of the property owners had listed, that only two mercantile stocks had been placed on the books, and that eighty per cent or more of the personal holdings had been given in for taxation. Property owners are warned about late listing this year.

APPLICATIONS

Nearly 500 applications for soil conservation payments have been filed by Martin County farmers and forwarded to the Raleigh and Washington offices. The first checks should be made available to the applicants in late February or early March. Most of the applications were filed by farmers in Bear Grass, Griffins, Poplar Point, Williams and Williamston Townships.

Applications are being prepared and signatures of farmers in Jamesville, Cross Roads, Robertsonville, Hamilton and Goose Nest Townships will be received within the next ten days or two weeks.

Right To Redeem Farms Is Upheld By Supreme Court

Decision Was Handed Down On December 9th, 1940 By Jurists

The United States Supreme Court handed down a decision on the Frazer-Lemke Moratorium Act, upholding the right of a farm debtor to redeem his mortgaged farm and thereby reversed its previous stand taken in the case of Louisville vs. Radford.

The court has now ruled that if the debtor so petitions, he must be given the right to re-purchase his farm at its reappraised value or such value as the court determines, before the farm may be offered at public sale.

This decision was handed down in the case of Wright v. Union Central Life Insurance Company on December 9, 1940, and constitutes the second case that the same parties have taken before the Supreme Court.

Farmers throughout the county will be affected by this decision, which reverses the Supreme Court's earlier interpretation of Section 75 (a) and which now prevents the mortgage holders from negating the rights of farm debtors by demanding public sales.

In writing the unanimous decision of the court, Justice Douglas stated: "We hold that the debtor's cross petition should have been granted; that he was entitled to have the property re-appraised or the value fixed at a hearing; that the value having been determined at a hearing in conformity with his request, he was then entitled to have a reasonable time, fixed by the court, in which to redeem at that value; and that if he did so redeem, the land should be turned over to him free and clear of encumbrances and his discharge granted. Only in case the debtor failed to redeem within a

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Geo. S. Peed Dies In Fayetteville

George S. Peed, Sr., brother of Mrs. Frank Weston of this place and a resident of Aurora, died in a Fayetteville hospital yesterday. Well known in Beaufort and adjoining counties, Mr. Peed had been quite ill in the hospital since Christmas, and although his condition was considered serious the end came unexpectedly. Death was attributable to a complication of ailments.

Besides his sister here he is survived by his widow who before her marriage was Miss Jessie Rowe, of Small. He also leaves two sons, Joe Lawrence and George S. Peed, Jr., of Aurora, and two daughters, Misses Jessie and Ernestine Peed, students at the East Carolina Teachers' College, Greenville; his mother, Mrs. John Clayton, of Aurora, and a sister, Mrs. John Brincefield, of Suffolk.

Funeral services will be held at the home in Aurora this afternoon and interment will follow in the cemetery there.

Large Number Of Cases Continued In County Court

Tribunal in Session Less Than Two Hours Last Monday

In one of the shortest sessions held in recent weeks, the Martin County Recorder's Court last Monday continued a majority of the cases on the docket and adjourned in less than two hours. "It was one of the sorriest courts I have attended in recent months," a spectator was quoted as saying as litigants, lawyers and witnesses crowded around the judge's bench and offered their services in handling the cases.

Proceedings: The bewhiskered case in which Joe Lanier Godard, Jr., was charged with operating a motor vehicle after his license was revoked, was continued under prayer for judgment until January 27. The defendant pleaded guilty.

Andrew Andrews, charged with violating the liquor laws, failed to answer when called, and the court issued papers for his arrest. The case charging Cary Whitehurst with an assault with a deadly weapon was continued under prayer for judgment for one week.

Pleading not guilty in the case charging him with an assault, Numphus James was adjudged guilty of a simple assault, the court sentencing him to the roads for two months and placing a \$10 fine on him with the costs added. The road sentence is to begin at the direction of the court at anytime within the next two years.

Calvin Hill, charged with the larceny of oil from a river warehouse, had his case continued until next Monday. Willie Powell and Clinto Smith, charged with aiding and abetting in larceny, were granted continuances, their cases being closely associated with the one against Hill.

Chester Mooring maintained his innocence in the case charging him with the theft of a pair of gloves, but he was adjudged guilty and was sentenced to the roads for a term of two months. It was pointed out that Mooring was wearing the stolen clothes when he was arrested.

Reapportionment To Center In West

To add another district to North Carolina's Congressional set-up, the reapportionment group will not alter lines as they are established in the east according to reports coming out of Raleigh this week. The first nine districts will likely remain unchanged, while the new twelfth district is carved out of the tenth and eleventh congressional set-ups.

It was pointed out that after the division is effected, each of the three districts would have a larger population than the first.

