

Warren Home Of Francis Scott Key's Daughter Destroyed By Fire

By HOWARD JONES
Record Editor

A Sunday morning fire destroyed an historic Warren County home built of hand-hewn logs by the daughter of Francis Scott Key, author of the national anthem.

"Nebraska," the rustic home built by Mrs. Daniel Turner in the 1850s, was enveloped in flames when members of the Warrenton Rural Fire Department arrived at the site a mile south of Warrenton on Baltimore Road (SR 1600) shortly after 9 a.m. Sunday.

"Fire was already coming out of the top of the house, and the back portion of the house was gone" when firemen arrived, Chief Kenny Clayton reported.

The fire broke out in the chimney and side of the house when an occupant, Marzella Harley, was cooking breakfast on a wood stove.

A bucket of water was thrown on the fire, and that extinguished the lower part of the blaze, but the fire by then was burning out of control, Clayton said.

Two persons were in the house at the time, the fire chief reported, and one ran to a nearby home to summon help. No one was at home, and the call for help could not be turned in until a passing motorist was flagged down and asked to report the fire.

Four fire-fighting units were taken to the scene and nine firemen remained at the site for two hours. Making the job of extinguishing the fire more difficult was the fact that the log house had been covered with weatherboarding in years past, and water could not easily penetrate to the source of the fire.

Fire Captain Walter Gardner said owner Kenneth Mustian, who lives nearby, told firemen he had no insurance on the building, and firemen allowed the structure to burn completely when flames rekindled.

No injuries were reported in the fire which destroyed all the house's contents, valued at \$2,000.

"Nebraska" stood west of "Shady Oaks," home of the late Alston Twitty, which has recently been restored. At one time

"Nebraska" had served as the home of Elmer Palmer, who lived there while he built the much larger two-story home now owned by A. K. Mustian. Other occupants of the log house in years past were Mrs. Bessie Blacknall, a local teacher, and the "Shine" Collins family.

The house owed its name to Kansas Nebraska Bill, an act of Congress which repealed the Missouri Compromise.

Mrs. Turner, who had the home built shortly after purchasing the homesite in 1856, was known for her interest in politics. Her husband, son of Governor James Turner, had served in Congress and was principal of the Warrenton Female College from 1847 until 1855. The following year, Daniel Turner, the father of six daughters, was given a naval appointment and moved with his older children to California. His wife, and presumably their younger children, remained here for several years before joining him shortly before The Civil War.



Drug Enforcement Det. H. B. Askew (right) examines a portion of the \$1,000,000 marijuana crop discovered on Thursday of last week off SR 1510 in Vaughan. Although some of the 14-foot plants had already been cut and placed in piles for processing and distribution,

many marijuana plants still stood in the three fields found. Shown with Askew, left to right, are Deputy Johnny Williams and Deputy J. A. McCowan.

(Staff Photos by Howard Jones)

Three Men Are Sought

\$1 Million Marijuana Crop Found By Lawmen

Towering marijuana plants valued at over \$1 million were destroyed on Thursday of last week, after being found by Warren County Sheriff's Department personnel at a rather sophisticated growing site in Vaughan.

But the destruction of the plants is not the end of it, Sheriff Williams said this week.

The Warren County's Sheriff's Department is still "hot on the trail" of the three or more men, who apparently set up camp near their three marijuana fields to give "tender loving care" to their crops.

According to the report filed by Sgt. Lawrence Harrison, a site south of Vaughan—larger than one acre and containing up to 1,500 marijuana plants—was discovered on Thursday of last week, following a telephone tip that the weed was being grown.

The unidentified caller had spied three white men dressed in camouflage clothing fleeing the wooded area.

As Sgt. Harrison surveyed the site off SR 1510, he found a campsite, filled with sandwich wrappers, crushed beer cans, a hammock and mens' magazines. Also discovered were a bowl with dog food and a water-filled bucket, all evidence of a continuous-care, residential operation.

The sergeant followed three paths deeper into the woods and discovered three fields with sensimilla marijuana plants ranging in height from three to 14 feet.

The sensimilla variety of marijuana plant is prized by users because of its higher concentrations of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the chemical which produces the "high."

Harvested stalks, bags of fertilizer and lawn food found near the three fields indicated a sophisticated operation. "Whoever they are, they sure knew what they were doing," Sgt. Harrison concluded.

According to Drug Enforcement Det. H. B. Askew, the men are thought to have lived at the campsite last summer to give daily care to their crops. Found, in addition to the plants and "living quarters" were several bags containing food and toilet items.

The use of camouflage netting is believed to be the reason the

many marijuana plants still stood in the three fields found. Shown with Askew, left to right, are Deputy Johnny Williams and Deputy J. A. McCowan.

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Sgt. Lawrence Harrison (left) and Drug Enforcement Det. H. B. Askew (right) examine the felled limbs and brush used to hide collapsed tent equipment found last week near three one-acre marijuana fields in Vaughan. The officers also found foodstuffs, mens' magazines and toilet items near the \$1,000,000 marijuana crop indicating on-site, residential management by the growers. The bust resulted from a telephone tip that three men had been seen fleeing the Vaughan site.

