

Accidental Shooting Costs Boy His Life

Willie C. Hassell Fatally Shot Here Saturday Evening

Laverne Roberson Surrenders; Hearing Before Justice Hassell Tonight

While demonstrating a cheap U. S. Dwl Head .32 calibre pistol in John Kiddick's fish market on Washington Street last Saturday evening, Laverne "Mutt" Roberson, 28, shot and mortally wounded Willie Clyde Hassell, young colored farmer of near Williamston. Witnesses declared the shooting was accidental, but the evidence will be aired at a hearing before Justice John L. Hassell in his office this evening at 7:00 o'clock. While Roberson is charged with carrying a concealed weapon and an assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill, the preliminary reports would indicate that he will be bound over to face a charge of involuntary manslaughter.

Six or eight persons were gathered around Roberson in the small fish market between the Blue Star Cleaners and the Red Front Grocery on Washington Street, watching him demonstrate the mechanism of the cheap pistol he had purchased a short time before from a boy whose name could not be learned immediately. The weapon accidentally fired, the bullet entering Hassell under his left jaw and plowing upwardly, apparently lodging in the brain. The victim was removed to a Washington hospital where he died at 11:30 that night.

Roberson ran out of the market and went immediately to the local police station where he surrendered to Officers Ballard and Keisler. He was quoted as saying, "I have killed a man and I want to be locked up. I know you'll send me to the roads or the electric chair, I don't care which. Just lock me up, please."

Investigating the case, Chief Chas. R. Mobley questioned several witnesses, including Riddick, Gilbert Respass, S. T. Brown, Joe Willie Williams and Kader Brown. The witnesses said they were standing in a semi-circle with Hassell, watching Roberson prank with the pistol. Roberson and Hassell had had no words, and it was believed that neither knew the other personally. There was no argument, the witnesses declared.

The victim of the shooting was the son of John Hester Hassell and wife, and was about 19 years of age. Funeral services are being held this afternoon.

Wild Life Club Holds Meeting

Reporting to a meeting of the Martin County Wildlife Club in the courthouse last Thursday evening, canvassers reported 141 new members signed up during the past few weeks.

The next meeting of the club will be entertained by Mr. Wilbur Barrett at a barbecue in Oak City sometime in June. A special speaker will address the meeting at that time, President J. C. Manning announced.

Membership prizes were awarded, as follows:

First prize, 1 double barrel shot gun donated by Pittman's Firestone Store, to J. R. Winslow with 68 members signed.

Second prize, 1 casting rod and reel donated by R. L. Smith and Company and Western Auto Store, to Ben James for 23 members.

Third prize, 1 thermos jug, by Williamson Hardware Co., to D. G. Matthews, Jr., 23 members.

Other prizes included: Fishing tackle box by Woolard Hardware to Frank Bailey, 16 members; A hunting knife by A. O. Roberson and Co., to E. C. Harrison, 5 members; fishing rule and scale by G. and S. Motor Co., to S. H. Grimes, 4 members; Gun cleaning rod by Thrower Appliance Co. to Calvin Ayers, 2 members.

Former Prisoner Expresses Thanks For Holiday Gift

Worked On County Farm While A Prisoner Of War In Williamston Camp

Receiving holiday gifts from Farmer Lester Bryant of this county, the Fritz Rickard family of Lubeck-Travemunde, Achterdeck 15-B, Germany, some weeks ago expressed appreciation and briefly described conditions in their homeland. The letter, written in German, was translated by the Home Service department of the Red Cross, and was just recently delivered to the owners. The letter follows:

"Many cordial thanks for your lovely Christmas parcel. We have been wanting to thank you for a long time, but we do not speak your language; we hope somebody will translate this letter.

"Mr. Bryant, how kind of you to send the package for the feast. It made the day a real holiday. We had nuts, rice, candy and all the other lovely things. My husband and Gerhard were so very happy about the cigarettes. Our joy was immense. Once before, dear Mr. Bryant, you made our boy very happy, when during his time as a prisoner he worked for you one afternoon. How kind you were to our son; immediately after he returned to us from prison-camp he told us about you and your kind soul. One doesn't forget a person quickly who has been so kind in hours of distress!