According to some reports it had been proposed by some to elect the 12th congressman at large, but the creation of a new district gained favor when Emery E. Denny, chairman of the Democratic Executive Committee, told the House Committee on Congressional Districts in Raleigh this week. North Carolina gained a new seat in the Congress with an increase in population figures.

Colored Youth Is Jailed Here On Larceny Charge

Richard Lee Morgan, one of a big gang of colored boys who roam wild on the local streets, was arrested Wednesday by Officer J. H. Allabrooks for the alleged theft of costly parts from a \$400 electric switch belonging to the Virginia Electric and Power Company. Sold to a local junk dealer for \$1.25, the parts were recovered from a dealer in Greenville.

Morgan, 13 years old, is being held in the county jail while efforts are being made to get him into a training school.

World Looking To National Congress For War Decisions

British and Germans Pounding Important Military Bases Today

While Britain and Germany are pounding away at vital military bases, the world is centering its attention on the program America will follow in the future. The spotlight for millions of war weary souls is centered on the outcome of the United States lend-lease bill which is now undergoing bitter attack in committee hearings at Washington. Some have suggested that the outcome of the war and the future of the civilized world depends upon the events in Washington during the next few weeks.

Government leaders who are in position to know the facts as they exist today have strongly intimated that this country would be subject to invasion if Britain falls. Secretary of State Cordell Hull, and Secretary of War Stimson stated to the foreign affairs committee at a hearing this week in Washington that it was their opinion that every aid possible should be made available to England, that if necessary our battle-ships should enter the war zones. Mr. Stimson said it was not advisable to tie our right hand behind us at this critical time. "The problem is not so much keeping America out of war but keeping war out of America," Mr. Stimson said.

There is a bitter fight brewing over the plan, and those nations trying to hold democracy together are getting weary of all our talk and our feeble efforts to act. The Turkey press stated yesterday that the United States is talking too much and doing too little in the way of helping Britain stung by brutal attacks on land, sea and air over thousands of miles of war fronts. In that connection, Martin County people can aid in supporting the plan by writing to their congressmen and senators urging them to work for the lend-lease program or any other plan that offers aid first to Britain and then to ourselves.

Costly blows have been dealt by both Germany and Britain during the past few days. The British wreck-

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Influenza Continues To Spread in County

Estimating there were more than 200 cases in the county the early part of the week, local doctors are of the opinion that influenza is claiming added victims each day, pushing possibly the number of cases to around 300. The epidemic, while having possible serious effects, is not yet considered alarming in the county, however. No plans have been advanced to close the schools, and as far as it could be learned no deaths have been traceable to the flu pneumonia in this county.

While attendance figures are sagging in most of the schools in the county, school authorities state that not all of the absences are traceable to influenza. Hog killings and unfavorable weather are keeping quite a few of the little folks out of school.

With the exception of a few localities, the disease is scattered over the county. Ten cases of influenza were reported in the George Reynolds Hotel here one day this week, but the victims are recovering.

The epidemic is on the wane in other sections, but many schools continue closed in a number of counties in the State.

'March Of Dimes' To Get Underway Here

"The March of Dimes" with members of the local Junior Woman's Club taking the lead, will get underway here tomorrow. County Chairman E. Thayer Walker stating that the sale of the little tags would also be advanced in the several districts by the community chairmen, most school principals. A booth will be maintained by the club on Main Street here tomorrow, and the patronage of everyone is earnestly solicited in support of the nation-wide drive against infantile paralysis.

Dr. Walker states that plans for the President's birthday ball on Tuesday, January 28, are shaping up rapidly, and that present indications point to a record attendance.

LICENSE SALE

The sale of automobile tags here this year is holding its own, a report from the Carolina Motor Club license bureau today stating that the sales this year are slightly ahead of those for the corresponding period a year ago. Up until January 15, 1940, the bureau here sold 3,445 car, 522 truck and 452 trailer licenses as compared with 2,450 car, 562 truck and 474 trailer licenses sold this year up until the same date.

Few Would Get Divorces and Deny Their Wives Insurance

It is fairly certain that the call to the country's colors hastened a number of marriages, but believe it or not, reliable reports state that several young men are seeking divorces because they are subject to the draft. It is also a fairly well established fact that a few young married men are seeking entrance into the service to gain their freedom from marriage contracts, temporarily, at least.

As far as it can be learned at this time, none of the "war" divorces has been granted, the seekers carefully hiding the real motive behind their action.

Going over their cases with a local attorney recently, three husbands pointed out that if they went to the army and were killed they did not

want their wives to get "all that insurance money." Those who would deny their wives the last dime are colored, but the reports have it that those who would gain temporary freedom from their marital contracts are young white men.

Apparently the value of dependents in keeping a young man out of the service is dropping in this county. There are exceptions, of course. The records show that a surprisingly large number of married men are seeking to get into the service. And it is entirely in order for the draft board to call upon married men for service, especially in those cases where the wife is working and contributing to the support of her husband.

