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Fire Wrecks Large Plant In Oak City

Johnson Milling Company Loss Is Placed At \$25,000

Fire Departments In Three Towns Answer The Call Early Tuesday

Oak City had the most disastrous fire in its history shortly after 2:00 o'clock yesterday afternoon when the large plant of the Johnson Milling Company and thousands of dollars worth of contents were burned. No official estimate could be had, but one report placed the loss at \$25,000, and that was considered a conservative figure. The property was partially covered by insurance, or hardly enough to replace the buildings.

Housing a saw mill, planing mill and cotton gin and providing much storage, the company was ginning its first bale of cotton from the new crop. Manager Gene Tyson said the fire apparently started in the gin saws and was blown into the compress where it spread rapidly. "We tried to put it out but the odds were against us," Mr. Tyson explained, adding that fire was all over the place in a matter of minutes.

Fire departments at Scotland Neck, Hobgood and Williamston answered calls there, but the plant had just about burned down and the smoke stack was already down. Firemen were able to keep the fire from spreading to a lumber shed, and a few outbuildings adjoining the plant were saved. A bucket brigade saved a tobacco barn when sparks fired it approximately 200 yards away.

Carrying 750 gallons of water, the Hobgood fire truck successfully turned the fire back just as it was reaching the lumber shed.

No inventory count could be had immediately, but Mr. Tyson said that in addition to the partial bale of cotton in the press there were about fifteen bales of cotton stored and waiting to be ginned. In a nearby storage house, seven barns of tobacco and between fifty and 100 bags of cotton seed meal were burned. Cross ties on the A. C. L. Railroad were also burned or damaged.

The wind favored a large colored church adjoining the plant property as well as several homes and other buildings. The wind also favored a large oil storage tank a short distance from the plant.

Mr. J. C. Johnson, owner, was out of town and could not be reached for a statement. It is not known if he plans to rebuild the plant which normally employed from six to a dozen workers.

Hopkins To Open Shoe Store Here

Hopkins' Shoe Store, owned and managed by Mr. Ben Hopkins, is scheduled to open for business in the apartment building here on Main Street Friday morning at 9:00 o'clock.

A large assortment of shoes has been received and will be placed in the store just as soon as the House of Fashion completes its move to a new location.

Going with Belks here back in 1937, Mr. Hopkins has had much experience in footwear. Except for several years spent in the service during World War II, including three in the Pacific area, Mr. Hopkins has spent his time buying and fitting footwear.

The store is handling nationally-known brands. He will have associated with him, Mrs. Hopkins and Mrs. A. R. Alcox, both experienced in sales.

As an added opening feature, the store is giving away twelve pairs of shoes Saturday evening at 6:00 o'clock. Registrations get under way Friday morning, it was announced.

The House of Fashion vacated the store this week and both firms are rushing arrangements for their formal openings later in the week.

CONTRACTS

The town of Williamston is being asked to enter into contracts with the State Highway and Public Works Commission whereby the town will share one-third the expense of acquiring rights of way for the 2.79-mile by-pass and the widening of the overhead railroad bridge on West Main Street. The town is also being asked to enter into an agreement whereby the town is to exercise any rights it may have under franchises to effect the changing or relocating any telephone or electric power poles, water and sewer lines that are in the way of the project.

The contracts were not entered into immediately. It was pointed out however that very little of the by-pass is within the town limits, and that the underpass project will be limited to railroad property.

Schedule Twelve Divorce Cases In Superior Court

All But One Are Based On Grounds Of Two-Year Separation

Twelve divorce cases have been placed on the calendar for trial during the second week of the September term of Martin County Superior Court. All but one of the twelve divorce actions are based on grounds of two-year separation.

Judge Walter J. Bone of Nashville is to preside over the term which convenes next Monday morning at 10:00 o'clock. The first week of the two-week term will be devoted to the trial of a large criminal docket. In addition to the divorce actions, the court in its second week will hear a goodly number of civil cases, Clerk L. B. Wynne said.

Divorce cases on the calendar include the following: In the case of Eleanor B. Ballous against George Ballou, recently of Florida, the plaintiff says they were married August 25, 1945, and separated March 12, 1951, that the one child born of the union is living with and is supported by the plaintiff.

After approximately twenty-three years of married life, Henry Rowson is suing Anna Rowson for a divorce. He says in the complaint that they were married April 4, 1928, and separated March 28, 1951. The plaintiff also alleged that the defendant went to Mt. Vernon, New York, and returned a short time later, taking all six children with her to New York.

