

BEN RIGNEY MAY HAVE MET WITH FOUL PLAY

Coroner's Jury Orders Body Exhumed For Examination; Jury Meets Monday

FOUND DEAD IN HIS BED SUNDAY

Attorney Confident Furniture Workman Was Murdered—Vital Organs Sent to Raleigh For Analysis.

The officers, coroner, and a coroner's jury of this county are faced with the puzzling mystery that surrounds the death of Ben J. Rigney, aged 23, young furniture workman of this city. The young man was found dead in bed in his room at the home of Henry Leftwich Sunday afternoon. Two years ago he came to this city from up in Carroll County, later bought a house in Highland Park and had rented it to the Leftwich family, reserving a room for his use. Saturday afternoon the Leftwiches left the city for a week end visit and when they returned about supper time Sunday they found the young man dead in his bed.

The strange circumstances that surrounded his death caused an investigation to be started, although at first it appeared he had eaten some poisoned food. One thing that impressed those who first entered the room was the careful and deliberate manner in which his clothing had been placed on the floor. There was his coat, shirt, shoes, and other apparel and on top of all was his overcoat. Then lying on the bed was the young man flat of his back, the cover all straight and pillow hardly disturbed. His head was resting on the pillow, but had only buried itself into the pillow at the one place and showed no signs of having been touched elsewhere. It appeared that the young man had been placed on the bed and that he had not moved while in bed. His hands were folded across his body and there were no signs of any restlessness on his part while in the bed.

The county health officer, Dr. Gorham, was called in and he found the mouth and stomach of the man badly burned from some kind of poison. This caused a coroner's jury to be summoned and the stomach and vital organs were sent to Raleigh to have an examination made for poison.

Rigney was seen several times Saturday night and had stopped at a eating stand in this city about 11 o'clock. Soon the officers were tracing his movements that night and their investigation revealed that he had paid a visit to a girl friend up in Virginia during the evening, in company with some other young men. The coroner's jury met a second time Wednesday afternoon and heard the witnesses tell of Rigney's movements Saturday night, but the young men who were last seen with him could not be located. From the witnesses it seems that there had existed some jealousy between Rigney and his companions over their attention to a young lady and the state is now working on the theory that these young men may know something of what transpired to cause Rigney's death. It was in evidence before the jury that there had been some blows struck between Rigney and his companions and this has caused an order to be made to exhumate the body of Rigney and to examine the skull for possible injury to his head.

H. T. Rigney, the father of the young man, has employed J. H. Folger to assist in determining the cause of his son's death and after the jury had adjourned Wednesday afternoon Mr. Folger stated that sufficient evidence had been developed to convince him that the young man had been the victim of foul play. The jury will meet again Monday to hear what the result of the second examination of the body reveals and also by that time it is expected that the report on the stomach will be in from Raleigh.

Miss Ruth Epps Attacked By Mad-Dog

Miss Ruth Epps, the eleven year old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. L. M. Epps, of Newton, was severely bitten in the hand and leg Friday by a dog affected with rabies. She was passing the home of the dog's owner when the animal jumped the hedge and attacked her, she warded it off at first but, before help could reach her, was bitten twice. The head was sent to Raleigh and the chemists pronounced the dog mad. Mr. Epps was at one time superintendent of the public schools of Mount Airy and the family has many friends here.

Mrs. S. R. Jackson, Mrs. I. T. Jacobs and Mrs. W. M. Hollingsworth spent three days in High Point attending the state convention of the Baptist Women's Missionary Union. They are returning this afternoon.

Hospital News

Among those receiving treatment this week in Martin Memorial hospital are the following: Mr. James Soyars, Max Meadows, Va.; Mr. Ed Simons, Mount Airy route 2; Mrs. Ada Williams, Rockford; Mrs. George Lawrence, Highland Park; Mrs. Percy Hawks, route 2; and Miss Elizabeth Powell of this city.

Mrs. John West, of Stuart Va., had a tonsillotomy operation Monday.

Mrs. Annie Burrus, of Stratford, is recovering from an operation performed Saturday.

Mrs. Frank Carter, Jr., is a patient for an operation for appendicitis.

Mrs. Beale Tillotson, of route 5 submitted to an operation for appendicitis last Thursday.

Baby Robert Alexander son of Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Alexander of Elkin is an empyema patient.

