# Willie Bell Given Death Sentence

The Clinton Chronicle

# For Murder of Mrs. Bridges Here in August of 1963 Willie James Bell heard the trial that the four members of

sentence of death imposed on defense counsel did a good job him Saturday - six days short under the circumstances, fightof 20 months after he killed ing hard all the way. It was ap-Mrs. Beaufort Campbell Bridges parent that the other three defense lawyers let Perry bear the in a Clinton law office.

Bell, slightly built, 31-year-old brunt of the trial and remarks of Greenville Negro, was found many court attendants during guilty of murder by a Green- the week agreed that he had wood County jury in a trial that made an excellent impression.

the morning.

Clinton, S. C., Thursday, April 22, 1965

started Wednesday afternoon, All four defense attorneys preafter drawing of a jury began in sented final arguments to the jury. Nicholson cited what he The case went to the jury at called Bell's mental disability,

11:50 a. m. following a half-hour aside from the legal test of sancharge by Judge Clarence Sin- ity, as a mitigating circumgletary of Charleston, who told stance warranting mercy.

the jurors they could return one White told the jury that "you of four verdicts: not guilty, not are the only ones who can exguilty by reason of insanity, tend mercy." He also argued on guilty, and guilty with recom- the purely circumstantial namendation of mercy. The judge ture of the state's evidence declined on motion of defense against Bell.

counsel to add another possible verdict - guilty of voluntary "plea for the life of this man." manslaughter.

The jurors deliberated until more than a year and a half in about 1:00 p. m., when they went preparation for trial and was to lunch in a body, accompanied based then entirely on circumby court attendants. The group stantial evidence. He said there returned about 2:00 o'clock for were no fingerprints, no murder further deliberation and reap- weapons. He suggested that peared in the court room with "someone else could have comthe verdict at 2:33 p. m.

Clerk of Court T. R. Pinson Perry said to the jury, "Ours read the one word verdict, is not a vengeful society: I ask guilty, which under South Caro- you not to be vengeful in this death penalty.

a human being . . . Don't stamp

fendant to the bench and asked show him mercy." him if he had anything to say. Babb also suggested that the

Perry entered to the jury a He reminded that the case was

mitted this horrible crime."

lina law, requires a mandatory case . . . He (the defendant) is Judge Singletary called the de- his life out . . . I beg of you,

Bell began a three or four defendant's mental condition minute period of incoherent was an issue. "I can't believe a mumbling, largely unintelligible sane man would do this . . . it even to court officials nearby. nauseates me to stand here and The discourse included a series talk about it." He told th of unrelated religious phrases, that people of "unsound mind" delivered in a mumbling, ramb- frequently confess to crimes they did not commit for various ling manner. The judge listened patiently reasons. "Are you convinced of and then pronounced the sen- his (Bell's) mentality?" Babb tence - death by electrocution asked the jury. between 5 a. m. and 5 p. m. Prosecuting attorney for the state was Solicitor William T. Aug. 6, 1965. Bell received the sentence with Jones, of Greenwood, who skillno show of emotion (except dur- fully marshalled his witnesses Employed By Belk's ing the early part of the first day and presented testimony beginwhen he appeared nervous and ning with finding the body of Belk's Dept. Store as office and trembling) than he had exhibited Mrs. Bridges by her husband in credit manager, it is announced during trial that lasted the better his Clinton law office, which she part of four days-including two staffed, on the night of Aug. 23, Fulmer is a graduate of New- night sessions Thursday and Fris 1963, horribly beaten and mutilated, and placing the defendant Immediately following the within a few feet of the Utopia An officer in the Laurens unit trial, Bell was returned to the Building on Musgrove Street, of the National Guard, he is a state penitentiary in Columbia where the law office was located graduate of the Palmetto Mili- by law enforcement officials. on the second floor, on the day Trial evidence had included of the crime. testimony about Bell's odd talk Justin A. Bridges, Laurens atat times and his defense attortorney and former legislator, neys had entered a plea of not was the first witness. He told guilty by reason of insanity. how the Clinton branch office Fulmer is married to the for-Bell had four attorneys, all had been open only about three court-appointed and serving months, staffed by the 45-yearwithout pay, who told the court old wife on the sceond floor of Bell would not cooperate. The the Utopia Building where only attorneys were W. H. Nicholson a sign painter had other quar-Jr., of Greenwood, Thomas ters and was rarely there. Babb of Laurens, Cecil White of On the fatal day - Aug. 23, Clinton and Mathew Perry, Neg. 1963 — he had lunch in Clinton ro attorney of Columbia. with Mrs. Bridges, he said. Only The Kiwanis Club will have its Attorney Perry, who had the that morning they had seen their ing tonight at Hotel Mary Mus- verdict, immediately moved for daughter off for South America annual "farmers night" meet- jury polled individually as to the grove. The session will begin at a new trial and cited 17 grounds, daughter, Mrs. Ann Bridges all of them based on objections Martin, was at his side through-Each member is expected to during the trial, mostly to adinvite a farmer as his guest for mission of certain evidence, and out the trial. Bridges said he left Clinton all overruled by Judge Singleabout 12:45 p. m. and returned Tom Morgan, associate direc- tary. The judge also denied the to Laurens, where he saw a waittor of Extension Work at Clem- motion for a new trial. ing client about 2 p. m. He said son University, will be the prin- Trial of the case had been it was about then that Mrs. moved to Greenwood by motion Bridges called (telephone rec-A style show will be present- of defense attorneys. ords put the call at 2:01 p. m.) ed under the direction of Miss The defense offered no testi-Myrtice Taylor and Mrs. Marie mony and Bell did not take the from the Clinton office to say to talk with him about an insuragents for Laurens County, fea- It was the concensus of many ance claim. Bridges said he adturing cotton goods. who attended all sessions of the vised his wife to have the client see him at the Laurens office, where he promised to wait. When no one had come by 2:30 p. m., he said, he got a haircut, picked up his car where it was being serviced. returned to the office and stayed until 5:40 p. m. During the interval, he said, he talked with two others in the office, then made a trip to Greenwood to see a nephew, Marvin Watson, on business. He said he ate hamburgers there at a, drive-in restaurant and was back in Laurens about 9 p. m. to find that his wife was not at home.

