

Series Of Accidents Reported In County The Past Week-end

Nearly Every One Of Wrecks On Highways Involved Drunken Driving

Several persons were hurt, none seriously, and considerable property damage resulted in a series of motor vehicle accidents on Martin County highways last week-end. Highway patrolmen were kept busy during a greater part of Saturday night clearing the wrecks from highways and rounding up drunks on the highways. Drunken driving was involved in nearly every one of the accidents. In one instance two men were said to have been so drunk neither knew which one was driving, and in another case the driver was so drunk he could not tell a railroad from the highway and started down the track in the direction of Everetts and Robersonville.

While the drunks took over the highways during the week-end, Judge Walter Bone took action against the dangerous business of drunken driving when he, in superior court Monday, sentenced a drunken driver to the roads for six months.

The first in the series of accidents was reported on the Robersonville-Stokes highway, about half a mile out of Robersonville, last Thursday evening at 10 o'clock. William A. Pitt, Parmele colored man, sideswiped a car driven by William Whitaker of Cross Roads. No one was hurt. Pitt, his car damaged to the extent of about \$50, was booked by Cpl. W. S. Hunt of the highway patrol for drunken driving.

The curtain on a big wrecking night was raised about 7 o'clock Saturday night when Buck Raynor and Jake Downs lost control of the 1940 Ford, tore into Dick Hardison's field just a short distance below Holly Springs Church on Highway 64, wrapped it around an electric transmission line and set the machine and pole on fire. It could not be ascertained which one was driving, each declaring that the other was under the wheel at the time of the accident. Both were arrested, jailed and charged with drunken driving. Downs was hurt, but not seriously. Damage to the car was estimated at about \$1,000 by Cpl. W. S. Hunt and Patrolman W. E. Saunders, the investigating officers. Williamston's fire department was called to the scene to help put out the fires.

A few minutes later, Sam Manning of Bethel drove into the highway at Parmele just as Garland E. Warren of near Robersonville started by, traveling in the direction of Bethel. Warren, charged with speeding, sideswiped the Manning car, ran into a railroad ditch, continued on, jumping the railroads and coming to a stop when its front plunged into the ditch bank on the other side. Damage to Manning's pick-up truck was estimated at \$50 and that to Warren's car was placed at \$150 by Cpl. Hunt. Manning, on five-year probation for allegedly handling "hot" tires, was charged with drunken driving.

About three hours later, John Wesley Whitfield sideswiped with his 1937 International truck, a 1939 Plymouth car driven by James Taylor, Jr., colored of Oak City. Bernice Briley, a passenger in the Taylor car, was painfully bruised, cut and scratched, and Taylor's arm was broken, later reports stating that he was also cut on the face. Whitfield, Bethel man, continued on down the road and turned around. Returning to the scene of the accident he did not stop, later declaring to arresting officers, Patrolman Saunders and Wade Griffin, of the Robersonville police force, that he was scared. He admitted striking the car and was booked for a hearing before Justice John L. Hassell who found probable cause in the case and bound the defendant over to the higher courts under bond in the sum of one hundred dollars.

At 10:30 o'clock that same night, Rufus Clarence Jernigan, originally of Washington but more recently of the Bethel area, was driving toward Everetts on Highway 64 from Robersonville when he mistook the railroad for the highway and bumped several yards across the ties before

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Blue Star Cleaners Opening Plant Here

The first new postwar business in Williamston with a returned serviceman at its helm, will hold its formal opening at its new plant on Washington Street tomorrow. Returning from the Navy the latter part of last year, John Hatton Gurganus and his brother Geo. Hatton Gurganus, planned and built a structure for a modern cleaning and pressing establishment. Tests were completed today at the plant preparatory to the formal opening tomorrow. They are employing eight men, including Duke Ward, solicitor, and an experienced cleaner and several expert pressers. Operating under the name of Blue Star Cleaners, the new plant is equipped with the latest type of machinery.

Red Cross Fund Drive Nears Completion In Local Chapter

The annual Red Cross fund drive is nearing completion in this chapter, according to an estimate offered by Fund Chairman V. J. Spivey late yesterday afternoon. Seven of the nine districts submitting reports at that time had already gone over the top, and others were nearing their goals, the chairman stated.