Mrs. Mattie Martin, of Rockford, is a surgical patient.

Mrs. T. B. Ashby has returned to her home in this city after receiving treatment for several weeks.

C. F. Pain of route 4 was discharged February 23 after submitting to a minor operation.

W. J. Nixon of route 4 is a patient for appendicitis.

H. C. Hawks has returned to his home at Lambury, Va., after being a patient for treatment.

Atty. H. O. Wolts, of this city will probably return home the last of this week after spending several weeks in the hospital for appendectomy and complications.

Kiwanis Meeting Postponed

The regular bi-weekly meeting of the Kiwanis Club has been postponed from Friday of this week to Mar. 15 on account of the illness of Kiwanian Charles Andrew, proprietor of the Blue Ridge Hotel where the meetings are held. Mr. Andrew is suffering with influenza and apparently threatened with pneumonia. His little son James Andrew is recovering from an attack of influenza and pneumonia.

Honor Roll For Rockford St. School

1st Grade: Winifred Snow, Warren G. Hawks, Daniel Pardue, Hazel Scales, Robert Thacker, William Ray Haynes, Margaret Badgett, Margaret Roberson, Louise Poore, Margaret Nichols, Sarah Jackson, Cecil Chandler, Bobbie Lawrence, Maxine Redman.

2nd Grade: Nelson Allred, Warren Horton, James Norman, Jack Spain, Russell Wagoner, Robert Witt, Mary Inscore, Audrey Jessup, Elizabeth Pardue, Elizabeth Sargent, Mamie Sue Shelton, Dennis Edwards, Robt. E. Ashby, Jr., Wanda Daber, Sadie Wolfe James Davis, Frances Cockerham, Rachel Burcham, Boyce Watson, Millicent Whetstone, Boyd McKinney, Russell Shelton.

3rd Grade: Myrtle Moore Mickey, Rera Shelton, Glenn Butler, Margaret Chandler, Edna Holloway.

4th Grade: Nora Binder, Vivian Holloway, Josephine Shelton, Dennis Moody, Ruby Moody.

5th Grade: Cecil Amburn, Thelma Inscore, Gene Riddle, Elsie Johnson, Grover Beeson.

6th Grade: Sarah Lou Kiger, Josephine McKnight, Lillian Creed, Viola Douglas, Maria Smith, Beale Morrison, Mary Engle Hoffman, Edith Binder, Lorraine Johnson, Lucy Goldsmith, Marvin Sparger, Charles Lawrence, Haywood Sparger.

7th Grade: Mildred Jones, Mary Ruth Jones, Beale Lou Bray, Evelyn Fawcett, Bishop Horton, Doris Cockerham, Bentley Hines, Carl Stewart, Bruce Teah, Mary Brannon, Katherine Gilbert, June Simmons, Frances Lawrence, Scott Bowman, Dora Slaughter, Edna Roberson.

City Election Call Soon To Be Made

Commissioners To Issue Call At Special Meeting March 15th.

This city is scheduled for a municipal election on Monday, May 6th when a board of commissioners and mayor will be elected for a term of two years. The commissioners will hold a special meeting Friday night, March 15th, for the purpose of issuing the call, selecting the judges and registrars and providing for the opening of the poll books for the registration of voters.

As yet there has been very little discussion as to probable candidates for the offices but with the call for the election, friends of "favorite sons" are expected to bring forth their respective candidates.

Somers Is After Sheriff's Office

Doesn't Want To Be Sheriff But Asks That Sheriff Smith Move to Dobson—County Short of Funds.

County Commissioner J. A. Somers of Elkin again has brought up the proposition to require Sheriff Smith to maintain his office at Dobson. For some time he has been against the establishment of Sheriff Smith's office in Mount Airy, regardless of the fact that the largest part of the sheriff's business is transacted from the Mount Airy office, and last Monday he again made objection to the county paying rent on an office for the sheriff. For more than 20 years the county has seen fit to rent an office for the use of the sheriff in Mount Airy, knowing that it was not practical for him to have his office elsewhere. All this time, with Democrat sheriffs and Republican sheriffs, this has been the practice and neither party in power has doubted the wisdom of the custom until the advent upon the scene of Commissioner Somers of Elkin who refuses to let the subject drop. But for the time being the matter is deferred and will be taken up again at the April meeting of the board.