Grace Wynne Forehand is suing Thomas Lloyd Forehand of Chowan County for a divorce. The plaintiff says they were married December 17, 1949 and separated December 3, 1950, that one child was born of the union.

In the case of James L. Barfield

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Father and Son Caught At Still

Leamon Roebuck and his son, Billy, a Korean war veteran, were arrested at a liquor still in Cross Roads Township, not far from the Wilson Chapel church, last evening at 7:00 o'clock. Given a hearing before Justice of the Peace W. M. Tetterton, the father and son were released in \$100 bond each. They are to appear before Judge H. O. Peele in the county recorder's court on October 5.

Officers Cecil Bullock, Wiley Craft, Garland Bunting and Joe Smith took their stand near the still late in the afternoon and waited until the operators appeared and started making preparations for distilling about 100 gallons of beer. Officer Smith flushed the couple and Officers Bunting and Bullock picked them up.

The plant was equipped with a 60-gallon capacity copper kettle.

Escapee Booked For Larceny Of Goldsboro Truck

Elbert Lee Biggs Speeds 90 Miles An Hour Before Wreck

Elbert Lee Biggs, 17-year-old Martin County Negro youth with a criminal record going back eight years, is in the courts again. He was arrested in West End early Saturday afternoon after he wrecked a Studebaker pick-up truck stolen from Marshall H. Rest in Goldsboro at 9:00 o'clock that morning.

An inmate in the criminal division of the Goldsboro Asylum, Biggs broke out of the institution by scaling a 12-foot wall early that morning. It was his second escape since he was sent there for breaking into the Roanoke Chevrolet Company garage here some time ago.

Said to possess the mentality of a six-year-old, Biggs spotted the truck on a Goldsboro street and drove away, hardly knowing where he was going. He told officers he traveled through Rocky Mount, that he did not know where he was until he drove into Everetts from the direction of Spring Green.

When he drove into Highway 64 at Everetts, Patrolman B. W. Parker spotted the stolen truck and tried to wave Biggs down. The youth increased his speed, and Patrolman Parker started trailing him. Traveling at 85 to 90 miles an hour, Patrolman Parker called for a road block at Williamston. During the meantime, the officer tried to stop the truck, but Biggs would cut in on him. Just as they approached the intersection of 64 and McGaskey Road in West End, a car pulled into Highway 64, and Biggs was forced to ditch the truck, the vehicle

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School's Lunch Room Committee Participated In Prisoner Switch

In announcing the committees for the 1953-54 school term, the names of the high school lunch room committee were left out by mistake by the printers.

Asa Crawford, president of the parent-teacher association, supplied the names of those who were appointed to serve on the committee at the high school lunch room, as follows:

Mrs. Chas. Manning, chairman; Mrs. Raymond Gurkin, Mrs. Herbert Whitley, Mrs. Ralph Holliday, Mrs. W. R. Glover, Mrs. J. S. Rhodes, Jr., Mrs. Arthur Corey Mrs. Robert E. Manning, Mrs. J. R. Griffin, Mrs. Arthur Revels and Mrs. Albert Gurkin.

Martin County Farm Bureau Day Today

Drive Started To Sign Up Members For The New Year

Seventy-five Canvassers Are At Work In Every One Of Ten Districts

Farm Bureau day is being observed throughout Martin County today with seventy-five canvassers carrying the membership appeal to every nook and corner. Final plans for the observance and membership drive were advanced at a kick-off meeting held in the courthouse last Friday evening when President Chas. L. Daniel reviewed the organizational set-up and heard encouraging reports from the township chairman.

Mrs. Carl Griffin, chairman for Jamesville, stated that seven canvassers had pledged to carry the Farm Bureau membership appeal to every section in that township. President Daniel, heading the drive in Williams Township, said that six canvassers had been assigned routes, and that the work was already under way with good results. Chairman Griffin said four canvassers had agreed to canvass Griffins Township. Eight canvassers are handling the drive in Bear Grass, Chairman

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Tobacco Prices Breaking Records

Few Register For Bond Election In County October 3

Books Open For Last Day In This County, Saturday, September 19

Less than a dozen persons have registered so far in this county for the State-wide bond election to be held on Saturday, October 3, according to information released by Elections Board Chairman C. D. Carstarphen. The books have been open to receive new electors since Saturday before last, but very little interest has been shown in the registration.