"When our boy, after his return, found us in the North of Germany, and saw our needs and our hunger, he right away thought of you. "Oh, Daddy, oh Mammy!" he exclaimed, "I'm going to write to Mr. Bryant, he is going to help us! Mr. Bryant is a man of great spirit." And you, Mr. Bryant, you DID help us! You talked to others about our distress, and they too helped us. You supplied our children and my husband and son with clothing and underwear. How could we ever thank you enough? Would we live in the U. S. A., I could work on your farm every day, and could repay you for your sweetness. My daughters, and husband and son are so very happy about your gifts. Oh how wonderful to feel that in remote distance there are good Christians thinking of us with loving thoughts!

"Our son told us that your daughter was ill at the time. Is she better now? How dreadful for so young a child to have to suffer already so much! For us parents, too, it is very sad to see our children suffer. For the last four years we do not know what became of our youngest son. When we had the news that he had been wounded. Afterwards we didn't hear anything anymore. How much did we suffer over our child's destiny! Many a night I spent crying into my pillow, begging the Lord to leave me my child! My heart seemed to be breaking.

"We had not yet regained consciousness when the letters from our Gerhard ceased to arrive, a few months later my husband disappeared likewise. I did not learn anything about his whereabouts for a year. In the meanwhile my three daughters and I had to leave all our possessions and to walk from the East to the North of Germany. During the escape we had Russian tanks behind us, above and over us American and English aviators and pilots. Never

(Continued on page eight)

Home Damaged By Fire Here Friday

Believed to have started from burning soot leaking through a defective kitchen flue, fire damaged the Godard home occupied by Lee A. Osteen and family, corner of Simmons Avenue and Houghton Street, here last Friday afternoon at 4:00 o'clock. Most of the roof over the kitchen was damaged, firemen checking the fire before it reached the main part of the one-story house. No official estimate on the damage could be had immediately, but the loss will possibly exceed \$300.

Firemen used two lines of hose on the fire before bringing it under control.

Hundred Sixty-Five Girls And Boys Finishing School

One hundred and sixty-five boys and girls are finishing the high schools in the county this week and next, the number of graduates holding to about the same figure reported in the spring of 1945 when the last regular graduation exercises were held. Four special students were graduated in the county last year, but most of the pupils were carried over when the 12th grade was established.

The first in the series of exercises—commencement sermons—were preached in several of the schools Sunday afternoon and evening. Most of the graduation exercises will be held on Wednesday and Thursday of this week. Williamston and one or two other schools, their term interrupted by influenza epidemics last winter, will complete the term next week.

ROUND-UP

Local, county and state officers had a busy time last week-end rounding up killers, wife beaters and a larger-than-usual number of drunks. Thirteen persons were arrested, but most of them were released from the county jail after being detained a short while.

One, Laverne "Mutt" Roberson, a 28-year-old colored man was jailed for fatally shooting Willie Clyde Hassell, colored, last Saturday night. Seven were booked for public drunkenness, one for assaulting a female and one was detained for an investigation. Three others were charged with assaults with deadly weapons. Four of the thirteen are white and the ages of the group range from 23 to 51 years.

Assign Numbers For Dial System

Special representatives of the Carolina Telephone Company are assigning new numbers to all local telephones preparatory to a switch to the automatic dial system the early part of next month. Subscribers are also being acquainted with the operation of the automatic telephones.

Daily demonstrations are being held for the public in the lobby of the Virginia Electric and Power Company here where Mrs. Mary C. Clayton shows how the telephones are used and the actual working of the automatic system. The demonstration is quite interesting and the public is invited to observe it.

Possibly as a result of miscalculations concrete on Washington Street is being torn up the second time for a short distance for underground cable, but it is fairly certain that the main street will not be touched again.

