

## Cross Burning Has No Real Significance

### Numerous Rumors Declared Without Much Foundation

#### Chief Wm. Smith Believes Cross Burning Was the Work of Pranksters

The burning of a cross in front of the home of Hugh Morgan Gray in Robersonville about 10:00 o'clock last Wednesday night was declared to carry little significance, according to Chief of Police William Smith who expressed the belief that it was the work of pranksters.

The popular Robersonville officer stated that he had heard numerous rumors, but that he was satisfied just about all of them were without foundation.

The cross, measuring about four feet high and made of wood measuring about one and one-half inches wide and about one-half inch or less thick, was stuck into the ground near the porch of the home, which is located on Academy Street or U. S. Highway 64 just across the way from the high school building. It was fired with a burlap bag, and when officers reached the scene most of it had burned away, but the letter K was discernible about the middle of the cross member.

Chief Smith is confident that the Klu Klux Klan as an organization, had nothing to do with the cross burning.

It was rumored that a note had been addressed to Kenneth Bland, a roomer in the Gray home, but the officer said that he had been unable to find any trace of it, that as far as it could be learned, no threats had been made against Bland or any other person.

While the rumors maintained that Bland fled from the house in a hurry, one report stated that he was hardly able physically to run at the time. It was reported that he has now deserted the house for one reason or another.

O. B. Roberson, visiting in a filling station a short distance away when someone stopped in the station and reported that a cross was burning in the Gray yard, said he was one of the first to reach the scene, that he saw no one near there at that time.

It was reported that a car, bearing a Virginia license stopped there and that six men got out and planted and fired the cross. Another report said that one man was seen firing the cross, and that he was picked up by a slowly moving car a minute or two later. So far no one has been identified, but officers are working on every possible lead.

Other reports, later declared without foundation, maintained that three grave mounds had been constructed in the area, and that a property owner was advised to move tenants out of one of her homes. It was also rumored that there had been a cross burning in another county town recently, but citizens questioned there declared they knew nothing about it.

## Track Ham Thief Down In County

Tearing the hinges from the door, Kelly Crandall, 21-year-old colored man, entered the smokehouse of Clavon Sheppard, colored tenant on the Reuben Everett farm near Robersonville, last Saturday night and carried away two choice hams.

Missing the meat Sunday morning, Sheppard reported the loss to Deputy Dennis Roberson who with Deputy Raymond Rawls started an investigation. Disposing of the hams to Gaston Andrews that morning, Crandall returned to the Sheppard neighborhood where the officers found and questioned him along with other suspects. Crandall's unusual spot print gave him away, and he admitted stealing the meat and told where he had sold it. The meat was recovered.

Another ham theft was reported but details could not be had.

## Capture Convicts Near Williamston After A Wild Ride

#### Patrolman Narron Picked Up Trail Here and Stopped Men on Route 17

Two convicts, escaping from a Nash County prison camp early last Thursday, were taken into custody by Patrolmen R. P. Narron and D. S. Skiles a few hours later near Williamston but not until the convicts, L. D. Hatchell, 31, and Arthur Chadwick, 18, had stolen two vehicles and held up and robbed a minister near Hobgood.

Spotting the two convicts in the Dodge car stolen from the Rev. Grady Haynes of Hobgood, Patrolman Narron started the chase on Williamston's North Houghton Street. Hatchell, driving the stolen car, made a left turn into the main street and then turned right at the Central Service Station in an effort to lose the patrol car. The chase was continued on Highway 17, Patrolman Narron stating that Hatchell started to turn into the Ross tourist court and almost turned the car over there. Recovering from the near spill, Hatchell continued down 17 and started to make a turn into a dirt road about three miles from Williamston. The convict lost control and the stolen car turned over twice, knocking out both convicts and wrecking the minister's vehicle.

The accident victims soon recovered consciousness and were removed to a local hospital for examination and treatment. Chadwick suffered a three-stitch cut over his left eye and a three-stitch cut on his hand. Hatchell was not injured. The convicts were turned over to prison authorities, both of them begging not to be returned to the Nash camp.

