

# The Mount Airy News.

ESTABLISHED 1880

MOUNT AIRY, NORTH CAROLINA, SEPTEMBER 3rd, 1925.

\$1.50 PER YEAR IN ADVANCE

## Drought in Mountain Area Causes Enormous Loss

### Danger of Fire Now Outstanding Hazard—Forests Dying, Rivers and Creeks Drying Up; Farmers Deal Hard Blow

Asheville, Aug. 30.—Serious as has become the problem of Asheville's water supply, it is the least serious phase of conditions that arise from the fact that no rain has fallen west of the Blue Ridge Mountains since last May. Asheville, if the worst comes to the worst, can go where there is water, but the 150,000 people who make their living farming in this territory cannot move.

Literally the country is parched to a crisp brown. Crops almost everywhere, save in the low bottom lands, are a total loss. The thousands of acres of grazing land that support great herds of cattle are dry and hard. The grass is dead. There is no pasture for the cattle. Already hay is being imported to feed them in the season when usually there is plenty of grass.

#### Forest Dying

Up the mountain sides the forests are dying. Vast areas of chestnut, the most valuable natural resource of this country, are dying and turning a dull yellow brown six weeks ahead of the season when the frost usually turns the mountains into a riot of gold and yellow. Here and there the drab brown is blotched with a flame of crimson, maple turned red out of season.

Rivers and creeks and brooks are dried up. Streams that have never failed before, springs from which families have drawn their water for generations are dried up. Almost every town west of the Blue Ridge is confronted with the same condition that confronts Asheville. Many families living in remote sections are having to haul their drinking water for miles.

Asheville actually is in better condition than are many sections of this side of the mountain. They have water enough to drink, though it is shut off from the residential section for certain hours in the day. Tapping of Beaver Lake has thrown half million gallons daily into the city mains. What would happen if fire broke out is problematical, but there is healthful water enough to live on.

Soda fountains, bottling works, laundries and similar places have been cut off from water until there is an increase in the supply. Bottling companies and laundries beyond the mountains, principally in Marion, which has an abundant water supply, are doing an enormous business. Since last Friday all the laundry for Asheville has been carried in trucks across the mountains to Marion, 42 miles away.

Asheville will pull through for a good many weeks yet before there is need for any grave fears for its safety, save from the fire hazard, which has been greatly increased. Its splendid golf courses are turned a dusty, uninteresting brown, and many people from beyond the ridge have deserted the mountains, but among the residents there is only the discomfort that comes from being restricted in the use of water.

Crops are in ruins. The fall vegetables which usually bring in handsome returns and provide the mountain with food for the winter, are hopelessly parched. The apple crop is drying on the trees. Corn, save in the lowest valleys, would burn like a down-east broom-sedge in March. This mountain area, according to those who have examined it carefully, will not make 25 per cent of a crop.

Further West, where there are large areas of cattle land, with thousands of cattle, the owners are confronted with the choice of selling their herds in an unfavorable market, or importing hay to feed them with this winter. T. Leonard Cwynn, one of the largest cattle men in Haywood County, is preparing to ship a thousand head of cattle to Virginia, where he has found pasture for them.

But the small cattle raiser, the man with a herd of ten or twenty, from which he makes his money, has little in prospect save the sale of his cattle, or the very expensive alternative of buying hay until the grass grows again next spring. Rains now would avail him little. The growing season in the mountains is almost at an end. Frost comes by the end of September.

Resort centers in this section have

all summer felt the shortage of fresh vegetables. They have had to be imported from elsewhere. The residents of the section will feel the shortage until there is another growing season. The country will not starve, but it has been terribly hard hit. The coming winter will be a barren winter for them. Not only have they not raised their usual food crops, but their money crops and cattle have been woefully diminished.

Right now the menace is fire. A carelessly dropped cigar could do a million dollars damage. The Champion Fibre Co., of Canton, the largest makers of cardboard paper in the world, have upwards of fifty million feet of reserve timber standing in the mountains west of Canton. Fire could do them an incalculable damage. Their plant at Canton has been partially idle for weeks because of the lack of water, and hundreds of men are out of work.

