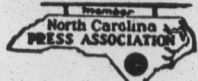


PERSON COUNTY TIMES



A PAPER FOR ALL THE PEOPLE

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THOMAS J. SHAW, JR., City Editor.

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News from our correspondents should reach this office not later than Tuesday to insure publication for Thursday edition and Thursday P. M. for Sunday edition.

SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 1943

How Well Protected?.....

The fire which last week destroyed Archibald Murphy high school in Caswell County raises anew the question of adequate fire protection for county public school buildings, and should cause some serious thinking here in Person. Few county school buildings, to our knowledge, have anything like adequate protection.

Roxboro Fire Chief Henry E. O'Briant says there is only one protected school in Person. This, of course, leaves out of account those schools in the Roxboro district which can depend upon service from Roxboro and Ca-Vel fire departments, and it should be said that all schools have, or should have, fire extinguishers. Main problem with fire fighting in rural schools is lack of water.

Chief O'Briant suggests that schools could wisely provide water by catching rainfall off of roofs and running it into cisterns from which it could be pumped, or, if need be, carried by bucket brigades. We will let O'Briant make his own elaboration of what schools can do by way of protection, although we do think that preventative by way of keeping rubbish cleaned up have an equal importance, and that is imperative that school officials do their best to see to it that no persons handle matches carelessly or leave stoves or electrical equipment in a hazardous condition.

Fires in public buildings such as schools are always tragic and wasteful, but doubly so now, when it is difficult to secure replacement materials, let alone the labor to put said materials together. We sympathize most deeply with Caswell's Superintendent McSwain, but sympathy cannot restore his burned building.

As Near Perfection.....

A reporter for the Raleigh News and Observer, describing success there of Thursday night's blackout said that Raleigh folks "saw the stars and the moon, that was all". His words can be quoted with equal truth in approximating the completeness of the blackout in Roxboro and Person County.

People here were no longer disturbed by the three alarm signals. They blacked out — and stayed out until street lights and telephone messages gave the quiet all clear. This does not mean that such perfection will obviate the necessity of having additional practice blackouts, but it does mean that citizens here are catching on to the idea of perfection.

Landon C. Bradsher, Civilian Defense director, and other officials here were pleased. They might well be. There was no hurry, no confusion. Just the blackness.

Without Stirring Dust.....

Announcement that the now unused CCC buildings are soon to be torn down does bring to a head the question of what Roxboro wants to do with the one building that is being offered by the War Department as a civic center and service club.

The story has it that this one particular building is to be left standing until the title-holding committee makes up its collective mind about what should be done. It may be that the said building is in a bad state of repair and it may be true that various groups represented on the title committee are doing some hemming and hawing over space-division of the spoils. It can even be true that some groups do not want the building as a gift and intend to have nothing to do with whatever promotion of goodfellowship for service men could be generated here, but it does remain clear that a decision should be reached.

Our understanding is that a desirable, downtown lot has been offered by a cooperative citizen as a location,

and that if conditions are at all feasible the Boy Scouts may be interested in seeing that the building gets moved, provided they can have some space in it and the promise of the use of the entire structure after the war. We do agree that thorough investigation of costs of moving, together with a report on the condition of the building, should be made, and that some planned program for its operation should be arrived at.

The main thing now is that the committee should make up its mind. Roxboro needs such a building and it is to be hoped that the committee will at long last come to that attitude. There has been time enough and courtesy, at least, demands that some action be taken.

The Power And The Glory.....

Most heart-rending story of the week concerns the death of a young Longhurst mother, the widow of a soldier, who gave her life while giving life to his twin sons. The boys live and so long as they do they will keep alive the memories of their parents, two young people who were caught up in the changes of war, but, who, nevertheless, met fate with respective and proper forms of valor.

