

REMEMBER

Vernon Edgar Whitley, Marvin William Scott, William H. Camp, Jr., Robert E. May, E. H. McCommons, James W. Whitley, Grover Woodruff, Winfield Hasty, Daniel E. Faison, Robert Lee Moore, Curtis E. West, Edgar H. King, Robert Lee Ingram, Thomas A. Cooper, Marvin F. Matkins, James G. Whitley, Thos. H. Cook, Jr., Elmer E. Chambliss, Randall White, Robert L. Harris, Joseph A. Crouch, Davie L. Harper, Brutus W. Book, Robt. E. Northington, Eugene Baill Glover, William C. Moody, Lawrence W. Myrick, Walter G. Cooley, Charlie L. Whitley, Melbourne Barry Jones, Robert A. Rogers, Rufus J. T. Woodruff, Clinton P. Deberry, Herbert S. Edwards, H. Charles Leatherwood, Jr., John Wayne Thomas, Alex Bullock, Jr., Frank P. Hunter, Cecil Coburn, Wilbur Anderton, Latt Harris Shearin.



THE ROANOKE RAPIDS HERALD

CAROLINA'S FIRST TABloid NEWSpaper



VOLUME XXXII

ROANOKE RAPIDS, N. C., THURSDAY, JANUARY 30th, 1947

NUMBER 14

HOWELL BROTHERS GUILTY OF SECOND DEGREE MURDER

Will Finish X-Ray Survey February 5

The Tuberculosis X-Ray survey which has been under way in Halifax County since December 2, will be completed February 5. All citizens who have received letters requesting them to return to the Health Department in Halifax for further examination must follow these instructions by February 5 in order to get these X-ray examinations completed before the technical personnel leave this county. It is absolutely essential that all citizens have all the X-rays completed in order for this work to be of any value to the county and, of course, to the individual citizens who have had these X-rays made. The taking of these X-ray pictures and the interpretation of the films require personnel trained in this field. This personnel has been furnished the county by the State Board of Health and the U. S. Public Health Service. After they have finished in Halifax County on February 5, the technical personnel will be transferred to Wake County where the county-wide survey will be conducted.

Through Saturday, January 25, 20,931 citizens have been X-rayed in Halifax County. As soon as time permits, a complete analysis of the total figure giving the number of X-rays in the various communities, together with the number of new cases of tuberculosis in its various stages that have been found, will be released.

Fire Destroys Meat and House

The fire department was called out this morning at 9:50 o'clock to the residence of J. H. Pair in Belmont, outside the city limits. Flames destroyed a smoke house and about 600 pounds of meat which was being smoked in the smoke house. The damage is estimated at about \$900. No insurance. The firemen did an excellent job in saving the residence of Mr. Pair.

Franklin Is Shot, Abernathy Jailed

Bennie Abernathy, white, is in Halifax County jail charged with the shooting on January 21 of E. D. Franklin, also white. Abernathy used a pistol and will be tried on February 11 in Halifax Recorder's Court. He is said to have been under a \$200 peace bond for previous trouble.



Pictured in the left is Walter (Pee-Dee) Howell, found guilty yesterday in Halifax County Superior Court of second degree murder in the slaying of Roanoke Rapids Police Officer, Clifton Massey. He was sentenced to 30 years in State's Prison. At the right is Henry (Skinny) Howell, who entered a plea of guilty to second degree murder. He was given "not less than 15 nor more than 20 years" in prison. They are sons of Mr. and Mrs. P. D. Howell of this city.

REVIEW OF MASSEY KILLING

According to evidence introduced at the preliminary hearing held in Roanoke Rapids before Mayor Kelly Jenkins on Monday, November 28, last year, Clifton Massey, Roanoke Rapids police officer, went into the upstairs Rosemary Billiard Parlor, took a seat near the stairway and was observing a "friendly game of pool." A few minutes later Walter and Henry Howell entered the place and ordered bottles of beer, then retiring to the men's rest room. Upon returning, it is said, that Walter asked: "Is that the so-and-so sitting over there?" He got an affirmative answer, and is said to have turned and hurled his beer bottle at Massey. The officer and Walter went together in a struggle and Walter Howell called to his brother to come and "get the son-of-a-b' gun, he's going to kill me."

Henry did not immediately go to his brother's assistance, it was brought out, and the pair fell down the stairway to the street entrance door. Walter, it was revealed, again called to Henry to come and "get the gun, he's going to kill me."

It was at this point that Henry went down the steps, took the officer's gun from his holster or wrenched it out, and ran through the door and a short distance from the scene.