The board of commissioners were presented with the report of County Agent White at their monthly meeting which indicates that Mr. White is still on the job. In presenting his report Mr. White explained that he was tendering his services to the board until June 30th, the date his contract expires, and that he would be glad to receive any instructions or suggestions from the board as to what they wanted done in the county farm agent work. He received no reply from the board and Mr. White's report was left on the commissioners' table without further comment.

The county faces a shortage of funds with which to meet teachers salaries and other running expenses and had a bond buyer present at the meeting Monday with the idea of selling \$25,000 of short term notes to pay off bills and vouchers that are due and pressing.

Improvement Adds Brilliancy To Lights

Residents of this city have observed with a great deal of satisfaction the improvement of the street lights during the past few nights. Some time ago Supt. C. M. Whitlock reached the conclusion that the street lights of the city were not throwing out a sufficient brilliancy and he began an investigation. While there had been no complaint from the town, yet Mr. Whitlock believed the lights were not giving their proper output of rays. Armed with special light ray instruments, volt recording outfits and other technical equipment he started on his tour of inspection and when he completed his work the result was a considerable increase in the brilliancy of the street lights. This was accomplished by adding another circuit to the lighting series, providing additional transformer service and installing a more efficient bulb in the light sockets. A good place to observe the great improvement is in the lobby of the post office where at night the rays penetrate the darkness of the lobby and one can read from the light that is suspended across the street.

Mrs. Allie Nutt Dies in Greensboro

A message was received here this morning announcing the death of Mrs. Allie Joyce Nutt, widow of Mr. John Nutt, deceased, a former resident of this city which occurred in a hospital in Greensboro where she was carried Tuesday following a serious attack of poisoning due to diabetic condition.

Mrs. Nutt has for a number of years made her home in Greensboro and has not been in good health though she went about as usual until a few days ago, having very recently returned from a trip to Florida.

She is survived by her parents State Senator and Mrs. R. T. Joyce, two sons Robert and John Nutt, one sister Mrs. Carrie Galloway and one brother Gilmer Joyce, of Gastonia. Her daughter Miss Joyce Nutt passed away several years ago and is buried in Greensboro and it is presumed that Mrs. Nutt will be buried there also. The eldest son Robert Nutt is en route from California to Greensboro.

The Joyce and Nutt families are among the old and respected families of this community and have many relatives and friends here.

Miss Katherine Price will attend the Tri-State Poster convention to be held at Sedgefield Manor Thursday and Friday. Mrs. W. E. Merritt and Mrs. Frederick Smith will accompany her to Greensboro.

Local Young Man Is Suicide Victim

Claude D. Smith Takes His Life; Found in His Store With Fatal Pistol Wound in Head; Was Popular Here

Funeral rites were held in the Friends Church, this city, Wednesday afternoon for Claude D. Smith, young grocery merchant who committed suicide in his store on North Main street Monday morning soon after entering his store.

He had left his home on Church street at the usual hour that morning and during the day his wife learned that his store had been locked all day. Late in the afternoon when he did not return and his store continued closed she came up and started to make inquiry. No one had seen him all day. She came on to the store and unlocked the door, and as she walked on back into the rear of the room she found her husband on the floor dead from a pistol wound in his head. While no note or letter was left by him circumstances showed that he had taken his life. He was lying on his back and had first spread out his overcoat and some sacks on the floor before lying down. He had taken a .32 calibre pistol and holding it against the side of his head with one hand, had fired the fatal shot with the other.

His friends have been unable to determine any reason for the act, his home life was ideal, and his business affairs were not in such a condition to give him any great concern. It was known however that he was subject to severe headaches and at times he suffered considerably from them and this might have brought on a sudden unbalancing of his mental faculties. He was a cheerful young man, liked by a large circle of friends and his death was a great shock to all who knew him.

The deceased was the son of Crockett Smith of Patrick County, was 36 years old and is survived by a wife, the daughter of Sheriff A. M. Smith, and two little girls. He was one of the first boys to go to France from this section and served 18 months in France and Germany. He was a member of the famous third division and saw hard service in the battle of the Marne and the Argonne Forest contest. After the armistice he was stationed for several months with army of occupation on the Rhine river in Germany.

