

## Tyner Found Not Guilty In Murder Case Last Week

### Little Argument Now As To Who Is Master Of The Tyner Premises

Clyde Tyner, 65-year-old Negro man, was found not guilty of the murder of Rufus Taylor, colored, in the Tyner home near Williamston last March 27 by a jury in the Martin County Superior court last Thursday afternoon. The jury, taking the case at 12:31 that afternoon was back with its verdict in exactly twelve minutes.

It was directly admitted by the defendant that he did not have control of his own home. Well, the verdict returned by the jury last Thursday leaves little doubt as to who is master of the premises now. While Tyner was not given license to shoot and kill in his own home in the future, it can be inferred that visitors go there at their own risk.

The defendant offered a realistic account of the shooting, maintaining he could see danger in Taylor's eyes as he (Taylor) allegedly started on him with a hand reaching in a pocket presumably for a knife. He told how he grabbed his gun quickly and fired literally from the left hip. Tyner went on to build up an enviable reputation as a peaceful man, the character witnesses leaving no flaw or blemish on him.

But the case started leaking air just as Defense Counsel Chas. H. Manning made ready to go before the jury with the argument. Officer Bill Haislip was called as a last-minute witness for the State. Defense disputed the State's right to put him on the stand, but Judge Jos. W. Parker, presiding, ruled him out.

The witness said he was on duty that Sunday afternoon (March 22) when Tyner came down and said he wanted a warrant, the officer declaring that Tyner said he wanted a warrant for his son, Dawson. The officer said Tyner did not mention Taylor's name. The officer added that Tyner explained he was having so much trouble with his son that he wanted a warrant for his arrest. Returning to the stand, Tyner said he talked with the officer and told him he wanted a warrant for both the son and Taylor, that maybe the officer misunderstood him.

All the evidence in the case was completed at 10:30 that morning, but not until shame and disgrace was wrapped all round the Tyner premises, but the defendant came through unscathed. Stephen Griffin, the first character witness, praised Tyner as being a man of good character, and that Taylor had a bad reputation.

Fannie Williams ripped into the dead man's character from far back. She knew Taylor in Wilson about ten years ago, declaring that he had threatened to kill her father. Asked if Taylor had hurt her father, she said, "He didn't hurt him; he just knocked him out." It developed that the witness was employed in the home of defense counsel.

The defense imported a witness from Washington, one who knew Taylor back in Wilson County. The witness, Esther Smith, said Taylor carried knives and guns around with him at Walstonburg. Richard Roberson, coming from Bethel, said he knew Taylor tried to shoot him. Roberson declared he took the gun away from Taylor and gave it to his bossman who gave it to Taylor's bossman.

Hubert Biggs declared Tyner's reputation was good and that he had known him for 25 years. The witness on cross examination, said he knew nothing about Tyner.

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## ROUND-UP

Ten persons were rounded up and temporarily detained in the county jail last week-end. Four were booked for public drunkenness and one each for breaking and entering, drunken driving, assault, carrying a concealed weapon, operating a motor vehicle without a driver's license and violating parole.

There of the ten were white and the ages ranged from 17 to 36 years.

## Father Gets 8 To 10 Years In Incest Case

### Frank Edwards Is Found Guilty End Three-Day Trial

#### Unusual Evidence Offered To Add Confusion To Sordid Case

Found guilty of incest, Frank Edwards, a newcomer to this county from Pitt, was sentenced by Judge Jos. W. Parker in the Martin County Superior Court last Friday afternoon to serve not less than eight and not more than ten years in State's Prison. Pin-dropping silence crept into the courtroom as Judge Parker weighed the final pleas advanced by defense counsel and Solicitor George Fountain. The verdict and judgment were received without emotion appearing in any of the faces of those who had held a close watch in and around the court room all week long.

