

# WATAUGA DEMOCRAT

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BOONE, WATAUGA COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA, THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 1931

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## PROMINENT ASHE COUNTY MAN DIES OF HEART ATTACK

William J. Price, Pioneer Citizen and Civic Leader Succumbs Suddenly. Native of Tennessee, But Had Resided in Neighbor County for 33 Years. Funeral Services Conducted Wednesday of Last Week.

Mr. William J. Price, one of Ashe County's best-known citizens, died at his home on Beaver Creek Tuesday, March 10th, following a heart attack. For almost a year he had been in declining health, but for several days prior to the fatal illness had been feeling stronger. Funeral services were held from the West Jefferson Presbyterian Church Wednesday, interment following in the cemetery on the lovely eminence near his home.

Mr. Price was born in Rogersville, Tenn., April 27, 1868, making him almost 63 years of age. Early in life he united with the Rogersville Presbyterian Church. For a number of years he was a traveling salesman, carrying on this work in the mountain counties of North Carolina until two years ago. In this capacity he came to Ashe county in 1899, since which time he had become popular with a throng of friends in Watauga. In June of 1904 he was married to Miss Clyde Hamilton, member of a prominent Ashe County family. He is survived by Mrs. Price and five children: William H. Price, Elkin, former student at A. S. T. C. here; Paul B., Virginia, Henry Clay and Mary Gale Price, of West Jefferson; also one brother, R. R. Price, of Churchill, Tenn., and a sister, Mrs. B. J. Smith, of Colorado Springs, Colorado.

The Ashe County Journal has the following to say of the deceased man's useful life:

"Among the pioneer builders of a bigger and better Ashe County was Mr. Price. His interests were many—farming, cattle raising and dairying. He was a leader in some of the progressive issues that have been before the county, among which were road building and the betterment of schools. Mr. Price was a recognized leader in the Democratic party in the county and his opinions and advice were prized in political circles of the State organization.

"Friends throughout the South and many places throughout the nation will extend their sympathy to the bereaved family in the passing of this prominent and beloved citizen."

## HUGE ATTENDANCE BOONE HIGH SCHOOL

Two Hundred and Ninety-Six Students Have Enrolled During the Present Term. Average Attendance is 253.6

Two hundred and ninety-six students have enrolled in Boone High School this term, according to figures given Monday by Principal Dave Mast. The average daily membership for the first six months of school is 262.1 students. Average daily attendance for the six months is 253.6 students. The per cent in attendance is 96.

Banner Miller represented the school in an annual declamation contest held at Emory and Henry College in Emory, Va., on February 22. Boone School has entered the Triangular Debate this year. This contest is sponsored by the University of North Carolina, and any standard high school may enter it. Preliminaries are held on April 3 throughout the State. Winners in this preliminary contest will go to Chapel Hill on April 16 and 17, where the best team will be selected by means of further preliminary contests. The query for debate this year is: "Resolved, That the United States Should Grant Immediate Independence to the Philippines." Speakers representing Boone are Winton Rankin, James Farthing, affirmative; and Ollie Jean Coffey and Ruth Farthing, negative.

Coach Gorley plans to begin spring football if the weather soon clears up.

## Dr. Chandler to Conduct Revival at M. E. Church

On Sunday, March 22nd, Dr. C. J. Chandler will begin a series of services at Boone Methodist Church which will continue up to and include Easter Sunday. The eminent divine will preach twice daily, at 12 noon and 7:30 in the evening. The noon service will last just one-half hour, 12 to 12:30. At this service the sermons will deal with incidents in the closing scenes of Jesus' ministry. The evening service will be strictly evangelistic. Mr. Zeb Dickson, with a choir made up of a group of singers from the college and community, will have charge of the music.

The public is cordially invited to take part in all of these services.

## Smokehouse Robbers On Job in Watauga

It seems that robberies are on the increase in Watauga. Tuesday night thieves entered the smoke house of Watt H. Gragg in Boone, and took therefrom nearly all the meat of two good hogs along with five or more bushels of corn. No trace of the marauders has yet been found, although local police have been on the job during the day (Wednesday).