Although the local communication system is being rebuilt almost in its entirety at a reported cost of \$140,000, company representatives are not yet able to advise potential subscribers when more telephones will be made available.

Poor Prospects Aggravated For Current Tobacco Crop

Tobacco transplantings, delayed throughout the county by cold weather earlier in the season, is getting under way in scattered sections of the county this week following a rain last Saturday evening. However poor prospects for the current crop have been aggravated in most areas by hot and dry weather and damaging blue mold attacks. Virtually all the tobacco land has been prepared to receive the plants, but most farmers have no definite idea when they'll be able to transplant their crops.

Inspections over a 15-mile highway stretch last Sunday revealed only an acre or two that had been transplanted, and reports at that time indicated that transplanting could hardly be expected to get

County Goes Over The Top In Drive For Cancer Fund

Total of \$1,554.56 Raised In Ten Townships During the Campaign

The 1947 Cancer Drive in Martin County was a success as far as reaching the quota is concerned, according to a final report released yesterday by the county chairman, Wheeler Manning.

Assigned a 50 percent larger quota this year than last, the various township chairmen, in cooperation with their respective canvassers, various organizations and the general public, raised the \$1500 quota and went over by a few dollars.

Chairman Manning states that he would like to thank every person in the county that had a part in helping reach the goal for this year, and to especially thank those individuals who so willingly and unselfishly served as township chairmen and the canvassers that served under them. The drive this year came at a somewhat inopportune time, when most people, especially in the rural areas, are busy on the farms, and it also followed several other drives.

Funeral Services Sunday Afternoon For H. P. Leggett

Retired Builder Died In the Local Hospital Friday After Long Illness

Funeral services were conducted in the Biggs Funeral Home here on West Main Street last Sunday afternoon at 1:30 o'clock for H. Pearl Leggett, retired builder, who died in the local hospital Friday afternoon at 2:05 o'clock. Rev. John L. Goff, pastor of the local Christian Church, officiated. Interment was in Woodlawn Cemetery here.

Mr. Leggett, a victim of an heart ailment, had been in declining health for several years. He had received hospital treatment for fairly long periods during the past two years. His condition became serious last Wednesday and he returned to the hospital, but little hope was held for his recovery at that time.

The son of the late Robert and Rebecca Leggett Leggett, he was born in Beaufort County 66 years ago last month. In early youth he joined the church at Old Ford, and located in the Farm Life section of this county a quarter century ago, coming to Williamston twelve or fifteen years ago. He was a builder by trade, but was forced into virtual retirement two

(Continued on page eight)

Warehouse Mails Dividend Checks

Ordered by a meeting of the board of directors a short time ago, a four percent dividend is being distributed to holders of stock in the Roanoke Tobacco Warehouse Corporation this week. The total dividend amounted to \$1,100 and checks were mailed by Secretary-Treasurer C. D. Carstarphen yesterday afternoon to the approximately 100 stockholders.

Nearly one-fourth of the dividends went to the estates of the original purchasers.

R. L. Coburn is president of the company whose stock is controlled by a few individuals.

County Goes Over The Top In Drive For Cancer Fund

Total of \$1,554.56 Raised In Ten Townships During the Campaign

The 1947 Cancer Drive in Martin County was a success as far as reaching the quota is concerned, according to a final report released yesterday by the county chairman, Wheeler Manning.

Assigned a 50 percent larger quota this year than last, the various township chairmen, in cooperation with their respective canvassers, various organizations and the general public, raised the \$1500 quota and went over by a few dollars.

Chairman Manning states that he would like to thank every person in the county that had a part in helping reach the goal for this year, and to especially thank those individuals who so willingly and unselfishly served as township chairmen and the canvassers that served under them. The drive this year came at a somewhat inopportune time, when most people, especially in the rural areas, are busy on the farms, and it also followed several other drives.

Shown below are the township quotas, and the amount raised in each.

