



CHRISTINE WILLIAMS - Duplin County Register of Deeds, explains the contents of a book that records slave marriages. It is the original copy from 1866. Thelma Kenan listens and watches for names of her ancestors.

Speeding Auto Causes Accident In Warsaw

By Emily Killete

A speeding car occupied by three boys was being pursued by the Warsaw Police Department when it crashed into another car on College Street last Wednesday about 10 p.m.

According to police reports, Stephen Craig Blanton of Kenansville, 18, was driving a 1979 Toyota, with passengers Dennis Wilkins, 16, of Warsaw, and David Warrington, 18, of Kenansville. Blanton was speeding when the Warsaw

Police Officer Tommy Combs attempted to stop the car. Blanton continued to speed down College Street, running a stoplight and then hitting a 1978 Dodge at the intersection with Frisco.

Joseph Pendleton (J.P.) Johnson of Wards Bridge Road, Warsaw, was driving the Dodge, and his wife, Margie, was the only passenger at the time of the accident.

All five persons involved in the accident were transported to Duplin General Hospital in Kenansville where Dennis Wilkins

and David Warrington were sent to New Hanover Memorial Hospital in Wilmington. All persons, with the exception of David Warrington, have been released from the hospitals. Warrington is listed in critical condition.

Charges issued concerning the accident are: Blanton, with driving under the influence of alcohol, speeding over 15 miles per hour above posted speed trying to elude arrest, failing to stop at a stop sign, and failure to stop for a blue light and siren. No charges were issued against Johnson.

ABC Board Appointed In Kenansville

By Emily Killete

The Kenansville Board of Commissioners have appointed a new ABC Board after the resignation of the entire board about three weeks ago.

Last week, the Board of Commissioners appointed Rich Boyd, John Hall and Benny Prince to the new ABC Board. John Hall was named chairman.

The resignation of Elmore Bell, chairman; Phil Kretsch and Harold Jones resulted from a disagreement between the Board and the Kenansville commissioners, said Town Administrator Woody Brinson. According to Brinson, the Kenansville ABC store ranks in the bottom nine of the state listed by profit. Kenansville's ABC store is currently returning a profit of 4%. Revenues from ABC stores are divided with 55% of the profit staying in the town,

and 45% going to the county, Brinson said.

Brinson said the Kenansville commissioners requested the former ABC board to make a study of sales per hour, and personnel at the ABC store last year, but the Board failed to report on such a study. Commissioners feel there are not enough sales to justify 12-hour workdays, and if the store hours are cut, there will be less personnel needed, Brinson said. At the present time, there are three people employed full-time by the Kenansville ABC store.

According to Brinson, ABC store sales have stayed about the same as they were in 1975, but inflation has reduced the amount of profit Kenansville receives. Brinson said the town receives about \$60,000 after state taxes and the county receives their share of the

revenue. From the \$60,000, Kenansville pays \$32,000 in salaries, \$16,000 in other debts, and there is \$12,000 left as a profit. The profit is applied toward town projects in the place of tax money, and Brinson says this keeps the tax rate down. However, the commissioners feel that unless the Kenansville ABC store can begin to return a larger profit, taxes will have to be increased.

"We are expecting a 7-8% tax increase next year unless the ABC store profit picks up," Brinson said.

Cutting store hours and reducing the staff by one person would result in an increase of about \$10,000 a year, Brinson explained.

The Kenansville commissioners request to cut hours and personnel has also been recommended by Bill Hester of the State Administration of ABC Stores.

Former Duplinite Writing On Slave Marriages In Duplin

By Christine W. Williams

Dr. Oscar Williams, Jr., a professor in the history department of Virginia State University, Petersburg, Va., is engaged in research preparatory to writing on "Slave Marriages in Duplin County."

In preparing for his study, he has visited the Duplin County Registry and obtained a copy of a book restored by the Register of Deeds and now on file as a part of the permanent records which contains a record of 690 slave marriages which took place prior to the Act Concerning Negroes and Persons of Color or Mixed Blood, which was ratified March 10, 1866 by the N.C. General Assembly. Prior to the ratification, white persons preparing for marriage purchased a marriage bond from the office of the county

Clerk of Court, but persons of color could not purchase marriage bonds or enter into legal marriages, but many of them entered into "slave marriages."

The book, containing 690 slave marriages, shows that from May 1866 through December 1867, 690 couples appeared before either a justice of the peace or the clerk of court, paid the required fee of 25 cents and made sworn statements that each party was a "colored freedman" or "colored freedwoman" and they acknowledged that they had been living together as man and wife since the date of the commencement of such living together as man and wife and they did acknowledge under oath that they were man and wife in accordance with the act of the general assembly regarding slave marriages which was enacted March 10, 1866. The book containing these marriages lists three marriages in which the affiants certified that they had been living in a slave marriage for a period of 60 years, each commencing in 1806. The three couples who had been man and wife for 60 years in slave marriages were: Arthur and Julia

Pearsall, who made their affidavit on August 11, 1866; Andrew and Judith Herring, who made their affidavit on August 14, 1866; and Simon and Sooky Simmons, who made their affidavit on August 28, 1866.

Another couple showed that they had been living in a slave marriage 56 years. The length of these 690 slave marriages recorded between May 1866 and December 1867 showed periods of slave marriages ranging from 7 months to 60 years.

The declarations made by these couples before a justice of the peace or the clerk of court constituted a valid marriage under the law. The book containing these early marriages had disintegrated, but it was completely restored recently by the register of deeds and is used by many black persons searching family history.