Waste Backlog Ends Up On Granville Fields

A six-month backlog of municipal sewage waste at the Warren Wastewater Treatment Plant has been hauled off and the three government entities using the plant have agreed to pay the \$10,000 cleanup cost on a pro-rata basis.

Warrenton Administrator V. R. (Pete) Vaughan said a meeting of representatives of Warrenton, Norlina and Warren County had resolved the question of how much each would pay for the cost of removing the backlog.

The backlog of waste—"sludge," as it is commonly known—began piling up last March, when state regulations barred its disposal at the Warren County landfill on Baltimore Road.

Since then, some 43 loads of the sludge have been taken to Granville County where it was spread over farm land. At least one farmer in Warren County had hoped to use the sludge as fertilizer, but Vaughan said necessary safety questions had not been answered.

"Sludge removal is every bit as complicated as the removal of hazardous waste," Vaughan acknowledged.

Under the current agreement with Granville Farms, the Town of Warrenton, operator of the wastewater treatment facility south of here, pays three cents a gallon to have the sludge carried away.

In the long run, Vaughan thinks, paying to have the sludge shipped elsewhere will probably cost less than operating the pumps and maintaining the two drying beds at the treatment plant just north of Fishing Creek.

Vaughan said that both drying beds need replacing, and to bring new beds up to current specifications would cost about \$10,000 each.

Vaughan met last week with Norlina Mayor Bill Delbridge, County Manager Charles Worth, Warrenton Water Supt. Bill Neal and treatment plant superintendent Macon Robertson. During the 15-minute session, an agreement was reached whereby the contributors to the backlog would pay for the cleanup on the basis of the amount they paid for their September wastewater treatment.

That means that Warrenton will pay 67.75 percent, Norlina will pay 28.56 percent, and the County of Warren, paying for Soul City sewage treatment, will be billed for 3.69 percent.

Hereafter, when the tankers—capable of transporting 8,200 gallons per trip—arrive to pump the sludge from the bottom of the settling basins at the plant, Granville Farms' bill will be split among the three contributors based on their sewage bill for that month.

After 18 Ballots

Dr. Green Elected To Fill House Seat

By THURLETTA M. BROWN
News Editor

Following a full 18 rounds of balloting tallied on Thursday night of last week, Dr. James P. Green was chosen by the Democratic Party's 22nd House District Executive Committee as its nominee to serve the remainder of the term of the late Billy Watkins.

The 22nd House District Executive Committee, chaired by Mrs. Jeanne Lucas, met in the auditorium of Henderson's E. M. Rollins School.

From the seventh round of balloting, the votes were tied: Dr. J. P. Green—253; VGCC President Dr. Ben F. Currin—253. But in the 18th round, a one-vote difference broke the tie giving Dr. Green 253 votes to VGCC President Dr. Ben F. Currin's 252.

In addition to Dr. Green and Dr. Currin, the committee had considered two other nominees: Michael S. Wilkins, former chairman of the Person County board of commissioners, and Mrs. Louie B. Watkins, widow of Rep. Billy Watkins. In the third round of balloting, Mrs. Watkins was eliminated as a potential nominee.

In rounds four and five, Dr. Currin and Wilkins were tied, with Dr. Green leading the race.

The sixth round of balloting, called to narrow the options, forced the committee to decide between Dr. Currin and Wilkins. Dr. Currin was victorious, but the two-option-vote brought protests from Dr. Green. Not included on the ballots cast in the sixth round, the Henderson physician believed all three candidates should have been considered.

In rounds seven through 17, the votes were deadlocked: Dr. Green—253; Dr. Currin—253. But shortly after 11 p.m., the delegates split their votes, giving a one-vote margin to Dr. Green.



The 22nd House District Executive Committee is comprised of two delegates each from Warren, Halifax, Caswell, Person, Granville and Person counties. Warren's delegates were Mrs. Johnnie Johnson and Marvin P. Rooker.

Last week's meeting was about four hours in length. "It was an interesting experience to say the least," Rooker said Monday in a telephone interview. "I thought we'd vote three or four times and then go home," he said. Secret (Continued on page 12)

Coulter Wanted As Replacement

A recommendation for the replacement for Oscar L. "Butch" Meek on the Warren County Planning Board was voted on by planning board members during a meeting held on Friday morning of last week.

Rufus Coulter of Lake Gaston was unanimously voted to be recommended to the planning board as a replacement for Meek, who, in September, gave his letter of resignation from the planning board chairmanship.

In addition to making their recommendation to the county commissioners, the board voted to reappoint T. T. Clayton and Freddie Hargrove to serve additional three-year terms.

Approval of a number of final plans was among other action taken by the planning board last week.

Among the approved items was a final plat for Lakepointe Subdivision, located in Nutbush Township off SR 1202. The subdivision, owned by Mr. and Mrs. Danny Strickland, consists of 11 lots.

The board learned that the road going through the subdivision is almost complete, and the owners have posted cash security in the amount of \$6,800 for the road improvements.

A motion made by Karl Hehl and seconded by T. T. Clayton

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