He was a member of the Junior Order and of the Friends Church of this city. The funeral services were conducted by his pastor, Rev. John Permar, assisted by Dr. J. T. Smith, of Westfield, life-long friend of the family. Burial was at Oakdale cemetery.

W. B. Partridge Heads Royal Arch

The regular election of officers for the Royal Arch Masons was held in the Masonic hall Tuesday night with the selection of W. B. Partridge as High Priest of the chapter for the ensuing year, succeeding M. A. Pendleton, the retiring High Priest.

Other officers elected to serve with Mr. Partridge were C. Binder, King; J. W. Parker, Scribe; A. B. Council, Sec., and J. B. Haynes, Treas.

J. C. Penney Store Will Open March 15

Delay in the arrival of fixtures has caused a postponement of the opening of the J. C. Penney store in this city and the date has been moved up to March 15th, by which time everything will be in readiness for the formal opening of this new department store, according to announcement made this week by S. H. Locke, manager of the local store. Mr. Locke has assisting him in the store C. L. Hill, of Westfield, who is well known in this section.

Earnings of the company for the year ending December 31, 1928, were \$9,521,217.58 after preferred stock dividends of \$1,097,794. Earnings for the previous year were \$7,982,831.91 after preferred dividends of \$965,998. The portion of 1928 earnings allocable to the no par common stock is equivalent to \$14.12 per share as compared to \$12.52 for previous year.

At a meeting of the Board of Directors on February 19, 1929, a dividend was declared of \$7.00 per share on the outstanding common stock of the company payable March 13, 1929, to common stockholders of record at the close of business March 7, 1929.

The total sales of the J. C. Penney Company for 1928 were \$176,096,989.14, as compared with total sales for 1927 of \$151,957,965.20.

Important developments during 1928 include the erection of a new warehouse in St. Louis which serves as a general distribution center for the Company, also the announcement of a special expansion program involving the opening of 500 additional stores this year.

A son was born to Mr. and Mrs. Newton Fowler in Roanoke, Va., Thursday morning.

LEGISLATURE SLOW TO CHANGE PRESENT LAWS

Dr. Bernard Finds It Hard To Interfere With Democrat Officials in Old Surry

Mrs. E. M. Taylor Dies in Florida

A wire was received here this morning announcing the death of Mrs. E. M. Taylor, of this city, which occurred at Rockledge, Fla., where Mr. and Mrs. Taylor were spending the winter. The remains will be brought here for interment arriving Friday. Funeral arrangements have not been made at this writing.

Mrs. Taylor was about sixty years of age and had been enjoying her stay in Florida until a few days ago when she suffered a hemorrhage of her eye and they planned to return home according to a letter received this morning. Death seems to have occurred suddenly Wednesday night though no details are known.

Mrs. Taylor was before her marriage Miss Sarah Jane Cox, of Virginia, and was a loyal member of the First Baptist Church. She is survived by her husband, two sons Bob somewhere in the south and William, who resides near this city. Three sisters and three brothers also survive. They are H. P. Cox, Cold Creek, Va.; Will Cox, Woodlawn, Va.; Marshall Cox, Galax, Va.; Mrs. J. L. Hawks, Bluefield, W. Va.; Mrs. Violet M. Lamb, Lumburg, Va.; and Mrs. Cena Belton, Akron, Ohio.

Cooking School Closes With Table Demonstration

The cooking school which was conducted by Miss Sue Ramsey Johnston under the auspices of the Mount Airy Woman's club and has, for the two weeks ending last Friday, occupied the chief place in the minds of the club women and others, came to a close Friday night with a table demonstration in the home of Mrs. J. Bruce Yokley with about forty women in attendance.

The demonstration began with the breakfast table where the hostess, not supposed to keep a maid, served from a tea wagon, having the daughter to assist by bringing the hot breakfast and breakfast plates from the kitchen.

The luncheon table was arranged in the dining room and here a more formal meal was served and a maid brought in the service and removed the used dishes.

The teacher discoursed on the gracious hospitality as evidenced by the afternoon tea, and demonstrated serving this refreshing beverage from the tea table on which were placed the tea service, an extra pot of hot water, plates of sandwiches, bonbons, small cakes, napkins and a small vase of flowers. The service was very simple and very informal.