Township	Quota	Raised
Jamesville	\$100.00	\$ 97.00
Williams	35.00	57.10
Williamston	600.00	610.57
Griffins	75.00	105.56
Bear Grass	75.00	75.90
Cross Roads	75.00	50.00
Robersonville	300.00	311.80
Oak City	100.00	159.93
Hamilton	75.00	38.40
Poplar Point	30.00	13.30
Hassell	35.00	35.00

\$1500.00 \$1554.56

The drive in the Hassell community was a success, according to John W. Eubanks who served as chairman for the community. Assigned a quota of \$35. Mr. Eubanks, assisted by E. L. Bradley and J. A. Haislip, collected the full amount.

In Cross Roads township where a quota of \$75 had been assigned, Mrs. A. P. Barnhill and her aides raised a total of \$50. Shown below is the amounts collected by the canvassers and other organizations: Mrs. A. P. Barnhill, 12.03; Mrs. Dillon Peel, 6.50; Cross Roads Christian Church and Sunday School, 13.50; Everetts Colored School, 8.15; Everetts Colored School, 2.80; Coin collector at Bill Bullock's Station, 7.02.

Williamston Township was one of the seven townships in the county that raised or exceeded its goal in the 1947 cancer drive, according to the chairman.

The campaign in Williamston was handled by Mrs. P. B. Cone and members of the Woman's Club. Mrs. Elbert L. Sherman canvassed the business section of the town and collected a total of \$497.27 which was the bulk of the amount donated in Williamston. Other canvassers and the amounts that each raised are as follows:

Mrs. H. L. Swain, 7.00; Mrs. Lorene Mahler, 16.30; Mrs. Leman Barnhill, 12.00; Mrs. James Bullock, 22.70; Mrs. L. J. Bullock, 11.35; Mrs. David Modlin, 12.25; Mrs. J. D. Thrower, 4.35; Miss Patsy King, 24.35; and Mrs. Walter Martin, 3.00.

Starts Civil Case Against Officer

According to information received here over the week-end, a civil action has been started by Olla Ray Boyd, Pinetown man and a former candidate for governor, against Lester Jones, North Carolina Highway Patrol officer. Few details could be learned, but a hearing has been tentatively scheduled before Justice John I. Smith in Greenville on Thursday next.

The suit, one report states, is based on remarks allegedly made by the patrol officer at a JP hearing in Williamston a short time ago. Boyd was suing a highway patrol mechanic for alleged damages and Jones was a witness in the case.

That portion of the crop already in the field is making only fair progress, most of the early plantings calling for a considerable amount of resetting.

Soaring Costs Block Expansion Program

Education Board Takes No Action On Building Bids

The penalty on tobacco plantations in excess of 1947 allotments has been fixed at 19 cents a pound, according to an official announcement released this week by the Triple A office in this county.

It has been pointed out that the grower who plants in excess of his allotment forfeits all claims to support prices offered by the Stabilization Cooperative.

Enforcement Unit Continues Drive On Manufacturers

Eight Illicit Liquor Plants Wrecked In Less Than Two Weeks

The illicit liquor manufacturing business flaring up on a larger scale than usual, was the target of a concerted drive by enforcement officers recently, ABC Enforcement Officer J. H. Roebuck stating that eight plants were wrecked in the county in less than two weeks. During the period beginning May 6 and ending May 15, the officers found and wrecked almost as many illicit plants as were found during the entire month of April. Several of the plants were equipped with copper kettles and had fairly large storage facilities.

After wrecking five plants a short time earlier, Officer J. H. Roebuck assisted by Deputies Roy Peel and Holloman returned to the Hassell section of Hamilton Township on May 6 and tore up a 50-gallon oil drum used for a still and poured out 150 gallons of cheap beer.

A well equipped plant, including a 100-gallon capacity copper kettle, seven fermenters and other material, was wrecked in Griffins Township on May 8. The officers poured out 300 gallons of beer and confiscated 25 gallons of molasses. The officers were aided in the raid by representatives of the Beaufort County ABC Board.