Making a break in Nash County, the convicts stole a pick-up truck and ran out the gas supply. Leaving that vehicle, they thumbed a ride with the Hobgood Baptist minister, and then at pistol point carried him into the woods and tied him to a tree, using one of their rawhide shoe strings. Prison officials were surprised when they learned the minister had not been harmed by Hatchell who is serving terms for two killings. The minister said he pleaded with the convicts, that Hatchell put the gun back in his pocket and after a short distance into the woods, he was tied to the tree. Tied very loosely, the minister freed himself by the time the convicts got back to the car, and he then walked into Hobgood and gave the alarm.

When the minister reached Williamston to claim his property, he was apparently more pleased to recover his false teeth than he was his overcoat and \$25 in cash. The car was insured, Patrolman Narron said.

Hatchell, a one-time Cardova textile mill worker, was sentenced from Richmond County in July, 1942, to 20 years for second-degree murder. He later escaped and in so doing killed a prison guard which resulted in his being

Working with Mrs. W. H. Carstaphen in this township, Miss Irene Tetterton announced the following canvassers for the identical areas in her assigned territory; Mesdames Louis Coker, Harvey Baggett, Ralph Taylor, W. T. Ross, D. G. Modlin, Charlie Edwards, D. D. Stalls, Jr., W. O. Griffin, Thomas R. Speller, Joseph Gurganus, Hubert Biggs, P. O. Holloman, William Everett, Leslie Roberson and Mayhue Edwards.

Colored citizens in the five townships comprising the chapter recently completed their canvassing organization, and accepted quotas, as follows: Jamesville, \$55; Dardens, \$55; Williams, \$40; Smithwick's, \$30; Rodgers, \$55; Biggs, \$55; Burroughs, \$40; and Williamston, \$400.

The following volunteered to handle the canvass: Jamesville: Mesdames Emma Gregory, Jane A. Norfleet, Virginia Hopkins, Mary Everette and Mamie Knox.

Smithwick's: Anopholes Peel, Julius Evans, Ben Reddick, James Fodard, Cleveland Manning, Almen Reddick and Annie Hassell.

Williamston: E. J. Hayes, Mrs. Cleo Tyner, Elizabeth Hargett, R. A. Broadnax, F. L. Blount, Mrs. Lillian Slade Jones, John M. Slade, Mrs. Clara R. Owens and Mrs. Nora C. Slade.

Williams, Lower: James Faulk, (Continued on Page Eight)

**Suffers Broken Leg Getting Off Table**

Eli M. Taylor, local farmer-business man, suffered a fracture of his right leg just above the ankle when he stepped off a table in the Washington Street pool room here last Saturday night.

Removed to a local hospital, Mr. Taylor was reported to be getting along very well this morning.

## Red Cross Bloodmobile To Visit Here On March 21st

Your blood is needed! Your's and all other citizens' residing in the area of the Martin County Chapter of the American Red Cross. This blood is needed for use in the local hospitals as well as by the armed forces. Since the blood program was instituted a year ago, more than 190 pints have been used locally, the remainder going to the services at home and abroad.

Dr. J. S. Rhodes, Jr., chairman of the blood program of the Martin County Chapter of the Red Cross, reports that response is good to the appeal for pledges for the fourth visit of the Bloodmobile on Friday, March 21, but more are needed to assure our quota being met. Dr. Rhodes, who succeeded Dr. C. I. Harris as chairman of the blood program, urges each and every able-bodied citizen to make his pledge to the recruiters, Paul Simpson or Bruce Wynne, or direct to the Red Cross headquarters, Mrs. Edna Bondurant, chapter secretary.

The bloodmobile will set up

operations in the Recreation Room of the Williamston Methodist Church and the hours will be from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. You may specify the time you prefer to visit the church and give your blood and you will also be notified a few days in advance of the visit, as to what time you are to report. If you are unable to pledge your donation in advance, you may drop into the church on the day of the visit and donate your pint of blood to this worthy cause.