The youthful victim, Edwards' 14-year-old daughter remained alone during the trial, while other members of the family held together for the most part. Unusual evidence crept into the case during the trial, and the post-trial pleas pointed the defendant out as one possessed of a psychopathic personality. Following neurosurgery in a Durham hospital back in 1948, Edwards was said not to be capable of telling right from wrong. Defense counsel referred to the case as a pitiful one, and briefly referred to the absence of emotion on the part of the prosecuting witness as she withstood two hours of questioning, both by the State and defense counsel. There was a fantastic letter, supposedly written by the main prosecuting witness to Kenneth Bland, Robersonville, under date of June 16. In the letter she made certain accusations, involving others and stating a physical condition not supported by medical examination.

Declaring that he did not have a vocabulary to adequately describe the crime, Judge Parker said none is more revolting. The jurist carefully weighed the evidence and the pleas, giving due consideration to all the circumstances before pronouncing the sentence. "In the light of the circumstances, I am not going to give him the maximum 15-year sentence," the jurist said. Solicitor George Fountain said he doubted if Edwards and his wife realized the seriousness of the charges, adding that under the conditions he did not believe the case merited the punishment that one under more normal conditions or circumstances would merit.

Just about all the evidence in the case was completed at 12:45 last Friday. The court took a 45-minute recess and at 1:30 that afternoon it was announced that no arguments would be made before the jury. Judge Parker completed his 45-minute charge to the jury at 2:30 o'clock, and the jury, after deliberating thirty-two minutes, returned with the verdict, "Guilty, as charged."

Calling the first witness in the sordid case at 4:08 o'clock last Thursday afternoon, the State revealed some damaging evidence against Edwards. The witness, Edwards' daughter who is not yet quite fourteen years of age, told where they lived and said the family moved to Williams Township in March, 1952. After telling about the members of the family she related the damaging evidence, declaring that her father had attacked her on nine different occasions, the first dating back about two years. The first and fourth other attacks allegedly took place in Pitt County near Stokes. Following closely the evidence offered at the preliminary hearing in May, the little victim, explained that she had pleaded with her mother for help, but got no protection from her.

She told how her life had been threatened by her father, how he carried her to Sweet Water Creek, tied her hands and gagged her but could not drown her. Following the last alleged attack in a taxi on May 9, the alleged acts came to light and Edwards was immediately arrested.

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## Critically Ill In Virginia Hospital

Suffering an attack at his home here on Hassell Street about 3:00 o'clock last Saturday morning, Mr. Henry D. Harrison continues critically ill in a Richmond hospital, according to last reports reaching here this morning.

His trouble had not been definitely diagnosed at that time, but it is thought he is suffering with a tumor of the brain. Given first aid treatment in a hospital here, he was removed to the Richmond hospital at noon Saturday.

Accompanying him to the hospital members of the family, are constantly at his bedside.

## Plan Programs For The Local Youth Center

Some new records are being purchased this week for the use of the local Youth Center and plans for special programs for the young people are being worked out by some of the youngsters themselves.

Dick Manning is head of a group which is to direct games and other activities for a few evenings at the center.

## Native Of County Died Saturday At Home Of Daughter

### Funeral Service Held Here Sunday Afternoon For Mrs. W. B. Weaver

Funeral services were conducted in the Biggs Funeral Chapel on West Main Street here Sunday afternoon at 3:30 o'clock for Mrs. Maggie V. Weaver who died at the home of her daughter, Mrs. G. A. Burroughs, 3516 N. Woodlawn Avenue, Norfolk, last Saturday morning at 5:30 o'clock. Her pastor, the Rev. Ralph E. Ferguson, pastor of the Robersonville Baptist Church, assisted by the Rev. E. Gordon Conklin, pastor of the Williamston Memorial Baptist Church, conducted the rites. Interment was in Williams-ton's Woodlawn Cemetery.

Going to Norfolk about a month ago to visit her daughter, Mrs. Weaver was taken ill about ten days ago. Her condition was critical during most of that time. The daughter of the late Samuel D. and Cynthia Cherry Rawls, she was born in this county 77 years ago on October 23, 1875. She made her home in and around Williamston and Robersonville all her life, and was a member of the Robersonville Baptist Church for many years. In early womanhood she was married to William Benjamin Weaver who died in 1948. Since his death she had made her home with the children.