To date, a total of \$2,536.94 has been raised and turned into the treasury, leaving the drive just a little over \$1,000 below the \$3,600 assigned quota. The chairman pointed out that several other districts had raised fairly sizable amounts but were withholding their reports until the goals were reached. It is now fairly certain that the quota will be reached and passed by the end of this week, and the chairman is urging all canvassers to work with that date in mind.

Reviewing the reports, Chairman Spivey said that Griffins had ex-

ceeded its quota by \$4, that Mrs. J. Eason Lilley, chairman, was the first to report a township over the top. Quite a record is being established by the colored districts, six out of the eleven having reported successful fund drives. Biggs, the first to report, exceeded its \$40 quota by \$2.85. Poplar Point went \$5.13 over its original goal. Woolard's raised \$12.35 in excess of its \$50 quota. Corey's had \$7.20 to spare after meeting its \$20 goal. Dardens, with one of the largest quotas assigned the smaller districts in the county, raised \$71.00 or \$1 in excess of its quota. Jamessville, with a \$50 quota, is about \$8.95 below its goal at the present.

With a \$1,940 quota, Williamston up until yesterday had raised \$1,741.24, the chairman again pointing out that late reports should carry the township over the top. Bear Grass reported \$221.12 of its \$300 quota.

Given Road Sentence For Drunken Driving

INSPECTIONS

Discontinued during the war years on account of the scarcity of parts and the acute labor shortage, the inspection of motor vehicles will be resumed by license examiners of the Safety Division of the N. C. Highway Patrol immediately, Safety Examiner Boyce said last week-end.

"There's no good reason for continued omission of vehicle inspection in connection with the issuance of drivers' licenses," it was explained. In the future, applicants for drivers' licenses, must have their vehicles in proper shape before a driver's license will be issued, Mr. Boyce said.

Only Two Political Races In District

Only two political contests have developed in this district so far, but there is no telling what will develop between now and April 13, the final date for candidates to file with the county board of elections. Last Saturday marked the close of the filing period for United States and district offices, including Congress, and the closing found only two contests in this district.

Herbert Bonner, incumbent, and Robert Lee Humber, Greenville attorney, filed for a seat in the National House of Representatives. While there is still time for aspirants to file for the State Senate, a contest has already developed in that quarter with H. G. Horton, of Williams-ton, Roy Hampton, of Plymouth, and John Rodman, of Washington, in the race. C. B. Martin, former school principal and now a member of the armed forces, has announced for the State House of Representatives. No announcements have been made for any county or township offices.

Clarence W. Griffin, county attorney who represented Martin in the general assembly for the past two terms, will not be a candidate to succeed himself in that position, he announced this week.

Missionary To Speak At Macedonia Wednesday

Rev. Samuel K. Saunders, a missionary to Japan for a number of years, will speak in the Macedonia church Wednesday evening of this week at 7:30 o'clock, it was announced yesterday by Mr. R. L. Perry, a deacon in the church. The public is cordially invited to hear the missionary who is expected to relate many interesting experiences.

LONE APPEAL

Holding forth all yesterday morning, the Martin County Commissioners received only one appeal from a property owner for a reduction in assessed property valuations.

Bill Bullock, Everetts filling station owner, pointed out to the board that he believed the \$2,000 valuation placed on his new filling station was a bit high in comparison with other listings, and the authorities reduced it to \$1,500.

The commissioners briefly studied preliminary reports on values submitted by the various list-takers and they were said to have been greatly surprised at the downward trend in values, especially in some instances. Holdings of a large pulp company dropped in value, and timber holdings, selling recently for three-quarters of a million dollars, are said to be on the tax books at a mighty low figure.

Respected Citizen Of County Dies At Home On Monday

Funeral Service At Smithwick Creek This Afternoon For David B. Stallings

Funeral services are being conducted in the Smithwick Creek Primitive Baptist Church this afternoon at 3:00 o'clock for David B. Stallings, respected county citizen and retired farmer, who died at his home in Griffins Township yesterday morning at 7:00 o'clock of a heart attack. His pastor, Elder P. E. Getsinger, assisted by Rev. W. B. Harrington, Baptist minister, will conduct the last rites and interment will follow in the Tice Cemetery in Griffins Township.

The son of the late Stanley and Paulina Lilley Stallings, he was born in Griffins Township 75 years ago on the farm where he lived all his life.