It may be emphasized that the operation is rather simple and relatively painless. Those who have given blood on the previous visits are again eligible and are requested to make every effort to do so.

Remember the date of the Bloodmobile visit is Friday, March 21; the location, the Recreation Room of the Methodist Church; the hours are from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM and the recruiters are Paul Simpson and Bruce Wynne. Call either of these two or Mrs. Edna Bondurant at the Red Cross office and make that appointment right now!

## TRASH MOVER

Striking mainly between 7 and 8:00 o'clock this morning, a heavy rain flooded just about everything in this area. The approximately one inch of rain fell so rapidly that it was referred to as a trash mover. Several places in the town here were filled with water from curb to curb.

So far this month, three and one-third inches of rain have fallen here. The Roanoke this morning stood at 11.3 feet, or about fourteen inches over the banks, and logging operations along the stream are still at a standstill.

## Stephen Copeland Dies In Accident

Stephen L. Copeland, 45, was instantly killed in an automobile near his home in China Lake, California, Sunday afternoon, reports reaching here stating that he suffered a broken neck and back when his car went off the road and turned over.

Funeral services will be conducted tomorrow afternoon in China Lake. Interment will be in the cemetery there.

Married to the former Miss Elizabeth Gurganus of Williamston in January, 1933, Mr. Copeland was well known here. He spent most of his life in Norfolk where he was associated with the Virginia Engineering Company for a number of years before going with the Naval Ordnance Department. Seven years ago he was transferred to California where he served as safety engineer for the Naval Ordnance Training Station. During his stay in Norfolk, he visited Williamston often and made many friends here.

Surviving besides Mrs. Copeland are a daughter, Lamarr; a brother, William D. Copeland, of Chicago; a sister, Mrs. Margaret Hayes of Los Angeles, and his mother, Mrs. B. W. Woodard, of Norfolk.

His mother-in-law, Mrs. Mary Bonner Gurganus, and brother-in-law, Eli Gurganus, are en route to California by stratoliner today to attend the funeral.

Although he continues quite ill and is still unable to have company, Mr. J. E. King, prominent local citizen, was reported late yesterday to be holding his own in Duke Hospital with the possibility that his condition is slightly improved.

## Local Man Holding His Own In Durham Hospital

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## Firemen Called Out Last Friday Afternoon

Volunteer firemen were called out early last Friday afternoon when fire threatened a vacant house belonging to the Della Rogers estate, corner of Sycamore and Wilson Streets. Believed to have started from a spark, the fire burned away a small portion of the roof.

## Twenty-Two Seek Divorces In The Superior Court

#### Most of the Actions Based On Grounds Of Two Years Of Separation

Twenty-two divorce cases have been placed on the calendar for trial in the Martin County Superior Court next week, most of them being based on grounds of two years of separation. None of the actions is being contested, but two or three of the complaints were answered.

Quite a few of the marriages, now on the "rocks" were dated in the late and post-war periods, one going way back to 1903.

The divorce calendar, scheduled for March 20, carries about the largest number of cases ever to be called at any one term of court in this county.

Judge J. Paul Frizzelle of Snow Hill is scheduled to preside over the term.

In the case of Edgar Simmons of Martin County against Bertha Simmons of Bertie County, the plaintiff says they were married May 26, 1948, and separated in July, 1949. No children were born of the union.

George Smith, in his case against Eula Mae Smith, says they were married December 6, 1946, and separated June 27, 1949, that no children were born of the union.

In her case against John Edmonds, Nolie Edmonds says they were married January 3, 1924, and separated June 4, 1949, that no children were born of the union.

In the case of Joyce Johnson against William Johnson, the plaintiff says they were married in Brooklyn on September 24, 1947 and separated March 3, 1948, that no children were born of the union.

Suing Sam Manning for divorce, Clydia Mae Manning says they were married April 4, 1946, and separated December 24, 1947. The two children, ages 5 and 4, born of the union are with the plaintiff.