It is true that those whose names are already on the books do not have to register again to participate in the October 3 election, but it is believed that there are several hundred persons who are eligible to register and who have not placed their names on the books.

The registration books close on Saturday of this week, and the following Saturday—September 26—will be designated as challenge day.

Plans for holding the special \$72 million bond election have been completed by the officials, and there have been few changes in the registrars and poll holders, Chairman Carstarphen said.

Those whose names do not appear on the books and who wish to participate in the October 3 election should see their respective registrar before 6:00 o'clock on Saturday of this week.

The precinct registrars are: Jamesville, F. C. Stallins; Williams, Grady Godard; Griffins, S. Oscar Peel; Bear Grass, A. B. Tyers, Jr.; Williamston No. 1, Wendell Peele; Williamston No. 2, S.

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Delayed Few Days



Freed a short time ago after spending nearly three years in a communist prison camp, Sgt. Martel Hardy is scheduled to land in San Francisco tomorrow. He was to have reached the west coast Sunday, but his ship, the U. S. S. General Black was delayed. The above picture was taken by the American Red Cross at Inchon, Korea, the 30th of last month and flown to this country. Sgt. Hardy, a veteran of two wars, is the son of Mrs. Nellie Hardy of RFD 3, Williamston.

\$40,000 Bad Check Trail Ended Here

Jas. Rowlen Tells A Fantastic Story Following Arrest

Shoots Man Over Fifty-Cent Debt

Companion Held For Investigation; Third Member Of Trio Escapes

A self-admitted \$40,000 bad check trail, dating back to 1942, came to an end here last Thursday night when James Rowlen, alias Robert Louis La France, was arrested by Officers Tom Chesson and Verble Jones. A companion, James Thomas Harris, 23, was taken into custody along with Rowlen for investigation, but a third member of the unholy trio, John "Shorty" Morgan, driver of the car, escaped.

The car, a 1951 Studebaker stolen

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Angered because James Godard would not pay him fifty cents he had won in a matching game, Lee Rollins, colored, went into his house, got a shot gun and came out firing on Godard at fairly close range. The victim was peppered with bird shot in the feet, legs and back. Godard's wounds were not serious, and he was released following brief hospital treatment.

Rollins, Godard and one or two other colored men were engaging in the gambling game at the Rollins home on the Purvis farm in the Spring Green community last Saturday afternoon when the 50-cent argument started.

After the attack, friends picked Godard up and removed him to the hospital. Rollins packed his suit case and took French leave.

Tobacco Sales Pass Six Million Pounds

ROUND-UP

Local and county officers had another busy week-end, rounding up and temporarily detaining fourteen persons. Two others were wanted but did not fall into the hands of the law.

Six were booked for public drunkenness, three for being drunk and disorderly, two for investigation, and one each for carrying a concealed weapon, assault and larceny of a motor vehicle.

Nine of the fourteen were white and the ages of the group ranged from 16 to 51 years.

United Forces In State Endorsing Proposed Program

Lists Eleven Reasons Why Bond Issues Should Be Voted October 3

Raleigh—State leaders of the United Forces for Education, strong statement urging all North Carolinians to support the bond issues for school and mental hospital construction at the polls Oct. 3.

Pointing out that a statewide bond issue to aid counties in needed school construction has been a major objective of the United Forces since Jan. 7, 1952, the group expressed its conviction that without state aid at this time North Carolina's critical school building and health needs cannot be met.

The UFE statement follows:

1. An opportunity for the people to vote on a bond issue to assist with our school building program, the money to be distributed according to need and ability to provide, was Point Five of the United Forces for Education basic legislative program for 1953. This program was announced on January 7, 1952, and the UFE has promoted it since that date.

2. We, therefore, concur in the sound judgment of the state administration and of those members of the 1953 General Assembly who voted to submit the bond issues and who are now urging their acceptance by the people who elected them.

3. The passage of these bond issues will provide funds which we consider an investment in the development and conservation of North Carolina's greatest asset, its human resources.

4. Based on information supplied by superintendents of the county and city administrative units to the State Department of Public Instruction for use of the

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One Injured In Auto Accident

Native Of County Dies In Virginia

One person was painfully injured and two others went through a wild ride without injury on Highway 64, about four miles east of Williamston, Monday afternoon. Damage to the 1949 DeSoto belonging to Joseph Price of RFD 3, Williamston, was estimated at \$500 by members of the highway patrol following their investigation.