The last demonstration was the formal dinner with a variety of courses and strictly formal service. Miss Johnston explained that between the strictly formal and the very informal meal would be found all shades of more or less formal meals to suit every hostess and to conform to her home and the ability of her maid. A rising vote of thanks was extended to Miss Johnston for her very fine service, during the two weeks she was here, and for her helpful suggestions.

Will Repeat "The Dust of The Earth"

On account of numerous requests the White Plains school faculty will repeat the dramatic play "The Dust of the Earth" at the White Plains school Friday night, this week. This play was given in this city Tuesday night before a large audience and has also been played at Copeland. All school children will be admitted for 10 cents.

Broadway Theatre Being Remodeled

W. H. Marion, Proprietor, To Install Talking Picture Equipment.

For the past two weeks the Broadway Theatre in this city has been undergoing extensive repairing and remodeling. The building is being repainted throughout and new wiring is being installed to insure absolute safety from electrical troubles, replacing all the exposed wires that formerly were in use.

In a few days Mr. Marion, the proprietor, expects to receive a talking picture equipment and as soon as this can be installed his opening announcement will be made. While he cannot tell just now the definite date, yet he hopes to have everything in readiness by March 15th.

YADKIN SENATOR ENTERS CONTEST

Hard Fight Continues Over Mount Airy's Court and the County Purchasing Agent; Past Financial Tangle Is Proving Embarrassing.

Reports reaching this county from Raleigh indicates that Surry county local matters continue to be much in the lime light among the legislators, and bills and counter bills effecting local offices keep being dumped in the legislative hopper. Track has been lost of the various bills of Representative Bernard which would change the present status of the courts and purchasing agent of this county. Perhaps the latest move on his part was when the effort to oust Judge Llewellyn from the Recorders Court was transferred to the hands of Senator Joyce. And after meeting with failure in every move made, Dr. Bernard has now pinned his hope on his co-worker Senator Joyce. But here again it appears that he has met with poor success for Senator Joyce's measure to elect the recorder has become lost among the mass of bills that are on the Senate calendar.

When it became apparent that Senator Joyce would not be able to bring to life his bill the aid of Senator Williams of Yadkin was solicited, and when they brought in the Yadkin gentleman they without a question enlisted the aid of the leading Republican member of the Senate and one whom the Democrats recognize as being able and astute. Senator Williams now has before the Senate for the satisfaction of Dr. Bernard a bill entitled "To establish a recorder's court in Mount Airy." Just what this means has not been given out, but it is supposed to have as its prime object the ousting of Judge Llewellyn. This measure will be fought out in the committee hearings in the next few days.

After failing to abolish the office of county purchasing agent Dr. Bernard is now asking for a bill to provide for the election of this officer and this will be heard before the committee Friday. And here again is opportunity for a contest in the legislature for Democrats opposing the doctor's measure point to the danger of electing the keeper of the county's funds, as the purchasing agent is also the county treasurer. They point out that the last two officials who were selected by election were short \$50,000 in their accounts with the county, while with the present arrangement there has not been the least hint of any money shortage or wasting of funds. All this argument forcefully presented to the members of the legislative committee will make it hard for Dr. Bernard to show the committee the advantage or wisdom of giving up a good thing for the county for a method that has proven so costly to the county in the past.

One measure of Dr. Bernard's has met with no opposition—that of issuing \$50,000 in bonds to pay off some maturing bonds and accumulated running expenses. A measure previously introduced asked for a bond issue of \$131,000, but for some reason it has been reduced to \$50,000.

The legislature is due to come to a close next Monday, but all the major bills are yet to be passed upon and it is expected that the session will continue for at least a week over time. The bill providing for a larger equalization fund is still under consideration, but it appears that the eight months school term will be defeated. The present bill being considered provides for a fund of six million dollars for distribution among the counties, but the plan of its allocation is meeting with opposition from the rural districts. It changes the distribution of teachers requiring a larger percentage of attendance than in the past and making it opposition from the rural districts. It maintains an attendance sufficient to keep the present teaching force. The new measure would take a teacher away from the three and four teacher schools in the rural districts. State and county school authorities are disturbed over this feature of the new bill and are fighting to have the old method of teacher allowance retained.

I. W. Smith Passes.

Isaac Walker Smith died P.M. 26 at Martin Memorial Hospital. He was 55 years old. He leaves his wife Mrs. Cans Smith, three sons and one step-son. He was buried at Bank Cemetery, High Point, Va.