Gary Bunting is suing Margaret Bunting for a divorce, stating they were married February 14, 1948, and separated in July, 1949. The defendant is a minor, and a guardian was named for her. The plaintiff says there are two children, ages 4 and 3, who are with and supported by the mother, the plaintiff denying paternity. While not contesting the action, the de-

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## Les Darby Speaks To Kiwanis Club

Mr. Les Darby, Director of Industrial Relations of North Carolina Pulp Co. was guest speaker at the Williamston Kiwanis Club meeting held at the Woman's Club on Thursday night.

Mr. Darby gave the history of the North Carolina Pulp Co. plant in Plymouth. He said the production of pulp has increased from 200 tons per day in 1937 to 800 tons per day at the close of 1951. Continuing, he stated that although the plant consumes over 468,000 cords of wood a year, the mill is rebuilding the forestry industry by replanting and selective cutting. The replanting program includes the furnishing of seedlings to school children for planting.

Mr. Darby pointed out that the plant has a payroll of around \$3,000,000 per year and is the world's largest manufacturer of paper board which is used in making milk cartons and other containers. He then explained the process of making paper and told how chemicals are reclaimed from the water before it is discarded.

In conclusion Mr. Darby stressed the assets that the North Carolina Pulp Co. provided Martin County, Plymouth, Williamston and the surrounding area.

Prior to Mr. Darby's talk several guests were introduced among whom were Bynum E. Smith by George Mahler, Junie Peel by E. S. Peel, Sr., and Fred Sherman by Bob Newell. Mrs. W. E. Thornton, club pianist, was welcomed back by president Reg Simpson following an absence due to a illness. Bruce Wynn was also recognized on the occasion of his birthday.

## Confiscate Obscene Picture In Theater

#### ABC OFFICE

Without office space for several months, the Martin County ABC Enforcement Bureau, J. H. Roebuck, chief, established offices on the second floor of Williamston's town hall last week-end. Evidence in the form of legal and illegal spirits is kept in a strong box.

Confidential reports may be submitted personally at the office or by direct mail to the enforcement bureau, it was explained.

## Three Injured In Series Accidents On County Roads

#### Four Wrecks Reported In The County During Past Several Days

At least three persons were injured, one of them badly, in a series of four motor vehicle accidents on the highways in this county during the past few days. There was a fifth accident, but the highway patrol office said that a car ran into a ditch, that no one was injured and there was no property damage even though the vehicle had to be freed by a wrecker.

Arthur Chadwick, escaped convict, suffered cuts on the face when the stolen car in which he was riding turned over twice on a dirt road about three miles from Williamston on U. S. 17, south, early last Thursday afternoon. The driver of the Dodge, L. D. Hatchell, was knocked unconscious, but he recovered quickly and was not listed among the injured. The car, belonging to the Rev. Grady Haynes, Baptist minister of Hobgood, was damaged to the extent of about \$600, according to unofficial information.

Two wrecks in one were reported about two miles out on the Caskey Road, in Williamston Township, last Friday night about 11:00 o'clock. Fernando DeSoto Jones, driving a 1950 Plymouth toward Highway 125, stopped to make a left turn when James Henry Wiggins met him in a 1942 Oldsmobile. The Oldsmobile side-swiped the Plymouth, causing about \$25 damage to each vehicle.

Wiggins stopped his car about twenty feet away in his right lane of traffic. While Wiggins and Jones were allegedly arguing over their accident, Wilbur Eugene Cannon, young white man of RFD 1, Hobgood, drove up, traveling toward Highway 64. Apparently blinded by the lights on the Jones car, Cannon did not see anyone or the Wiggins car in his path. Just as he reached the Jones car, Mary Wiggins stepped into the road. The Cannon car struck and knocked her into a ditch, causing a compound fracture of the right leg just above the ankle. The Cannon machine then plowed into the rear of the Wiggins car, causing about \$400 damage to it and about \$550 damage to his own machine. Cannon suffered painful cuts about the face and bruises on the knee, but was able to be out following over-night hospital treatment. The other victim of the accident continues in the hospital with the possibility that she will

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## Foot Crushed In Farm Accident

Luther G. Leggett, Jr., young farmer of Poplar Point, suffered a crushed foot and ankle in a farm accident late Monday afternoon. Removed to a local hospital, he underwent an operation and was reported to be getting along very well this morning.