Mr. Gragg is of the opinion that outsiders are responsible for the theft, and are disposing of their ill-gotten goods in markets below the mountain. In the event his conclusions are correct, chances are that the thieves will never be apprehended. In other words, its "good-bye, ham."

## W. M. FRANCOM DIES TUESDAY MORNING OF HEART FAILURE

Pioneer Scholar and Teacher Passes At Minneapolis, Avery County. 75 Years of Age, But Still Active in Educational Field. At One Time Superintendent of Watauga County Schools. 11 Children Survive.

W. M. Francum, picturesque scholar and pioneer school master of the mountains, died almost suddenly at his home near Minneapolis Tuesday morning. Mr. Francum suffered the fatal stroke while walking about the yard, and expired within a few minutes, without having regained consciousness. He was about 75 years of age. He had closed a term of school last Saturday at Valley and had complained to a friend in Newland of slight illness, however no serious ailment was contemplated.

Detailed information as to the funeral is unavailable other than that interment was at Minneapolis, where his widow resides. Eleven children, who reside at widely divergent points, survive.

Mr. Francum was a native of the Moberly Springs section of Caldwell county and received his early education at the old Globe Academy, having taught his first term of school in the vicinity of Bailey's Camp, about 54 years ago. Later he acted as preceptor to the youth of Watauga County and 40 years ago was superintendent of public instruction in this county. Since that time he has been constantly engaged in educational work, and his services were eagerly sought throughout a wide area.

Of late years, during vacation periods, he centered his talents about Christian endeavor, and lectured and taught in many of the rural churches. Although Mr. Francum began his literary education late in life, having been deprived to a large extent of childhood instruction, and while eight grades of classroom studies comprised his academic education, he managed by dint of hard work to become an educator of the first rank. He taught and worked and played with the mountain people for more than two score and ten years and filled an important niche in the development of the hills of Northwest Carolina.

Mr. George Swift, 78 years old, prominent citizen of the Beaver Dam community, died Thursday evening after a protracted illness, due principally to the natural infirmities of his advanced age. Funeral services were conducted from the Cove Creek Baptist Church Saturday morning at 11 o'clock by Revs. McKaughn and Williams, and interment was in the Swift cemetery nearby.

## FIRST WEEKS OF MARCH BLUSTERY

Low Temperatures and Howling March Winds Feature First Fifteen Days of Month. "Like a Lion," Says Wright

March came in like a lion, according to Observer J. T. C. Wright of the local weather station, whose report for the first fifteen days of the month show an average temperature of 34 degrees, over six inches of snow and howling west winds. The complete chart for that period follows:

Average maximum temperature, 42 degrees.  
Average minimum temperature, 26 degrees.  
Average temperature, 34 degrees.  
Average daily range in temperature, 17 degrees.

Greatest daily range in temperature, 31 degrees; date, 13th and 14th.  
Average temperature at 6 p. m. (time of observation), 36 degrees.  
Highest temperature reached, 58 degrees; date, 14th.

Lowest temperature reached, 20 degrees; date, 5th.  
Number inches of rainfall (including melted snow), 1.42 inches.  
Number inches of snowfall, 6.50 inches.

Greatest rainfall in 24 hours, 0.43, date 9th.  
Number of days with 0.01 inch or more rainfall, 8.  
Number of clear days, 5.  
Number of cloudy days, 8.  
Number of partly cloudy days, 2.  
Direction of prevailing wind, west.  
Dates of light frost, 6th, 7th.  
Dates of fogs, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 7th.  
Other phenomena described as follows: Solar halo on 13th; high winds on 9th and 10th.

## WEBSTER DRAWS FIVE TO SEVEN YEARS FOR MURDER OF S. E. DAY LAST OCTOBER; MANSLAUGHTER VERDICT IS RETURNED

Seawell C. Webster, who shot and killed Ed S. Day, former Watauga man, in Wilkesboro on October 29 last, was convicted of manslaughter in Wilkes Superior Court Saturday and sentenced to serve not less than five nor more than seven years in State Penitentiary. The jury deliberated more than twenty-four hours before bringing in a verdict that closed one of the most sensational trials ever held in Wilkes County.