Ledge Williams, colored of Williamston, suffered a severe arm injury, possibly a fracture in addition to bad cuts. She was given hospital treatment.

Leola Williams, 29 of Williamston, was learning to drive Price's car. She ran off the right side of the highway, and then back across the road. The car went wild, tearing down a crepe myrtle tree in Arthur Green's yard, then glancing the front porch and tearing away a post. The car swerved at that point, struck another tree and came to a stop in a soy bean field, investigating officers said.

Highest Sale Of The Season Made By Local Market

Second Largest Sale Of The Year Averaged \$62.19 Here Yesterday

A new price record for the season and the highest since October 16, 1951, was chalked up on the Williamston Tobacco Market yesterday when 406,550 pounds of the leaf were sold for \$252,869.18, an average of \$62.19 per hundred pounds.

Last Friday the market set poundage and price records for the season, government reports placing the poundage at 408,896 pounds and the money at \$244,304, or an average of \$59.75. With prices showing added strength and with better tobacco appearing on the floors, the market went right on to set a new price record for the year yesterday.

Yesterday was about the first time in the history that the market paid out more than a quarter million dollars for tobacco in a single day.

Up until this morning the market here had sold 5,875,394 pounds for \$3,300,097.00, an average for the season to date of \$56.17. The sales today will not quite up to capacity, will carry the total well over the six million mark.

During the corresponding seventeen selling days last season, the market sold 4,214,166 pounds for \$2,048,691 an average of \$48.61.

A review of sales and prices in the entire Bright Belt follows as furnished by the Agriculture Departments:

Volume of sales was heavy on Eastern North Carolina flue-cured tobacco markets this week. Average prices by grades were generally steady to a little lower, according to the Federal-State Market News Service. Quality of offerings showed a slight improvement over last week.

Sales for the four-day period ending September 11 totaled 51,116,889 pounds and averaged \$55.54 per hundred. This was the highest weekly average of the season, topping last week's by 94 cents. Season sales were brought to 174,079,036 pounds for an average of \$54.50. For the comparable period last year 129,842,158 pounds had averaged \$49.86.

A large number of grade averages continued steady with fluctuations of the week before. Fluctuations were small—mostly \$1.00 to \$2.00 per hundred pounds. Most losses than gains took place, with declines being centered on lower quality grades.

A small decrease occurred in the percentage of nondescript marketings, while a slight increase was shown in smoking leaf.

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Ask School Patrons To Reserve Subscriptions

The annual magazine sale, conducted by the elementary students of grades 5-8, will be held during the two weeks beginning Sept. 29. Parents and friends of these children are asked to save their renewals and original subscriptions for the children.

Martin County Leads The List

According to fairly complete returns, Martin County led the list in supporting the recent peanut assessment referendum. The farmers in this county cast more than sixteen percent of the vote recorded in favor of the assessment of one cent per hundred pounds.

Martin County 1,309 votes in favor of the assessment and only four against it. Bertie, one of the largest peanut producing counties in the State, voted 783 and 5 against. Halifax voted 865 for and 21 against. Northampton, where peanut is king, supported the plan with only 557 votes and led the opposition with 62 votes.

The 44 counties participating in the August 29 referendum voted 8,035 for and 174 against the program.

Hearing Held In Assault Cases

The principals in an assault case were placed under \$100 bond each and a third defendant was fined \$5, plus costs, in Justice J. R. Mobley's court here last evening.

The cases had their origin the early part of last week when Homer Holliday of Plymouth visited his sister's store in Williams Township and spilled a bottle of beer on a pool table. Holliday maintained at the hearing that he struck no one, but probable cause of guilt was found and he goes into the county court October 5 charged with assaulting a male and female with a cue stick. Harry Reed is booked for trial the same day for allegedly assaulting his brother-in-law, Homer Holliday, with a deadly weapon. Reed maintains that Holliday assaulted his wife, struck him with a cue stick and pushed him against a crate of bottles, cracking three ribs.

Mrs. Dovie Cunningham of Plymouth was said to have returned to the Reed store the following night and tongue-lashed the Reeds as anti-climax to the assaults. She was fined \$5, plus costs.

Holliday was shot in the chest but his wound proved not to be serious.