#### Fight Fires

Sporadic fires have broken out all over the mountains, but they have fought doggedly. Only on Grandfather Mountain have they assumed ominous proportions. Jonas Ridge, on the east bank of Linville Gorge, has burned over. It will be difficult to estimate the damage done on Grandfather, but it will be well past the million mark. Other fires would probably match this figure in the aggregate.

Fighting a mountain fire is as hopeless a business as fighting a blaze in Dismal Swamp, where the very earth burns. The mountains are covered with several inches of matted earth roots and leaves. When fire gets in it nothing but a soaking rain can definitely put it out. The mountaineers have fought desperately and heroically when there has been need and a constant watch is maintained everywhere.

The summer tourist trade has suffered, but not as extensively as it might easily have suffered, had there been panic. Asheville has taken the situation calmly, hoping against hope that rains would come to relieve the situation. Waynesville and Hendersonville and other centers of the tourist traffic have economized in water and let the visitors have it. The hotels have been the last places to be cut off when necessity demanded it.

#### No Artificial Rain

All of the weather prophets have retired from the field in disorder. Just now they are saying that it will certainly be the 21st of September, the calendar date for the fall equinox. But all the signs have failed thus far, and save for very meagre showers, there has been no rain since May. Efforts to induce a rainfall by artificial means were tried out on the Asheville watershed, but they were unavailing.

Everywhere one hears talk of using a carload of high explosives in an effort to induce rain. Nobody believes it will work, but nobody would hesitate to use any means to get rain. The drought has become a nightmare. There is no escaping it anywhere. Drive along the roads and they are choked with tourists leaving the mountains. The hills and fields are brown and desolate, save for occasional patches of low ground corn.

It is unusual, like the unusual winter that Bill Nye struck when he came to North Carolina to escape the rigors of northern winters. The oldest inhabitants remembers nothing to compare with it. And it is the most serious drought that has ever struck North Carolina. Any computation of the damage that has been done is impossible, but it will run into the millions.

East of the mountains down to the rim of the Piedmont, the rain has been scarce, but not so generally scarce as it has been west of the ridge. Reason for it nobody can say, anyone than they can say when it will rain. But serious it is, and the most serious for the man who lives off the land and not he who gets his water out of a spigot and his food from the corner grocery.

The old city of Athens is to be torn down and archaeologists will excavate 25 feet beneath the surface in search of centuries of deposits. Forty American colleges plan to assist in the expectation that the work will yield more important disclosures concerning classical civilization, history and art than resulted from the excavations at Pompeii.

## 10,000 RAILWAY MEN LOSE JOBS IN COAL STRIKE

### Coal-Carrying Roads Will Lay Off Crews, Shopmen

Philadelphia, Aug. 29.—The anthracite suspension ordered for September 1 not only will mean a walk-out of 150,000 workers, excluding the 8,000 to 10,000 maintenance men remaining in the mines by mutual agreement, but will also throw out of work 10,000 railway men, officials of anthracite carriers in the region reported today.

The small host of rail employes directly serves the local and through movement of hard coal produced at the mines. Their present tenure of employment, after "suspension Tuesday," officials said, was good for only two additional days or so, at the most. By then the roads will have cleaned up the last of the mine coal awaiting shipments.

#### To Close Shops

Immediately thereafter the anthracite-carrying roads would issue orders closing down locomotive and car repair shops in their hard coal territory, thus laying off several thousand shopmen and car repairmen, it was said. A similar order would go out for roundhouse men and train and engine crews on mine runs and through local trains. The last black steel coal "gondola" will go on a siding, to remain until operators and miners are again at peace.