Guaranty Bank Has Annual Meeting In Greenville Tuesday

Institution Has Its Most Successful Business During The Past Year

The 40th annual meeting of the stockholders of the Guaranty Bank and Trust Company was held in Greenville Tuesday with Col. Ed Flanagan presiding.

J. H. Waldrop, cashier, reported that total assets of the bank are \$8,600,000 with more than \$7,700,000 in deposits. He also reported that the past year was one of the bank's most successful from the standpoint of total deposits and profits.

W. H. Woolard, executive vice-president since 1920, reported that the Guaranty Bank and Trust Company's investments in federal, state and municipal bonds would show a profit (if liquidated) in excess of \$85,000 and this is in addition to the bank's \$35,000 reserve account, carried to take care of fluctuations in bond prices. He commended the various branch cashiers and other officers for their part in making 1940 a successful year. N. O. Warren, former cashier of the bank and a director, reported that the Examining Committee had examined and appraised the bank's assets and had found them in excess of the book value.

All the directors and officers of the parent office and the branches were re-elected.

Stockholders were allotted 10 per cent in new stock and a dividend of 15 per cent was authorized by the stockholders. Messrs. J. D. Woolard, R. L. Coburn, J. W. Eubanks, of Hassell; R. W. Salsbury, of Hamilton, and D. V. Clayton represented the Williamston-Hamilton branches at the meeting.

Bennie Lilley Hurt In Auto Accident

Bennie Lilley, well-known farmer of Jamesville Township, was badly injured and Samuel P. Sawyer, 54-year-old Elizabeth City man, received painful but not serious cuts in a head-on, automobile collision near Roper Tuesday afternoon. Lilley, removed to a Washington hospital after receiving first-aid treatment in Plymouth, was not expected to live at first, but late reports state that his recovery is expected if no complications develop. Sawyer, suffering from shock and cuts on his face, is recovering at his home. The Jamesville farmer was cut on his face and knee, one report stating that twenty-six stitches were necessary to close the knee wound. Lilley also suffered fractures of two or more ribs and possibly internal injuries.

Lilley's car, a comparatively new Dodge, was wrecked beyond repair, and the Sawyer car, a new Chrysler, was badly damaged. Pending the outcome of the injured men's conditions, Corporal Tom Brown of the Highway Patrol is delaying his investigation of the accident.

Check Lice Spread In Local Schools

After spreading rapidly among children in the grammar grades, unwanted head inhabitants have been checked, a reliable report heard today stating that the number of infestations had been reduced from more than 100 to a scattered three or four cases. Flaring up almost overnight, the lice made an effective invasion before they were detected. Complaints were heard over the all-powerful "grape vine" and the health department was finally forced to act. Public health nurses, using an old cure, went to work and the effect of the drive was declared successful.

It is understood that a few children carrying lice on their heads had not applied the treatment and were possibly continuing as a menace to others. Such cases are being isolated and drastic action will be taken to rid the school of the vermin if necessary.

Record Budget Is Proposed For The State In 1941-42

Agencies Plan To Spend Total Of \$176,266,176 in the Next Two Years

North Carolina is making ready to spend a record sum—\$176,266,166—during the next two years, the Advisory Budget Commission having recommended the record spending program to the State Legislature this week. The new budget calls for nearly seven million dollars more the amount budgeted for the present biennium.

In the new budget is seen a virtually unchanged program of State government for the next two years beginning July 1. Provisions are made for the creation of a retirement fund for school teachers, but hopes for increases in teacher salaries other than in earned increments, an extensive secondary road system and an enlarged facility for the mentally unbalanced and tuberculosis victims are lost in the figures that pile up into one massive blur with appropriations for such agencies as the State ABC board and Conservation and Development departments sticking out to claim particular attention along with a few other bonanzas.

The old budget has its familiar heads sticking out. To start off the spending orgy, the legislature calls for \$200,000. Justice in the high places, including salaries, expenses and a few other items in the supreme and superior courts, will cost right close to half a million dollars, the figures being exclusive of the court costs back home. It'll take, the budgeters estimate, \$32,143 to run the governor's office. The Secretary of State will have to have \$28,603 and the State Revenue Department is demanding more than half million in fees for rounding up the dough. The budget starts skipping when it reaches such agencies as the Library Commission, the State Library, public health, and the institutions, but Mr. Cutlar Moore's State Liquor Board gets a \$1,500 increase over the 1940-41 estimate. As for agriculture extension, the budget is recommending about \$106,000 less than the amount asked for by the department head. There's no provision for a twelfth grade on a ninth school month, but the budget recommends a thousand dollar increase for the school commission over the 1940-41 estimate. The Department of Conservation and Development is to get about \$40,000 more than the last budget estimate if the commission's recommendations are heeded.