Joined by the Beaufort officers and federal agents, the county officers raided on May 9 along the Martin - Beaufort boundary and found a still of the submarine type. The kettle had a copper bottom and a wooden top. There were seventeen fermenters, 400 gallons of beer almost ready for the kettle, 25 gallons of molasses and four gallons of liquor. The plant was still hot when the officers found it at 10:30 that morning.

Returning to his old hunting ground in the Free Union section of Jamesville, the officers, Roebuck, assisted by Deputy Roy Peel and Constable Paul Holliday, on the 10th captured a modern

(Continued on page eight)

Justice Hassell Hears Five Cases

Justice John L. Hassell heard five cases in his court over the week-end, and announced that several other cases were tentatively scheduled for consideration early this week.

Charged with operating a motor vehicle with improper lights, Harry Best was fined \$5 and taxed with \$7 costs.

Jesse Lawrence Brown, charged with operating a motor vehicle with improper lights and inadequate brakes, was fined \$20 and required to pay \$6 costs.

Oscar A. Frazier was fined \$5 and taxed with \$8.50 costs for disorderly conduct.

Charged with operating a motor vehicle with improper brakes, Norman Council was fined \$5 and required to pay \$6 costs.

Ernest Winchester, charged with operating a motor vehicle with improper lights, was fined \$5 and taxed with \$6 costs.

Education Board Takes No Action On Building Bids

Want \$8,000 Per Room For The Construction Of School At Everetts

For the second time within a year, a replacement and expansion program for several of the Martin County school plants has been blocked by high construction costs, the Board of Education last Thursday taking no action when bids were submitted for the construction of a six-room school for colored children at Everetts.

Almost stunned by the cost figures, members of the board discussed the bids for more than two hours without taking any formal action, but apparently it is the sentiment of the board that no school expansion program will be attempted just now or as long as building costs hold to their present levels. It has been pointed out that no program can be attempted under such conditions without a general bond issue, and it is the consensus of opinion that a bond issue would not carry in the county at this time.

While the board took no action at the special meeting last Thursday afternoon, it is likely that all the bids will be rejected at a regular meeting to be held on June 2. It is also considered likely that the board will attempt the construction of a building in Everetts with private building contractors. The construction of a building to replace the one burned in Jamesville will possibly be handled in the same manner, but the problem there is awaiting action to be taken in connection with the Everetts project.

The lowest bids received for the six-room cinder block building at Everetts amounted to \$54,704, the highest running up to \$60,123. The lowest bid for general construction was submitted by the P. S. West Construction Company of Statesville and calls for an outlay of \$48,537. The highest, \$51,120, was submitted by a New Bern construction firm.

Z. A. Norris of Wilson submitted the lowest bid for the plumbing and calls for an expenditure of \$4,274. A New Bern firm submitted a bid in the amount of \$5,110 for the plumbing. The lowest bid for the wiring was submitted by the Durham Electric Company, calling for an outlay of \$1,895. The highest bid, submitted by a Henderson firm, amounted to \$3,893, a figure just about twice as large as the low bid placed for the wiring contract.

Architect E. G. Flannagan recommended that the low bids be accepted, but the board considered all the bids out of reason and delayed action.

Last August plans were submitted for the construction of an eight-room school with an auditorium and home economics department for the colored children at Everetts. The first project was to include heat, water and lights, but the project was forgotten when construction cost estimates approximated \$144,000, and new plans were called for. After re-vamping the plans and reducing the provisions to an almost absolute minimum, the board still considers the costs most unreasonable.

Shirt Sleeves And Overcoat Together

While it is everyman to his own liking, the fact that Dr. John Biggs was in his shirt sleeves and John Wier was in his overcoat on the streets here last Friday morning made one a bit uncertain about the weather.

Mr. Wier declared the coat did not feel bad, and Mr. Biggs declared he was very comfortable in his shirt sleeves, going on to explain that "old" men had to take protective measures against the weather.