Mr. Stallings has suffered with arthritis for about five years, but was apparently getting along very well. Yesterday morning he got up about the usual time, had breakfast and was sitting down reading a paper and smoking his pipe when he suffered the attack and died suddenly. He was out most of the day before riding around in the neighborhood and seemed to be feeling good at that time. For some time he had his great niece, Mrs. Levi Edmondson, and Mr. Edmondson in the home with him.

Mr. Stallings never married and is survived by one sister, Mrs. Sylvester Peel, who continues quite ill in the home of her daughter, Mrs. T. C. Griffin, in Griffins Township.

For more than half a century he was a devoted member of the Primitive Baptist Church at Smithwick Creek. He was an industrious farmer, working hard until about five years ago when failing health forced his retirement.

Accident Injuries Fatal To Soldier

A letter confirming the death of Cpl. Thaddeus Newsome III, Martin County colored youth, was received by his parents near here last week-end. While the letter did not offer many details, it stated that Newsome died on March 5 on Honshu Island, presumably Nagoya, "as a result of injuries received in a truck accident."

The latest communication explained that provisions had been made for the unit commander or the chaplain to send a letter setting out in detail the facts surrounding the accident and the soldier's death.

The boy's parents were notified on March 8 of their son's death on March 5. Later information received here stated that Newsome suffered second and third degree burns in the accident.

Assigned to the quartermaster corps, Newsome had been driving a truck for some months.

Painfully Hurt In Freak Fall Here

Mrs. Leo Andrews was painfully but not seriously hurt when she fell from a second story window at her home on Smithwick Street here last Thursday. One report stated she lost a tooth and suffered a broken jaw and a chin cut in the fall.

Mrs. Andrews opened the window screen to call to a child in the yard. The hinges at the top of the screen were not very secure and when she placed a little weight on the bottom the screen pulled loose. Mrs. Andrews lost her balance and fell to the ground with the screen. She is getting along very well.

Open Flower Shop In Former Cafe Building

Mesdames Betty Eason and Shirley White have opened a flower shop in the Leggett building formerly occupied by the late Gus Rigas' Williams-ton Cafe.

ELECTIONS BOARD

Messrs. Sylvester Peel of Griffins Township, Alvin Hasty and Wade Vick, both of Robersonville, were appointed to serve as elections officials during the next two years, by the State Board of Elections in meeting at Raleigh last Saturday. Mr. Peel begins his tenth term as an election official for the county. During the past eighteen years he served as secretary. Mr. Hasty will fill the position made vacant nearly two years ago when Mr. J. R. Winslow resigned to enter the race for a seat in the general assembly. Mr. Vick has served as republican member of the board for a number of terms.

The county board is tentatively scheduled to meet on Saturday of this week to perfect its organizations and make ready for the primary election on May 25.

Judge Urges Stronger Public Sentiment For Enforcement Of Laws

Dangerous Trend In Support of Criminal Is Cited By Jurist

Judge Walter Bone Mentions Attitude Of Veteran In Charge To Jurymen

In his charge to the Martin County Grand Jury Monday, Judge Walter Bone addressed a stirring appeal for a stronger sentiment for public law enforcement, and took a fair stand when it comes to crime among returned servicemen. "I call attention to present conditions because they present a dangerous trend," Judge Bone declared.

In the fifty-minute charge, the jurist said it was hardly necessary to go to any great length in stressing the importance of jury duty and the importance of superior courts as institutions of state government, but a "few words will not be amiss in these days and times when so many are more intent on making money than they are interested in our government," Judge Bone explained.

Continuing, he said, "Our forefathers thought over these matters, they fought and suffered before our present system of justice was worked out. While it is not perfect, for no human system is, it is our job to add to the efficiency of the system."

"No institution is more important than the superior court. It is a place where people who feel as if they have been wronged, may lay their case before their fellowman, have the evidence aired in open court, hear witnesses, leave it to the jury to decide and have the court act to redress any wrong," Judge Bone said, adding that mistakes will be made, no doubt, for humans are subject to error.

"Judgment of the court has authority of state behind it. If we did not have a place to submit differences we would have to get our families and friends together, take out guns and go out to get our vengeance. That's the way nations do, for the world of nations have not progressed as far as individuals in settling their differences. Nations fuss awhile, raise armies and then go to war. The UNO is being created, and if it carries out its mandates it will serve as a superior court on an international scale," the judge said, admitting that the future for the organization was not very bright just at this time.