The farmer was holding a portable hog shed on a tobacco truck pulled by a pick-up truck. The truck turned over and the small house fell on his left foot and ankle.

## ROUND-UP

After almost filling the county jail up week before last, local and county officers reported little activity on the crime front in this county last week-end. Only four persons were arrested and detained in the jail during the period. Two were booked for larceny and one each for breaking and entering and public drunkenness.

## Distributor Says 'Somebody' Will Pay For His Loss

#### Feature and Short Subject Impounded by Sheriff Holloman Saturday

Rated one of the most lewd and shocking pictures operators ever dared flash on a public screen, the film, "Battle of Burlesque," was confiscated and impounded by Sheriff M. W. Holloman following a showing in the Twilight Theater near Williamston on Highway 64 last Saturday night. Confiscated along with the short subject was a feature picture, "Hurly Burly", rated a close runner-up in lewdness to the "Battle of Burlesque".

Discussing the case with District Solicitor George Fountain by telephone, the sheriff was advised to hold the film as evidence. The case is scheduled for airing in the courts on Friday, March 28, before Justice Chas. R. Mobley.

Jesse Robert Henderson, field representative for the Steede Amusement Enterprises of High Point, is charged with aiding and abetting in the showing of obscene pictures, and he is to appear before Justice Mobley along with John Mobley, owner-operator of the theater, and the machine operator, the latter two having been required to provide no bonds. Mobley explained to the officer that he did not know what was in the picture. Henderson, waiting with a car to pick up the films after taking his firm's cut in the profits, pleaded for the release of the film with the understanding that they would not be shown again in this county. The officer explained that it was a matter for the courts to decide.

During the meantime, a representative of the Steede Amusement Enterprises was quoted as saying that "somebody was going to pay him for every day the film was impounded." The sheriff is still holding tight to the films today.

Henderson declared he knew nothing of the short film, the rougher of the two subjects and the first to be screened.

Acting on information received from outside the county and with members of the Martin County Ministerial Association, the officer checked the picture which was booked for special showing Saturday night at 10:30 o'clock. There was a large crowd present for the special attraction which was booked as an added feature and at a cost of fifty cents. Children, as young as thirteen years, were in the audience, the officer said.

The theater owner-operator reported to the sheriff Monday that a similar picture, portraying the evil of dope, had been booked, and asked what action should be taken. It is distributed by the same distributor in High Point. The sheriff, unable to determine the exact nature of the film, made no suggestion about cancellation of contract. "If it is as bad as what was seen on the screen last Saturday night, it should be cancelled and thrown into the river," the officer was quoted as saying.

## Glee Club Wins Superior Rating

In the district music festival at East Carolina College in Greenville Saturday the Glee Club of Williamston High School under the direction of Miss Ann Royster, won a rating of superior and Miss Janice Manning won the same rating as a soloist.

A boys' quartet from the glee club was rated as good by the judges. The boys are: Bobby Goff, Corrone Bryant, Jerry Nicholson and Jack Daniels.

The Williamston Green Wave Band did not enter this year. In the band division Greenville won a superior and Elizabeth City, on the basis of Grade 6 music, was rated good.

## Marriage Licenses Are Issued In County Recently

Following a period of little activity, the Martin County office of register of deeds reported an increase in the issuance of marriage licenses last week-end, as follows:

Henry S. Everett and Mrs. Elizabeth Chandler, both of Robersonville; Gordon Ambrose and Juanita Ambrose, both of Plymouth; Joseph L. Edwards of RFD 3, Williamston, and Mary Bell Cullipher of Bethel; Curtis R. Mobley and Mrs. Beulah Griffin Bland, both of Williamston; and James Jones of Williamston and Rosa Lee Baker of Oak City.