The Lehigh Railroad company, for one, already has officially announced at Hazleton, Pa., that 750 men will be let out on the Hazleton and Mahoning division. The decrease in freight traffic activity may be somewhat compensated for financially to the railroads, spokesmen for the carriers said, by the increase expected in passenger business because of idle miners. Various excursions accordingly are being outlined for early announcement which officials admit, will be aimed at the surplus spending money with which the miners are said to be "flush" after two years of steady employment.

#### Last Three Months

A canvass of railroad sentiment today, while necessarily incomplete, tended to show a general belief that the coming suspension would more likely last three months than the three weeks now being predicted in many parts of the mining region.

Miners apparently are not waiting for Monday night to leave the mines. Hundreds began leaving today, taking their tools and effects.

In Wilkes-Barre gangs of several thousand imported laborers were reported outward bound.

Scranton reported that contract miners, as a rule, were quitting tonight, after "blowing down" enough coal to keep their laborers going until Monday.

## FLYING BOOTLEGER KILLED AT CHICAGO

### Irving Schleg and Companion Believed to Have Been Shot By Rivals

Chicago, Aug. 28.—Irving Schleg, "the Flying Bootlegger," and Harry Berman, west Side gangster were found shot to death near Ashburn Field, the air harbor of the Illinois Aero Club, early today. Each had been shot through the back of the head.

Schleg's suitcase, riddled with bullets and stained with blood, was found later partly submerged in a west park lagoon, miles away.

The police tonight were working on the theory that the slayers took their victims "for a ride" in Schleg's car, threw their bodies from the machine and drove the car into the lagoon to hide the crime.

A small black suitcase, part of an aviator's outfit, was found near the bodies as was a pistol with one chamber exploded. The police found the suitcase had been ransacked by some one with bloody hands. Schleg had been reported to be making airplane deliveries of liquor from Canada by airplane and the police theory was that he and his companion had been shot by rival liquor dealers or as the result of a deal of half million dollar safe blowing at the Parkway Hotel here several months ago in which the police suspected he was implicated.

Schleg's parents said they believed the police had killed their son and said policemen had threatened to slay him.

Two thousand plains buffalo have been liberated by the Canadian Government in the Great Slave Lake country to roam at will.

## CHECK LAW BEFORE SUPREME COURT

### Claimed to Be Unconstitutional in That It Provides Imprisonment For Debt

Raleigh, Aug. 27.—The supreme court will be called upon to pass on the constitutionality of the 1925 legislature's bad check law in an appeal docketed from the third district court.

In the lower court, from which the state has appealed, a motion by the defense to quash the bill of indictment on the ground that the law was unconstitutional was granted by the presiding judge. The case is that of the state vs. H. L. Edwards, of Hertford county.

The contention of the defense is that the law violates article 1, section 15, of the state constitution in that it provides for imprisonment as punishment for the giving of a worthless check. The defense, in attacking the validity of the act, points to the constitutional prohibition against imprisonment for debt except in case of fraud and contends a check is merely a contract or an agreement to pay a specified sum, if presented at a designated bank, and that the act of giving a check is therefore not fraudulent.

Assistant Attorney General Frank Nash, who will represent the state in the appeal hearing before the supreme court, will seek to sustain the constitutionality of the law with the contention that the giving of a check is a representation by the giver that he has an amount of money on deposit sufficient to cover it. The transaction, according to the state's position, speaks for itself as to the existence of fraud.

Whether the court declares the act valid or not, merchants of the state, who thought they had a real protective measure against the worthless check, have already discovered that it is ineffective. Before prosecution can be brought the giver of a check must be located by the holder and notified of its dishonor and the giver can dodge that corner, evade the holder of the check and thereby escape prosecution indefinitely.

## CATCHING CARP IN DAN RIVER

### Thousands Being Taken From Stream By Fishermen Who Learn Secret Of Trapping Them

Madison, Aug. 18.—If the reports of fishermen are to be credited, and there is a belief in some quarters that at least a few fishermen are partly truthful, thousands of pounds of carp have been taken from Dan river, in that part of the stream which flows through Rockingham county, within the past three or four weeks, and the end is not yet. For the fish continue to be captured in large numbers and of large size.