Surviving are three sons, J. Frank Weaver of Williamston, William Jasper Weaver of Plymouth and Lewis Andrew Weaver of Robersonville; three daughters, Mrs. G. A. Burroughs of Norfolk, Mrs. Onley S. Cowan of Williamston and Mrs. Glenn Stalls of Portsmouth; a sister, Mrs. W. D. McKeel of Williams-ton; eighteen grandchildren and thirteen great grandchildren.

## Prominent Negro Citizen Passes

Rufus T. Chance, prominent Martin County Negro citizen and leader, died at his home near Hassell early last Friday morning. He had been in declining health for several years.

Born on October 15, 1880, near Hassell, he lived and farmed in that community all his life, figuring prominently in every worthy undertaking. He supported educational and religious movements, and in his daily living he set examples worthy of others to follow.

With only a few hundred dollars saved over a period of years, he purchased a farm in 1914, and with the aid of his wife and a large number of obedient children he developed the farm into one of the most productive in this section. In addition being one of the county's largest colored farmers, he was listed among the best.

"Uncle Rufus" as he was favorably known among many of both races, was a leader in Harper's Primitive Baptist Church over in Edgecombe County and supported it liberally and faithfully. He was also interested in the cause of education, and was a recognized leader of his race, living in peace with his fellowman and holding the respect of all.

He was married first to Sallie Cherry and twelve children survive that union, five of whom earned college degree and all the others but three completing their high school education. His second marriage was to his sister-in-law, Mary Cherry.

Surviving are the following:

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## Crack Down On Traffic Violators

Members of the local police force are cracking down on alleged traffic law violators and at the same time rounding up others running afoul of the law.

Officers Chesson and Whitehurst last week-end cited four to the courts for violating traffic laws. James E. Taylor and Paul V. Narron were booked for not stopping for a traffic signal. Otis W. Casper and Marvin D. Futrell, Jr., were charged with speeding in 35-mile zones, the latter having been checked at 60 miles an hour. Several drunks were arrested along with other lawviolators.

## Holding Man On Robbery Charges In County's Jail

### David McLean Admits He Entered Hitching Post And Cleaners

David McLean, 25-year-old Charlottesville, Va., colored man, is being held in the Martin County jail in default of \$7,000 bond for the alleged robbery of four business establishments here early last Thursday morning.

Given a hearing before Justice of the Peace W. M. Tetterton at the courthouse last Thursday night, McLean pleaded guilty of breaking into the Hitching Post and the Horton Cleaners on South Sycamore Street, but claimed he was with a fellow by the name of John Douglas. McLean denied breaking into and robbing the stores of Walter Mizelle on North Elm Street and of G. T. Hill on North Sycamore Street, claiming that Douglas handled those robberies.

Breaking the front door locks and using a screw driver to force the latches, the robbers entered the front door of each of the establishments. When McLean was arrested about 5:00 o'clock that morning a short distance out on Highway 125 he had on his persons seven rolls of pennies, valued at \$3.50, missing from Mizelle's store and about \$3.25 in pennies and silver missing from Hill's store. Nothing was missed from the other two places of business, but the robber was wearing the money box in the Hitching Post picolo when he was frightened away.

Walking by the Horton Cleaners about 2:50 o'clock that morning, Sylvester Woolard saw McLean standing in the door. Thinking the man was working there, Woolard asked him why he was opening for business so early. McLean was quoted as saying that he could not sleep and decided to get to work, that Mr. Horton, the owner, would be down later. Woolard said he accepted the explanation at the time, but when he measured facts he became suspicious and notified the police. Officers Arthur Perry and Maurice Whitehurst found no one at the cleaners, but they started searching for the man using the description offered by Woolard, the officers picked the man up about two hours later.