Quite as sad, with a difference, was the Friday morning act of suicide by which a Person soldier at home on leave ended it all. He had his reasons and they are not to be questioned now, but the distinction between his tragedy and that of the young mother of twins is obvious, although those most hurt in spirit are the members of their families, the ones who must go on with living.

The war, like a knife in the night hits hard. It hits in unexpected places. It strikes home in unexplainable, and now and then lifts the clouds so that those of us who are left can feel the power and the glory and the frailty of the human spirit. All three have been shown here during the week and we doubt not, will be shown again.

WITH OTHER EDITORS

In Right Direction.....

Greensboro Daily News

Planting of 8,000 pine trees on the farms of Elmer and Campbell Stewart, of High Plains, brings the total of such plantings for this year in Person county to 15,000.

We wish we had before us the record for the entire state. Not that we would expect to find that every

Open Forum

Roxboro, N. C.
March 19, 1943

Mr. Willie R. Wilkerson, Chm.
Person County Board of Education,
Route 1,
Roxboro, North Carolina

Dear Sir:
The recent disaster of the loss of the Archibald Murphy high school in Caswell County impresses more deeply on us the necessity of making every safeguard possible to guard against a similar disaster to our educational buildings in Person County.

Lack of a water supply can usually be attributed to the extent of fire loss suffered by such buildings located in the rural section of a community.

I would like to suggest that to afford greater protection to such buildings a cistern or pit be constructed near the schools in which water may be stored for such an emergency. Such a cistern should be of the following dimensions or approximately so: 20 x 20 ft. with a depth of about 5 feet. Such a reservoir would hold about 15,000 gallons of water, and it would furnish an excellent emergency supply.

Chief Bennett of the Durham Fire Department has made some suggestions to the Durham Board of Education with reference to their rural educational buildings, and the source of supply of water could be obtained by piping the surface water from the roof through the drain pipes directly into this cistern. With such a reservoir the fire fighting apparatus from Roxboro,

Ca-Vel or in other near by towns would be able to pump

county in North Carolina had done as well as Person; but is there any sound reason why most of the 100 counties should not have? There is certainly enough of land going to waste to care for many times that number of pine trees and most of it can be put to no better use.

Encouraging as are reports of replantings, however, much remains to be done in the way of systematic promotion. It may be that the time has come to tell operators of sawmills that they must accept responsibility for their swaths of destruction. It is certainly in order for the department of conservation and development to devote some of its best thought and pains to advertising the need for reforestation and to show how it may be done profitably.

With the addition of a bureau of mines this newest of state departments begins to take on an importance which is difficult for those who have been chiefly concerned with hunting and fishing licenses to realize. Too, it has sometimes seemed to us that over-emphasis has been placed on securing outside capital to exploit our natural resources and too little insistence that home folks conserve them.

We hasten to concede that the board which frames the policies of the department has been composed of patriotic citizens with their hearts in their work; nevertheless there is need for more planning and greater drive.

But it looks as we might be started somewhere. Anyhow we have more hope for Person's 15,000 pines than for what came out of the last \$15,000 expended advertising for tourists. And we don't disbelieve in that form of endeavor either.

water and perhaps save a part of the endangered building and materially reduce any fire loss.

I would also like to suggest that no easily and inflammable materials like paper or other materials be stored in or under any rural school building.

If you are interested in such a proposition I will be glad to meet with your board and discuss it at any time, and I believe that such a safe guard would not only curtail any great fire loss, but would relieve your office of criticism in case of fire.

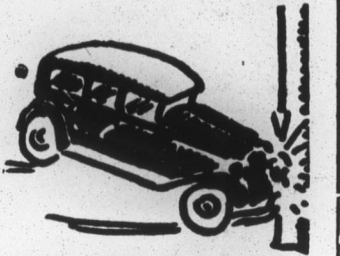
The details of such a plan are too lengthy to incorporate in a letter, but I assure you my department will be happy to cooperate in any way.

Yours truly,
H. E. O'Briant, Chief
Roxboro Fire Department

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