The jury's verdict was manslaughter, the lesser of three possible verdicts, as counsel for the State had sought to bring about conviction on first-degree murder charge. Judge Michael Schenck, in commenting upon the verdict, stated that in view of mitigating circumstances the jury was justified in bringing in a verdict of manslaughter and could in no manner be criticised.

Counsel for the defendant had indicated an appeal from the verdict and appearance bond has been set at \$3,000. It is believed, however, that Webster will take the sentence meted out to him by the court, in view of the State's efforts to convict on a first or second-degree murder charge.

**Sensational Evidence**  
Shaking the State's first-degree charge fiercely under grueling cross examinations of its star witnesses, the defense early indicated its effort to seek acquittal or at the most manslaughter. With the way opened by the insanity plea for what would otherwise have been excluded as wholly collateral matter, the defense heaped up testimony to show that Webster's home had been invaded by Day; that his step-daughter, whose virtue had been proven in the face of a divorce charge, had been led astray by the deceased married man; that the life of Webster had also been threatened.

Day will not see the face of a child soon to be born to his expectant widow, but on Thursday she told of their little home and their five children, of how she visited her husband at the hospital where he lay for several days with his life hanging by a thread, and there prayed with him and read the Bible to him and at least had the happiness of hearing him say he was ready to die.

Mrs. Day was followed to the stand by Mrs. Beatrice Smoak, step-daughter of S. C. Webster, who admitted to her mother that she had committed adultery with the deceased over a period of several months; that nothing could part them and had then mocked her mother, had described how Day, her admitted paramour, had also mocked her. That was after Mrs. Webster had gone to Day and begged and pleaded with tears and

a broken heart for him to cease his attentions. The step-daughter was a State's witness to prove that Webster had threatened the life of Day, but under Tam Bowie's cross-examination her testimony crumbled and she was forced to relate her clandestine love affair, although she steadfastly denied immorality.

**Physician Testifies**  
Arguing the competency sought to be adduced by testimony of Dr. F. C. Hubbard, physician, who treated Day after he was shot, the jury was excused, and Dr. Hubbard said Day told him, "To tell the truth, Doctor, I was going for my gun when Webster shot me."

Webster's wife was the first witness to be put on by the defense when the State closed its case late Thursday afternoon. She swore her daughter when accused and admitting that she had given herself to the deceased, said the latter always carried a pistol; that he threatened to cut Webster's throat if he ever came in his meat market; that he bragged that he knew how to take care of Webster's high temper. The story of the harrowing of the feelings of the defendant, the invasion of his home, his shock at finding his daughter, in whom he had implicit faith debauched by Day, the alleged insolence and stubbornness of the deceased in the face of the pleadings of the mother of Mrs. Smoak—these and many other things the defense claimed temporarily unseated reason and coupled with the fact of Day's alleged threat led to the fatal shooting.

The State's most damaging witness was young Donald Beach, a nephew of the deceased, who worked with his uncle in the meat market. Beach described the shooting on the night of October 29, last, when at about 9 o'clock he said Webster came up the street following his step-daughter's child, little Dan Smoak Jr., and stopped and cursed Day and then shot Day in the back. He said Day was neither in a belligerent mood nor position when the fatal shot was fired through the window of the meat market. However, he admitted that Day had started in the direction of the place he kept his pistol when he was shot.

Mrs. Smoak testified that she was nine years old when her mother and Webster were married and that he had treated her kindly as a daughter and had stood by her when her erstwhile husband accused her of infidelity of which she came clear. Her step-father had seen her come from the back room of the meat market and it was then that he ordered her

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## GEORGE SWIFT DIES THURSDAY EVENING

Aged Resident of Beaver Dam Section Succumbs After Protracted Illness. It Survived by the Widow and 5 Children.

Mr. George Swift, 78 years old, prominent citizen of the Beaver Dam community, died Thursday evening after a protracted illness, due principally to the natural infirmities of his advanced age. Funeral services were conducted from the Cove Creek Baptist Church Saturday morning at 11 o'clock by Revs. McKaughn and Williams, and interment was in the Swift cemetery nearby.