Unable to arrange bond, McLean was returned to jail where he is likely to remain until the next term of the superior court which convenes in September.

Investigating the case further, officers learned that McLean was Robert Bailey, a native of Sanford who was sent to the roads for three years on a robbery charge. Bailey escaped from a prison road camp in Craven County last week, wandered into Washington where he broke into a store and stole a knife and a watch along with a small amount of money before moving on to Williamston to committee four more robberies. He is being tried

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## Car Turns Over In Local Yard

When the brakes on his 1948 Studebaker convertible failed, William Earl Warren, 20 of Robersonville and Williamston, steered the machine onto the sidewalk in front of the Wheeler Martin home on East Main Street to avoid striking a car that was backed out in front of him at 11:45 o'clock Monday morning.

The young man, accompanied by two others, was doing all right in the emergency until the car struck an electric power pole guy wire and threw the machine over on its side in the Hugh G. Hortons' yard. No one was hurt and damage was estimated at little more than \$25, according to Officer Chas. R. Moore who made the investigation.

## Baptist Sunday School Holding Picnic Tomorrow

The Sunday School of the Memorial Baptist Church will hold its annual picnic tomorrow at Whitchard's Beach near Washington. Members of the school are asked to meet at the church at 2:00 o'clock Wednesday afternoon, and transportation will be arranged there.

## County Budget Calls For \$330,382 Taxes

### Estimate Based On \$26 Million Property Listing

#### Rate Fairly Definite At \$1.35 Per \$100 Property Valuation

Although holding to the same rate—\$1.35 on the \$100 assessed property valuation—Martin County proposed to raise approximately \$10,922 more in general taxes than it did a year ago, according to a budget estimate released this week by the board of commissioners.

The figures represent a total of \$330,382 to be raised from general taxation as compared with \$319,460 levied a year ago. The increased amount, it was pointed out is expected from approximately three-quarters of a million dollars in the assessed property values.

While the over-all rate is being held to the \$1.35 figure, there are some marked variations in the various departmental levies. Heretofore, the levy for general county purposes was limited for year by law to 15 cents on the \$100 valuation. A constitutional amendment provided a 5-cent increase in the rate for general county purposes. Heretofore, general county purposes had to up the rates for other departments to maintain itself. Now, each tub stands on its own bottom, so to speak with the general fund still carrying items that could be charged to other departments.

Indigent hospitalization and other emergencies, amounting to nearly 12,000, are being charged against the general county fund levy. It is estimated that \$138,915 will be needed to support the county's general activities, including salaries, administration, courts and allied items. The county is looking to taxation for 48,665, the remainder, or \$90,250, to come from liquor and beer sales, court costs, fees and so on.

The county home appropriation is being cut by about \$1,000 to \$9,744 for the new fiscal year, beginning the first of next month. A reduction of about \$600 is being made in the poor fund, leaving the appropriation at \$14,600.

The health fund was upped from \$20,880 to \$23,193 presumably in an effort to attract a head for the department.

Bond requirements are dropping from \$44,975 to \$33,215. At the close of the current fiscal year, June 30, the county will owe just a fraction over one-quarter million dollars in bonds, the budget estimate shows.

It is estimated that public welfare administration will require \$13,360 tax money for its operations next year as compared with \$12,660 this year. The actual cost is actually \$21,960 but the federal and state governments step in to pay \$8,500 of the amount. The county is cutting its actual tax for the welfare department, but actually more money is being made available for aged, dependent children, blind and the permanently and totally disabled than was appropriated a year ago.

The federal and state governments are participating in the cost of the agency to a greater extent than they did a year ago with the possibility that more of the old-timers will be included in the list and the average allotment increased.

When all the county and welfare department costs are considered a rate of 65 cents on the

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## Concert Group Meets Tonight

The executive committee of the Martin County Community Concert Association is to meet at 8:00 o'clock this evening in the lobby of the George Reynolds Hotel, it was announced today by the secretary, Mrs. Jos. Griffin. A New York representative of the association will meet with group and discuss plans for the coming concert season, it was explained.