Elaborating on his plea for a stronger sentiment for law enforcement, Judge Bone frankly declared that those charged with task see it turning in favor of criminals, that many are forgetting about the wrongs done. "We hear speeches before civic clubs and in the press and over the air, all pointing out the needless slaughter on the highways. In many cases when the defendants are brought into court to answer to charges of drunken driving or manslaughter or some other law infraction, juries turn them loose. If found guilty, the defendants, in some cases get the sympathy of the public, demanding him to be lenient in fixing judgment. And the judge is moved to be lenient," the jurist declared.

"I don't want to be misunderstood, for I do not mean that the innocent should be convicted and that the convicted should not be treated fairly. In some cases probation is better and there are instances where the defendant is deserving of it. But the sentiment is becoming so strong against law enforcement that it is difficult for and discouraging to officers who risk their lives. The way to have law enforcement is to have public sentiment for it. The people of Martin County will get just about the type of law enforcement they want. If you want law enforcement, build up sentiment for it," the jurist pleaded.

Continuing he said, "I have been astonished in other sections of the State where men had flagrantly violated the law and were turned loose to prey upon society. And there were cases where convictions were made and people were horrified because so and so was sentenced to prison. I

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George Sfetos Selling Cafe To Rockingham Man

George Sfetos, successful operator of the Central Cafe here for a number of years, is selling the business to Phillip Tonis, of Rockingham, it was learned a few days ago. The new owner coming here with a splendid reputation as a citizen and cafe operator, is to take possession the first of next month.

Tonis withdrew from the cafe business in Rockingham to enter the armed forces of his adopted country, and upon his return to civilian life, decided to locate in Williamston. He and his wife are expected here within a few days, Mr. Sfetos said.

Forger Has Tough Day In Court Here Monday Afternoon

Walter C. Walker Draws From Four To Seven Years In State's Prison

Walter C. Walker, 29-year-old colored man charged with forgery, had a tough day in the Martin County Superior Court here yesterday when he drew two terms in prison and was ruled, by strong intimation, to be a mighty loose hander of the truth.

Back in January, Walker, by hook or by crook, got hold of two checks and according to his own admission he forged endorsements on them. He left immediately for Chicago where he gained employment at a fabulous salary, \$93.30 a week, according to his claim. Last August 20, he was released from the highway prison camp in this county and located in Williamston where he made progress in his courtship with a certain woman whose name was not mentioned. It was on account of this great friendship that he decided to give up his "fat" salary job in Chicago and return here to his friend, face the law and take his medicine. It was his purported intention to refund the money he had gained by forgery, but it was brought out at the trial that he did not have the money and that he had made no effort to raise it. Walker, apparently lost in his courtship, did not report to the police, but in open court he admitted that someone reported him, and his arrest followed a short time later.

While the state was building up its case on the evidence offered by Police Chief C. R. Mobley, certain evidence was brought out about Walker's alleged study of medicine. Walker, taking the stand in his own behalf, said that he had told local officers he missed his degree in medicine by only a few months. He changed his story on the stand and said that he was licensed to practice in Ohio as a woman's specialist, an achievement well founded in Cupid's line when it was brought out that he had left a wife at 1614 Patterson Street, Nashville, Tenn. From the standpoint of medicine he was a weak specialist, for when Judge Walter Bone, the presiding jurist, asked him what books or subjects he studied in earning his medical degree, Walker mentioned tumors, brain and one or two other parts of the anatomy. "I thought so," Judge Bone said, and the defendant's doom was sealed, for it was indeed apparent that Walker was forging something besides check endorsements.

Asked about the several post office keys he once had in his possession, Walker told some tall stories, maintaining that they were not on the ring when he turned them over to the local hotel operator. It was apparent that Walker offered his strongest defense when it was suggested that he found or stole the keys and had lifted the checks out of post office boxes. He maintained that he bought two of the forged checks from two small colored boys for a nickel each. In a third case, charging him with forgery, Walker pleaded not guilty, and the case was not pressed after he had pleaded guilty in the other two and was sentenced to state's prison for not less than three and not more than five years in one and to not less than one year and not more than two in the other case, the sentences to run consecutively.