Surviving are the widow and five children, three boys and two girls: Butler Swift of Silver Lake, Clarence and Dean of Watauga; Miss Millie Swift and Mrs. Asa Reese, also of this county.

Mr. Swift was a member of one of the most prominent families of this county, was a farmer, and lived a long and highly useful life in the county of his nativity. He was a leading citizen of his community and contributed a full share to public advancement.

## Miss Nora Mast Weds Odis Wilson Sunday

On Sunday afternoon at 3 o'clock Miss Nora Mast, attractive daughter of Mr. P. C. Mast, White Hall, Md., became the bride of Mr. Odis Wilson, of Beaver Dam. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. P. A. Hicks at the Baptist parsonage in Boone.

The bride is a graduate of Appalachian State Teachers College, class of 1928, and for the past two years has been principal of the Silverstone school. Since childhood she has made her home with an uncle, Mr. John Mast, on Cove Creek, and is popular with a wide circle of friends in the county.

Mr. Wilson is a son of Jasper Wilson, received his education at Boone, and at present is employed by the Bristol Transfer Company. The young couple will make their home for the present at Zionville.

## Blowing Rock Road Is Being Resurfaced

Highway 17, or at least that part of the road between Boone and Blowing Rock, the surface of which was so seriously damaged by freeze during the winter, is being resurfaced with stone and tar. A good force of men is on the job, with an abundance of material at hand.

The work will be pushed to completion just as rapidly as possible, in order that the scenic highway may be ready for the tourists who will start their annual visits to the mountains just as soon as the weather opens.

It is understood that paving on Route 60 east of Boone will begin sometime during April. This project embraces almost five miles.

## HUBERT WAGNER PAROLED BY GOV. LAST THURSDAY

Killer of Earl Moody and Dexter Byrd Freed After Having Served Only Three Years of a Twenty-five Year Sentence. Newland and Lovell Instrumental in Release. Tragedy Occurred Christmas 1926.

Hubert S. Wagner, of the Foscoe community, serving sentences of 25 to 30 years in the State penitentiary for the killing of Earl Moody and Dexter Byrd, was released last Thursday, according to information furnished The Democrat by visitors to Raleigh the last of the week. Whether or not he has returned to his home in this county is not known. Governor W. C. Newland, of Lenoir, and W. R. Lovell, of Boone, are said to have been instrumental in securing the parole.

The double killing, for which Wagner was sent to the penitentiary, it will be remembered, occurred on Christmas Day, 1923, when Byrd and Moody fell prostrate within a space of minutes from two fusillades from the assailant's revolver. Because of the higher feeling which was evidenced at the time, officials placed Wagner in the Guilford County jail the following day for safe keeping, later removing him to the Wilkes County bastille where he remained until August, 1927, and was tried in the Wilkes court for the slaying of Moody, counsel for the defense having been successful in moving the trial from the scene of the crime.

On the first count a sentence of 15 to 20 years was meted out, and Wagner was again incarcerated until March, 1928, when he was sentenced to 25 to 30 years for the slaying of Byrd, second degree verdicts having been returned in both instances. The prison terms, however, were to have run concurrently, making the actual minimum of time to be served 25 years, and the maximum 30.

## A. S. T. C. TIES WITH CATAWBA COLLEGE

Mountaineer Basket Ball Squad Wins Thirteen Games During Season Just Closed. Lose Three by Very Small Margins.

According to C. B. Johnston, coach of the Appalachian State Teachers College basket ball team, the players recently closed a very successful season in which they won thirteen and lost only three games. This brilliant performance of the Mountaineer basketballers tied them with Catawba College for the championship of the Little Seven Conference.

The closeness of scores in a majority of the games attests to the quality of the opposition met.

The following players make up the squad which compiled the excellent record: Kermit Hinson and Conrad Hinson, forwards; Clyde Canipe, center; W. J. Ferguson and Red O'Hare, guards; reserves, Claude Pyatte, Sam McKinney, Red Walker, Stanley Livingston, Pete Mosteller.

Coach Johnston reports that his entire first team will be lost when the call for next year's candidates is made.