## Goodly Number Of Cases Are Tried In Superior Court

### Several Divorces Granted And Clear Other Cases From The Docket

Opening a one-week term Monday, June 15, the Martin County Superior Court really earned its pay last week. The tribunal was in session right on through last Saturday morning when special issues were heard before Judge Jos. W. Parker, the juries having been dismissed with the thanks of the court late Friday afternoon.

Encountering several aggravated cases, the court did not clear its docket, but it made considerable progress in getting its docket and calendar in shape.

With the murder and incest cases out of the way, the court opened up Saturday morning to hear several divorce actions and a few other cases near the close of the term.

Proceedings not previously reported follow:

Adjudged guilty of burning an automobile in order to collect the insurance, James Perkins was sentenced to the roads for twelve months. Perkins was in line for the maximum, but his counsel explained that his seven children, allegedly deserted by the mother, are living with his mother, and Judge Parker tempered justice with mercy. The sentence is to begin at the expiration of the 3-to-five-year term he is now serving for wife beating.

O. K. Harrison was sentenced to the roads for twelve months when he was found guilty of an assault with a deadly weapon. Judge Parker, making ready to pass sentence, told Harrison that the jury did not believe him. "I just couldn't help it," Harrison said, shaking his head when the jurist asked him if he really objected "going back home".

Charged with drunken driving, F. O. Moye was found not guilty. Based on grounds of two years of separation, divorces were granted James Albert Smith from Ellen S. Smith, Naomi Bennett from Bennett, and Idelle H. Rawls from William E. Rawls.

In the divorce action of William Earl Hollis against Wilda Yvonne Hollis, the plaintiff charged adultery. He stated they were married August 16, 1951, and left for overseas duty in the armed forces. In October of last year, the plaintiff said he received letters from friends, advising him that his wife had been unfaithful. Returning to the States last February 23, he reached home March 7 and learned on April 14 that his wife was "in a family way". He explained that he carried his wife to a doctor that day and was advised that she was from four to five months pregnant.

Grady Keith Lamm, alleged to have violated terms of a five-year probation is to be arrested, the court ordered. Pleading nolo contendere last March when he was charged with hit-and-run driving, Lamm was sentenced to the roads for not less than three and not more than five years and ordered to pay \$100 to David Mayo for medical expenses. He did not comply with the judgment, it was pointed out by probation officer Harry Douglas.

The following criminal cases were continued: Odis W. Whitaker, spending 70 miles an hour; J. T. Briley, assault with intent to commit rape; Clarence P. Joyner, Jesse Whitley (colored) Benjamin H. Lewis, James Roosevelt Peel, Robert E. Linton and Homer Bryan Bowen, drunken driving.

Returning Saturday morning after dismissing the jury, Judge Parker heard several motions in chambers.

In the case of Mary E. Holliday

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## Man Booked On Assault Charge

Renewing an old grudge that left several bad cuts in his anatomy about a year ago, Floyd Lanier, 36, opened up on James Godard a second time with a pocket knife at the Little Savoy Cafe on Washington Street here last Saturday night.

Godard was standing in the cafe when Lanier walked in and started swinging. Before he could be pulled away he had scored five times, cutting his victim twice on the head, once each on the breast, arm and back. The cuts were not very deep and the victim was able to attend a preliminary hearing before Justice W. M. Tetterton last night. Lanier was booked for trial in the county court.

## Speaker Stolen From Theater Last Week-end

For the second time in recent weeks a speaker was stolen at the Twilight theatre over the week-end.

Mr. Mobley owner and operator of the theatre, said yesterday morning he knew who stole the hearing equipment and that he would issue a warrant for the thieves unless the part was returned at once.

Parked two rows to the rear of the projection room Mr. Mobley said the car was occupied by two boys and two girls.

## IMPROVING

Following a tragic accident in which two persons lost their lives the previous week-end, no accidents were reported on the highways according to information coming from the highway patrol office in this county today.