Walter, getting free, ran out and overtook his brother, got the gun from him and returned to the stairway entrance and fired at Massey through the glass, the bullet striking the officer in the

head and killing him instantly. The two brothers fled the scene and took to the woods being captured on Saturday at a small country store near Littleton where they had gone to buy food.

After the arrest of the pair by (Continued on page eight sec. A)

Walter Howell's Stoicism Fails

Walter Howell's stoicism failed him yesterday afternoon after the jury's verdict had been announced. Previously he had sat through the preliminary hearing last November and through the trial this week without displaying any sign of nervousness or interest.

But when the foreman of the jury, M. G. Satterthwaite, of Hollister, said: "We find the defendant guilty of second degree murder," Walter's face twitched, his lips quivered and his eyes watered as if he were about to cry.

Immediately after the sentence was pronounced on him, his brother, Henry, was brought into the court room. He and his attorneys talked for a few minutes, Henry showed signs of great excitement and nervousness. After he was sentenced by Judge Bone, the men again became quiet and appeared to accept their fate in a resigned manner, both seemingly greatly relieved.

Walter Is Found Guilty by Jury, Gets 30 Years; Henry Is Sentenced to 15-20 Years

A jury in Halifax County Superior Court yesterday afternoon at 4:50 announced that it had reached a verdict in the case of Walter Frances (Pee Dee) Howell, 26-year-old white man, on trial for the slaying of Roanoke Rapids Policeman Clifton Massey last November 24. The verdict found the young man guilty of second degree murder and Judge Walter F. Bone, presiding jurist, immediately sentenced him to 30 years in State's Prison.

Henry Lee (Skinny) Howell, 24, brother of Walter, was brought into court and after a conference between his attorney, George Green, Ernest Tyler, solicitor, and Judge Bone, Henry, through his attorney, entered a plea of guilty to second degree murder and was given a sentence of "not less than 15 years nor more than 20" in State's Prison.

The case, which was called Monday morning attracted the largest crowds into the court room of any held in the county, according to court attaches. Interest never waned throughout the whole proceedings and hours after its conclusion small groups of men were seen standing around discussing it.

Sentiment seemed to be about divided. After the announcement of the verdict had been made a loud applause burst forth from the spectators in the crowded court room. Judge Bone had to rap sharply for order. Members of Massey's family and law enforcement officers as well as many civilians expressed different views, however, over the verdict.

Defense Attorneys, Ed Travis and George Green decided to separate the case against the two brothers and sent Walter to trial on a charge of first degree murder. Henry, through his attorneys, pleaded guilty to being accessory before the fact to the charge, in agreement with Solicitor Tyler Judge Bone, however, reserved his decision on this until after Walter had been tried. This plea would have been a mandatory sentence to State's Prison for Henry had his brother been found guilty of the original charge.

However, after the jury had rendered a guilty verdict of second degree in Walter's case, defense attorneys petitioned the court to allow them to withdraw the first guilty plea for Henry and enter a plea of guilty to second degree murder. Judge Bone allowed this plea and after hearing attorney Green's plea for a lighter sentence for the older of the brothers, agreed with him and sentenced Henry to a shorter term.

Thus finis was written to one of Halifax County's most sensational killings and trials.

Murder Trial Highlights

Solicitor Ernest Tyler, assisted by Lunceford Crey and Wade Dickens, special prosecuting attorneys, sent the following witnesses to the stand Tuesday in presenting the state's case against the Howell brothers:

J. T. Warren and Atlas Edwards, employees of the Rosemary Billiard Parlor where Massey was shot; John Dixon, a textile worker, who was in the pool hall at the time of the shooting; Dr. F. G. Kronche, who was called to the scene to administer aid to Massey; J. A. Wood, operator of the pool hall; and O. C. Beaty, a bus station employe, who contributed damaging evidence concerning the Howell's conversation a few moments before Massey was shot.

Law enforcement officers who testified were Chief J. T. Davis of the Roanoke Rapids police department; Sheriff E. L. Crawley; H. H. Salman, Littleton police officer, who assisted Crawley in the arrest of the Howells.

The defense did not introduce a single piece of evidence in favor of Walter Howell, neither did the defendant take the stand. His attorneys relied solely on arguments to the jury. George Green, chief counsel addressed the jury for 40 minutes, making an impassioned plea for a lesser verdict than first degree murder, saying that "no man in his right mind could have done what this man (Walter Howell) did." (The defense had contended that both men had had several beers during the day of the killing and were (Continued on page eight sec. A)