The new budget commission, anticipating floods and other damages to highways, recommends a three million dollar fund for repairs. A high spot in the budget is an increase in the fund for road—primary and secondary systems—maintenance. An additional one and one-half millions would go for improving secondary roads. This amount will make possible the "bushy" of half and the improvement of about five or six miles of the "later ridges" in Martin County.

Proposals have been made to broaden the sales tax exemptions on food and food products, but for that one item the tax picture is very likely to remain the same in the State during the next two years. The commission recommends exemptions for the following: flour, meal, meat, fowl, lard, milk, molasses, salt, sugar, coffee, Holy Bibles, bread and rolls, eggs, cereals, grits, rice, butter, butter substitutes, fresh and canned vegetables, fresh fruits, canned milk, fish and canned fish and meats.

Just before the law went into effect there was an unexplainable reduction in the number of marriage licenses issued in this county. For instance, in January, 1938, there were 29 marriages in the county against 126 in January, 1939. In February, 1938, there were 20 marriages in the county as compared with 11 in February, 1939. The variation was maintained throughout the entire period, and Dan Cupid apparently hasn't been able to recover from the shock of the law and the unexplainable cause for the downward trend in the number of marriages.

Possibly the decrease in the number of marriages will be reflected in the vital statistics where illegitimate births are recorded. The statistics for 1940 have not yet been recorded. It was following such a decrease in marriages over the State that a former marriage health law was repealed. However, the value of the present law is fairly well established and no change in the statute is anticipated, certainly not during the legislature now about to convene.

Charlotte, with the largest population of any city in the State, had only 19 marriages among its colored race last year.

County Native Dies At New York Home

Robert Roebuck, a native of this county, died suddenly at his home in Gardner, New York, last Tuesday, the victim of an heart attack. A great lover of horses, Mr. Roebuck was found dead at the stables.

The son of the late Geo. R. L. and Eliza White Roebuck, he was born in this county about 45 years ago. He traveled extensively and had a feature act in the 101 Ranch shows at one time. He was later fitted with his educated horse at Hollywood. He spent some time in the West and then went to New Jersey where he lived a few years before locating in Gardner, New York, where he was employed by the United States Government for a number of years.

Mr. Roebuck had many friends in this county, and was highly regarded in his adopted community in New York. He married Miss Rachel Edmondson, of Hamilton, who survives him. He also leaves two brothers, John Roebuck, officer on the Williamston police force, and Nicodemus Roebuck, of Philadelphia, and four sisters, Mrs. Carrie Dell Phippen, of Hamilton; Miss Martha Roebuck, Mrs. Ben James, and Mrs. James White, all of Poplar Point.

The body reached this county at noon today and was placed in the church at Spring Green where the last rites are being conducted this afternoon by Elders B. S. Cowin and William E. Grimes. Interment will follow in the family plot in the Spring Green Cemetery.

SEED-FEED LOANS

Applications for seed and feed loans will be received in this county beginning next Monday, according to unofficial information received here yesterday. An unofficial announcement in connection with the operation of the lending office is expected daily.

It could not be learned today who would handle the applications. O. S. Anderson, who formerly handled the applications with W. B. Watts, is now associated with another government agency.

The seed and feed loan office has rendered a valuable service to marginal farmers in this county in years past, and a fairly sizable business is predicted for the agency again this season.

Number Marriages Holding To A Low Point In County

Health Requirements Apparently Biggest Factor In Reduction

Working as hard as he could, Dan Cupid completed only two-thirds of his job during the year 1940 as compared with his accomplishments in the several years prior to 1939, according to a report coming from the marriage license bureau in this county for the year just ended. That he slipped around and carried on his work is fairly certain, but it is quite evident that the marriage health law has effected a reduction in this county since it was enacted in April, 1939. That the health requirement is the greatest barrier to Dan Cupid in his work is doubtful, observers stating that the added cost necessitated by medical examinations had had much to do with lowering the number of marriages especially among the colored population.

In the year just ended, 173 marriage licenses were issued in this county, 92 to white and 81 to colored couples. A small gain of fourteen points was scored in 1940 over the issuance in 1939, the slight increase pointing to a small recovery from the law's shock. In 1938 and before the law became effective there were 284 licenses issued in this county, 126 to white and 158 to colored couples. In the year before that there were 293 licenses issued, 147 to white and 146 to colored couples. The small issuance in 1940 recalls the depression years of 1931 and 1932 when only 126 and 155 marriage licenses were issued respectively in this county.

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Drug Store To Reopen Here Within Short Time

Suspending business voluntarily here this morning, Clark's Drug Store, one of the town's oldest business establishments, will be reopened within the next three or four weeks, according to information gained this morning. The firm will undergo a reorganization during the meantime, and plans are being advanced for the operation of a modernized store, it was learned.