The manner of their capture, moreover, is almost as interesting as the fish that are caught. In fact, it appears that somebody has discovered a secret that the carp didn't mean to let get out and the fish are at the mercy of those who seek their destruction. Who it was that discovered this secret is not known but certain it is that it has led to the undoing of many carp.

What some shrewd fisherman learned is that when frightened a carp doesn't dart up or down stream at lightning-like speed but sticks his nose in the mud instead, believing, like the ostrich, that when his head is hidden all is hidden. Nor is this his only peculiarity. So long as the carp keeps his nose in the mud he may be rubbed on the back, firmly grasped and lifted from the water without becoming alarmed, it is said.

Learning all this, man has taken advantage of the fish. A number of ordinary seines are tied together, or poultry wire is made to serve instead and set about holes in the river that are likely to harbor carp. Then men and boys get inside the pen thus made and feel around on the bottom until the fish are discovered and captured. When one hole is fished clean the fishermen move on to another.

A carp, it is declared, has only one ticklish spot, his tail. If touched on his rear extremity he takes his nose out of the mud and travels. After the net has been set for him however, he does not travel far until he runs into it and is brought to a halt and again does a nose dive in the mud.

Carp ranging in size from one to 17 pounds have been taken in the manner thus described and some tremendous fish fries have been held on the banks of the Dan recently.

## Railroad Crossing Crash in Reidsville Takes Five Lives

### Victims of Reidsville Tragedy Prominent Residents of State—All Killed Instantly

Reidsville, Aug. 30.—Four women and a man had their lives snuffed out this evening at 7 o'clock at the Carter crossing near the station here when Southern train No. 35, southbound, struck the automobile in which they were riding.

While horrified onlookers stood helpless, the car, driven by Mrs. Eugene Irvin was hurled high in the air, clear of the track, and the bodies of the victims of the crash were tossed like straws even higher, to fall upon the hard rails and roadbed of a sidetrack.

Not one person was left alive from the happy party which had started in the car from the home of Mrs. Manton Oliver a short while before. Mrs. Lillian Oliver was breathing when physicians arrived, but died in 10 minutes, while being carried to a hospital. All the others were killed either when the heavy engine struck the automobile or when they fell upon the sidetrack, a drop of about 25 feet or more, it is estimated.

Motionless, with no sound from their lips, they were victims in a tragedy that overmatched another one about two years ago at the same crossing, when members of the Pillar family, two men and two children, were struck by the same train, No. 35 driven by the same engineer, R. L. Pierce. In the Pillar wreck, one person in the car escaped, Mrs. Mitchell, who spent a long time in St. Leo's hospital, Greensboro, recovering from her injuries. While officially known as Carter's crossing, the death spot is generally called Pillar's crossing.

Engineer Pierce was driving his locomotive around a curve southbound. The train was a little late. Women on a porch on Market street, facing the double track of the southern, saw the automobile start across the track. Witnesses said that signal lights were flashing but Mrs. Irvin evidently did not know of the approach of the train or thought to get across before it came to the crossing. What she did was to drive across the northbound track and then get the front wheels of the car partly across the southbound track.

The impact was terrific. Like bits of paper, car and occupants were thrown up and aside, falling lifeless upon the sidetrack. If they knew their approaching fate they gave no sign. No movement of those in the automobile was observed just before the crash, no sound made. Death was quick; what had been a party full of life was transformed in a few moments into bruised and mangled flesh and stilled hearts. None of the victims were run over by the train.

Horrified onlookers could only watch. One man tried to scream before the crash but the shout died in his throat. Several women were sitting on the porch of a residence facing the track and saw the automobile tossed high in the air, with the bodies of its occupants carried even higher. It seems probable that some of those in the car were killed when the engine plowed into the car and were corpses thrown for further mangling.

All of the victims were thrown clear of the track, onto a sidetrack, on the right of train No. 35. The automobile, almost a complete wreck, was also thrown clear of the main line. The train was stopped within its length, its rear car standing, when still, almost at the crossing.