#### **Moose Lodge Names Officers**

Clinton Lodge No. 739, Loyal Order of Moose, at a recent meeting elected officers for the 1965-66 year. Shown above, they are (left to right), front row-Gene Bostic, governor; J. E. Braswell, secretary: Willie Kinard, treasurer; Tommie Moore, prelate; back row-Fletcher Davis, Thomas Rowe, Jack Wehunt, trusttes: Joseph Allman, past governor, Lonnie Tnisley, sergeant at arms .- Photo by Dan Yarborough.

# **Religious Census Slated** For Sunday Afternoon

dents.

Fourteen churches are coopeences of the townspeople. It is the first religious census to be held in Clinton since 1958.

Representatives of each of the participating churches will

# **Miss Clinton To Be Named May 8**

More than 150 persons will the auditorium of the Broad week with third reading in the move over Clinton this Sunday Street Methodist Church. They State House of Representatives. in a comprehensive religious will receive final instructions The bill, introduced by Sen. census designed to identify the at that time and obtain enve- W. C. (Bill) Dobbins on March census designed to identify the lopes with census cards to be 24, was reported out with a fa-denominations of local resi- filled out about the individuals vorable recommendation Tuescontacted.

By 2:30 p. m. the organization gation. hour period, to be concluded by pay the bond premiums. 4:30 p. m.

The following week may be whose terms expire this year, gather at 1:30 p. m., Sunday in used as a follow-up period to would have 30 days from the rian College by Alumnus Knox manager of the W. W. Mack include those persons who were effective date of the act to post missed on Sunday. The project the bond.

with final reports on Sunday, May 2. The Rev. John Rivers and The Miss Clinton Pageant will Rembert Truluck serve as co-

## **County Magistrates Must Be Bonded**

A measure requiring that Laurens County magistrates be bonded won final approval last

day by the Laurens House Dele-

rating in the effort to pinpoint will be ready to move out in Tme measure requires magisthe church affiliations or prefer- two-man teams. Each team is trates to file \$1,000 bond with expected to have approximately the clerk of court for the faith-20 cards. The schedule calls for ful performance and discharge extending the work over a two- of duties." The county would

will be closed out completely

aturday night, May 8, chairmen of the 1965 religious

Bell Leaves Court Room in Custody of Officers on Way Back to Penitentiary **Gross Is New** \$100,000 Deferred **Gift Designated** 

a set a raise of the second life of the a

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in Clinton.