Scores in the games played during the past season are:

Team	App.	Opp.
Lenoir-Rhyne	30	17
Western State College	40	24
East Tennessee State	24	35
Catawba College	25	26
Lynchburg College	35	24
Atlantic Christian College	51	38
High Point College	38	23
Guilford College	40	24
King College	38	29
High Point College	21	17
Guilford College	26	27
Catawba College	28	23
Lenoir-Rhyne	29	21
East Tennessee State	44	39
Campbell College	45	21
Lees-McRae College	46	24

The number of hours which we sleep is not so important, according to one expert, as seeing that our sleep is untroubled.

## M'N STORE AT RUTHERWOOD IS REBUILT MONDAY

An estimated \$4,000 Worth of Merchandise Stolen by Night Marauders. Dry Goods, Clothing and Groceries Included in the Wholesale Theft. No Clues as to Identity of Participants.

A robbery of wholesale proportions was perpetrated at Rutherfordwood, seven miles east of Boone, on Monday night, when the large mercantile establishment of Hodges and McNeil was entered and perhaps as much as \$4,000 worth of sundry wares removed. Mr. Eller McNeil, manager of the store and partner of John W. Hodges of Boone in the business, who resides just across the highway, was not awakened during the night, and the marauders made their nocturnal visit without having aroused anyone in the neighborhood.

When Mr. McNeil opened the store Tuesday morning he found that motor trucks had been driven to the rear of the building which at that point is several feet from the ground, and an opening in the floor perhaps four feet square had been made by the use of an augur. The culprits had scuttled the merchandise onto the ground, and thence into the waiting vehicles. A complete inventory following the burglary has not been made, but an incomplete survey indicates that of the stock which inventoried \$7,000 the first of the year, scarcely more than \$3,000 in goods remains. Dry goods, clothing, and groceries were taken from the building in huge quantities, a number of the shelves having been practically stripped. No clues as to the identity of the night riders have been advanced, however it is predicted that they are the same which recently pilfered so many similar establishments in adjacent counties below the mountain.

Funds from Rutherfordwood postoffice, which is housed in the same building, were taken by the robbers, but no estimate of the amount could be obtained Wednesday morning.

The Hodges and McNeil store was one of the largest mercantile establishments to be found in a rural community, and the general line included practically all the everyday commodities.

## JAMES MOORE WILL GO ON AIR FRIDAY

Local Tenor Goes to Charlotte Station for Initial Broadcast. Is Featured on "Dixie Crystals" and Other Popular Programs

James Moore, popular Boone singer who recently joined the Columbia Broadcasting Company at Charlotte as staff tenor, left Tuesday for that city where he will make his future home. Mrs. Moore will join him within the next few days.

Mr. Moore's followers in Watauga County will be interested in the schedule for the first week of his work, as they will probably have a number of requests which they will send in to Station WBT, central operations point in the "Dixie Loop" of the Columbia chain.

Regular features in which the local tenor will appear are "Dixie Crystals," "Musical Etchings," and "Swanee Review."

His schedule is as follows: Beginning Friday, March 20th, and each Friday thereafter, 8:30 p. m., Station WBT.

March 23rd: inaugural program of Dixie Loop of the Columbia Broadcasting System, 10:00-11:00 p. m., over WBT and associated stations.

Beginning March 24th and each Tuesday thereafter, 8:30 p. m., Dixie Loop of the Columbia Broadcasting System.

Beginning March 27th and each Friday thereafter, 10:30 p. m., Dixie Loop of the Columbia Broadcasting System.

## SOME PROOF

Does Advertising Pay? Does The Democrat reach the farmers of this territory? Well, listen to this:

For three weeks a small advertisement calling the farmers' attention to the agricultural limestone offered for sale by Mount Brothers of Shreve, Tenn., appeared in The Watauga Democrat. Through an error, the price of the limestone was omitted from the advertisement.

Until just the other day Mount Brothers had mailed over three hundred letters to farmers in this territory in answer to their queries concerning the price of the limestone advertised. In this week's issue you'll find another advertisement giving prices and further details run over the name of Mount Brothers. Does advertising pay? Does The Democrat reach the farmers? We'll say so!