Death had been mercifully instant for four in the party. Mrs. Lillian Oliver lived a few minutes, breathing faintly, but she never opened her eyes. The bodies were badly mangled. Mrs. Irvin's head was mashed, as was the head and face of Mrs. Lillian Oliver. Bones were broken in all of the bodies and the necks of some were said to have been broken.

The bodies were thrown upon the rails of the sidetrack and what life if any, that was in the four who were picked up dead was snuffed out by the terrible impact.

#### THE DEAD:

Jack Hilliard Carter, 31, of New York and Reidsville.

Mrs. Eugene Irvin, 45, wife of Eugene Irvin, cashier of the Citizens bank here.

Mrs. Manton Oliver, 44, sister of Jack Carter, and wife of the publisher of The Reidsville Review.

Mrs. Lillian L. Oliver, widow of

John T. Oliver, Reidsville. Mrs. Nina Johnson Cone, New York and late of Asheville, and cousin of Mrs. Manton Oliver.

## MERCHANT FACES CHARGE OF ARSON

### Max Samet Out On \$10,000 Bond in Connection With Blaze at King

High Point, Aug. 28.—Arrested at his home here today, Max Samet, merchant, was released on \$10,000 bond for his appearance for preliminary hearing on a charge of being responsible for the fire which almost wiped out the business district of the small town of King, Stokes County, last night. Samet and his counsel, L. B. Williams, went to King this afternoon to arrange for the preliminary hearing, but no date has been set for the trial.

The local merchant was taken into custody this morning, the warrant for his arrest being issued at the instigation of the sheriff of Stokes County, who, with several deputies, came here to make the arrest. Samet operated a general store at King, and it was in his establishment that the fire started. The loss will exceed \$25,000. No details were learned concerning what evidence the State has against Samet, the sheriff returning to King this morning without supplying local officers with information.

Samet emphatically denies he set fire to the building or that he is in any way responsible for the blaze. Two months ago he opened a store at King, having purchased the buildings and stock of the Stokes Supply Company. He and his son, Jake Samet, spent yesterday at King arranging for a sale, which they expected to conduct Saturday, he said.

He stated that he carried insurance of \$30,000 on the merchandise and \$5,500 on the buildings. The fire, it was learned here, broke out about 9:35 o'clock last night, and spread so rapidly that almost the entire business district of the town was wiped out. Inadequate fire fighting facilities and a limited supply of water made it impossible to attain success in fighting the flames. Bucket brigades were organized and in this way the blaze was finally brought under control.

Samet declared that he left King at 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon and was back at High Point at 7 o'clock last night. He said he did not know of the fire until the news was brought to him by officers when they went to his home to arrest him this morning.

## Probable Cause Found in Case of Max Samet

Winston-Salem, Aug. 29.—Max Samet, charged with the burning of his store building and stock of goods at King, Stokes county, Thursday night, was given a preliminary hearing before two magistrates in King last night. Probable cause was found, and the defendant was bound over to the next term of Stokes superior court, to be held in October. His bond was made the same as fixed just after his arrest in High Point late Thursday night.

A message received here this afternoon from King states that W. A. Scott, of Greensboro, deputy state fire commissioner, will go to King Monday and make a thorough investigation of the fire which threatened to destroy the entire town.

## Many Turned Away For Want of Room at Duke

Durham, Aug. 30.—Between 1,300 and 1,350 students will be enrolled at Duke university during the 1925-26 season, according to an approximation arrived at recently by the Duke registrar, who states that his figures represent a conservative estimate. Every available room will be used, while scores of students will be housed in private homes off the campus, it is stated.

There will be 165 young women students rooming on the campus, with the remainder of the 135 coeds living in the city, in private homes. There will be about 350 girls and 1,000 men students. Of the total number, between 300 and 350 will be from Durham.

The university has been deluged with applications from prospective women students, with more than 500 having been turned away because of insufficient dormitory space.