In the first case, the defendant had admitted that he had forged the endorsement on a check written to Miss Estelle Crawford in the sum of \$135 by the National Casualty Company. In the other case Walker pleaded guilty of forging the signature of Eunice Perry Whitfield on the back of a \$133.33 check drawn on the National Casualty Company. He denied endorsing a check written by Mrs. Sadie Speight in the sum of \$9.85 in favor of Mrs. Eloise Bennett.

While several checks were missed from Mrs. Bennett's post office box, several others were missed from boxes in the same section of boxes at the local post office, including one written by Mrs. J. H. Saunders in favor of the local telephone company.

Asked why he never practiced medicine, Walker said he was licensed in Ohio but lost his license because he took "dope." Solicitor Fountain reviewed Walker's crime record, and Walker tried to explain it away, but his explanation carried little weight.

It is likely that postal inspectors will enter the case shortly.

ROUND-UP

Local, county and state officers worked a greater part of last Saturday night rounding up alleged violators of law and order in this county. According to an official count, fourteen persons were jailed during the week-end, the number reaching a new record for the year. Eight were charged with public drunkenness, state patrolmen rounding up a carload at one time. Four others were charged with drunken driving and one was booked for an assault.

The ages of the group ranged from 23 to 59 years, and seven of those jailed were white. Nine of the fourteen were arrested and jailed Saturday evening and early Sunday morning.

County Young Man Married Overseas

After hearing nothing from his son since last September, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Manning finally received a letter from him last week in which the young man announced his marriage. The son, First Sergeant Marvin B. Manning, was married last February 8. Apparently he is withholding most of the details until he returns home next June or July. It is believed however, that he was married in Italy.

The breakdown in communications between the young soldier and his parents could not be explained immediately. In the letter that finally came through to his father, the young man stated that he had written time and again. His letters were never received, and he never received any of the letters written to him. Red Cross home service workers in the case and many of its letters and inquiries never went through until just a short time ago. The young man was transferred to another outfit when his old one was discontinued, and his address was not established for months. However, it is not quite clear why letters to relatives back home missed their destination.

Tobacco Acreage To Be Checked In 1946

To further strengthen compliance with the marketing quota program, all acreages of flue-cured tobacco grown on all farms in 1946 will be measured by AAA Committeemen or others working under supervision of committeemen, it was announced today by Jesse Crisp, chairman, of the Martin County AAA Committee.

"Due to the manpower shortage, the AAA found it necessary to discontinue measurement of all flue-cured acreages during the war, and this will be the first year since 1942 when all acreages will be measured," Mr. Crisp said. "The system of reporting their individual acreages by farmers, themselves, and subsequent spot-checking was the best means of acreage determination during the war. However, a return to measurement of all acreages is essential in order to make the marketing quota program fully effective."

Flue-cured producers of Martin County have been notified of 1946 acreage allotments for their farms.

Judge J. C. Smith Said To Be Improving Slowly

Judge J. C. Smith, who had the regular session of the county court last week on account of illness, Judge J. C. Smith yesterday was reported to be showing some improvement. He is able to be out for short periods, but has not been able to attend any of the early sessions of the current term of the superior court.

SPECIAL

Meeting in special session here yesterday, the Martin County Commissioners ordered a special election to be held in the Williamston School District to determine the will of the people relative to the levying of a 20-cent ad valorem tax for the support of additional courses in the schools of the district. Dates and boundaries will be announced by a special committee within the next few days, it was learned.

A special registration was also ordered, and Messrs. Joe Gray Corey, registrar, and Chas. L. Daniel and Fred Taylor, Judges of election for Precinct No. 1, were named along with Messrs. O. S. Anderson, registrar, and John E. Pope and Jesse T. Price, Judges of election, for Precinct No. 2. Dates for opening the special registration books will be announced within the next few days.

Large Crowd Plans To Attend Banquet

Two hundred or more Skewarkey and visiting Masons and special guests are planning to attend the annual banquet of the local lodge in the high school gymnasium this evening at 7:15 o'clock. Mr. Roy Ward, chairman of the committee on arrangements, announced. Present indications point to the biggest event of its kind the lodge has ever held, the chairman was quoted as saying.

Wade Marr, Elizabeth City man and a widely acclaimed speaker, will deliver the main address, but there will be other features on the program, Mr. Ward explained.