After the State Act of March 10, 1866, persons of color could purchase marriage bonds from the county clerk of court and have a legal marriage ceremony performed until 1868, when the register of deeds took over the duty of issuing marriage licenses with the continuance of no restrictions. The Duplin County marriage records since 1868 are complete. Only a portion of the marriage bonds issued by the Duplin County Clerk of Court prior to 1868 were preserved, and the preserved ones were transferred to the Department of Archives and History in 1918. The Duplin County Register of Deeds obtained a copy from the State Archives and History of the index to the Duplin County marriage bonds issued by the clerks of court prior to 1868, and it is

interesting to note that between the dates of June 2, 1866 and March 12, 1868, the index to the marriage bonds obtained from the State Archives lists 27 preserved marriage bonds issued to persons of color.

Dr. Williams, Jr., in searching his own family history, found in the Duplin County book of slave marriages, the marriage of his great-great-grandparents, Peter and Dilsey Williams, who made the official declaration of their marriage on September 1, 1866, showing that they had been married since 1816, a period of 50 years. Dr. Williams' father, Oscar Williams, died at Faison in 1965. He has an aunt, Annie Harrell, who now resides at Route 3, Faison, and a cousin, Anne Harrell Green, daughter of Annie Harrell, who resides in the area.

He is also doing research into the status of the negroes who fought in the Revolutionary War.

Dr. Williams plans to

Joseph Surratt Dies

WARSAW - Joseph C. Surratt, 78, retired businessman, died Saturday. Graveside services were held Sunday at Devotional Gardens conducted by Rev. John Aycock.

He was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Warsaw United Methodist Church and a former Lions Club member.

Survivors: widow, Mrs. Inez Bradley Surratt; son, Joseph C. Surratt, Jr., of Goldsboro; sister, Mrs. E.W. Stokes of Charlotte; brother, W.L. Surratt of Greensboro; three grandchildren, Pamela Surratt of Washington, D.C.; Joseph C. Surratt, III, of Williamston, and Gregory Surratt of Chapel Hill.

In lieu of flowers, the family requested donations be made to the Warsaw United Methodist Church building fund or to Duplin County Heart Association.

Youth Struck By Electrical Line And Killed

A hunting mishap on the first day of the bird season caused the death of Almond Lathon Wiggins, III, 16, of Route 6, Mount Olive, sheriff reports indicate.

Wiggins was accompanied by friends on a hunting trip on Rural Road 1304 near Bear Creek when he was struck by an electrical line and killed. According to Duplin County Sheriff reports, Wiggins was reaching inside a pickup truck when one of the hunting party shot

a resistor holding an electrical line. Reports indicate the line fell from the pole striking the pickup truck and then Wiggins above the right eye, killing him instantly. The shock also burned and flattened the truck tires. It was parked on the shoulder of the road.

The Sheriff's Department is still investigating, and charges may be filed upon completion of the investigation. Wiggins' body was taken to Tyndall Funeral Home in Mount Olive.

Drug Charges Dismissed

At the hearing for Garland Boyd Conrad, 63, and Nell Babb Conrad, 60, of Route 1, Pink Hill, charges for growing and manufacturing marijuana and to sell and deliver a controlled substance were dropped August 22nd.

According to the Conrads'

attorney, charges were dropped because of illegal evidence. The search warrant used by the Duplin County Sheriff's Department was not valid, so all the evidence taken was not admissible at the hearing. Conrads' attorney, Vance Gavin, said.



HELLO, JERRY LEWIS TELETHON - The Warsaw Jaycees participated in the Jerry Lewis Telethon supporting muscular dystrophy research. The Jaycees headquartered their operation at the Branch Bank & Trust

in Warsaw beginning last Sunday at 10 p.m. and ending Monday at 6:30 p.m. Members of the Jaycees pictured are William Costin, Jr., Tim Scanlan, and J. Michael Moore. They collected \$662 from the Warsaw area.

Extended Day School Serves Drop-Outs

Johnnie W. Boyette, Director

The Duplin County Extended Day School has been in operation for the past four years. During these years we have seen much growth. For instance, the average daily membership for the past four years has been as follows: 1976 - 71; 1977 - 91; 1978 - 107; and 1979 - 139. This represents an average increase of 23 students yearly.

Students range from 16 to 19 years of age, and there are a few students younger than

16 and a few older than 19. The 16-19-year-olds are our target population. According to N.C. State Law, a student is generally compelled to attend school until he/she is 16. Therefore our school attendance is not compulsory but on a voluntary basis. For this reason, we do have a high drop-out rate. In 1977-78 school year, our enrollment was 255 with 160 drop-outs at a rate of 62.7%. The school year 1978-79 our local figures show our drop-out rate to be slightly above 50%. This rate is slightly higher than some of the other

Extended Day Schools in the state, and we are setting goals to bring this drop-out rate to 25-30% this 1979-80 school year. Of the 232 drop-outs in the county in 1977-78, we are striving to enroll at least 76, or 33% of these students along with 76 of the 1978-79 drop-outs.

To accomplish our goals, we are striving to improve our present curriculum and increase our course offerings. There is a master fall schedule for the course offerings at the end of this article. Also, the class size will be limited from 10-12

students actively participating in each class. The individual touch, one-on-one teaching relationships, is a must for the students who have been long ago turned off to "education" or "schools."

Other additions of EDS in the past four years have been a full time guidance counselor, additional work-study monies to put students on the job, additional learning lab programs to work with students, especially with reading problems or any other school-related problem.