Magistrates, except those A deferred gift of \$100,000 has He came to this city from been designated for Presbyte- Piedmont, Ala., where he was Wyatt of Rome Ga., through Store.

imaginative use of his insurance Mr. and Mrs. Gross and chilprogram, President Marc C. dren, Patrciia and Daphne, are Weersing announced today. making their home at 105 5th He said Wyatt called upon his Avenue. experience as an outstanding in-

commerce Group

Chalenging goals were rec.

year at the Clinton Chamber

of Commerce coffee-member-

President Don G. Creighton

the Chamber for their approval

**To Deliver Papers** 

At Science Meet

Two Presbyterian College pro-

Hears Year's Goals

Harper's Manager

Lawrence Gross has arrived and assumed his duties as manager of Harper's 5 and 10c Store

pageant.

Bill Dobbins, Jr., and Rudy Hamrick, co-chairmen of the entries committee, state that several contestants have been entered and names of all contestants will be announced next week. In addiiton to being Clinton's official entrant in the Miss South Carolina pageant, where she will compete for a \$1,000 scholarship, the winner of the local pageant will receive a \$50 scholarship and a handsome trophy. The first two runners-up will also receive trophies.

Larry Gar, announcer for radio station WLGB, Laurens, will emcee the pageant.

### **Converse Students To Present Play** Monday at College

"The Royal Gambit," a play dealing with King Henry VIII and the women in his life, will be presented at Presbyterian College next Monday night by the Players.

It is scheduled for 8 p. m. in Belk Auditorium, and the public is invited to attend. There will be no admission charge.

Playwright Herman Gressieker presents a Henry who in the epitome of Renaissance man and then adroitly leads him to contemporary liberal thought. The play begins with the dissolution of Henry's marriage to Katrina on Sautrday from 8:30 to noon. for many years. of Aragon and proceeds through his alliances with Anne Beleya, Jane Seymore, Anna of Cleves, Kathryn Howard and Kate Pharr Henry remains the same throughout, but the women progress in their dress right up to modern times, showing their full knowledge of the lasting effects of Henry's thoughts through scenes in candlelight chambers and towers.

This historical drama is being toured by the Palmetto Players under the direction of James W. Parker, chairman of the Converse speech and drama department.

**Belk's Observes** Founder's Days

in Belk Auditorium on the Pres- census. They urge all persons to byterian College campus, ac. cooperate as much as possible cording to officials of the local and to make themselves avail-Jaycee Chapter, sponsors of the able in their homes during the 2:30-4:30 p. m. interval of the

# **Clinton Mills To Present Service** Awards on Friday

census this Sunday.

Men and women of Clinton Mills' Clinton and Lydia plants, who have within the past year completed five-year intervals of service, beginning with the tenth year, will be honored at the company's tenth annual service awards presentation dinner

Friday night. The dinner is to be held in the Thornwell dining hall at 7:00 p. m. At this year's affair 110 em-

ployees will receive awards recognizing 10, 15, and 20 years of continuous service with the company. J. B. Templeton, vice-presi- trate of Hunter Township at

dent, will be master of cere- Clinton Saturday, the 24th, havmonies. Entertainment by "The Uku- mission afer appointment by the

lodies" will precede the awards Governor. presentations by President Robert M. Vance.

group known as the Palmetto by Mrs. Eva B. Land at the or- four years, to 1969.

#### **Parents Invited To** Visit Children's Library

The Children's Library on the second floor of the Presbyterian tion in November. College - Community Library, is Oakley succeeds Magistrate the program. open Monday through Friday Sam McCrary, who has served from 2:30 to 5:00 o'clock, and

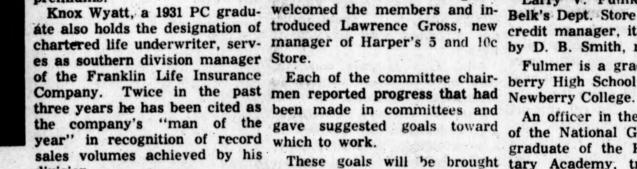
The library is a branch of the Oakley states that his office Laurens County Library. The li- will be in a new building rebrarian, Mrs. James S. Gray, cently erected to the rear of invites the parents to visit the Cener Service Station at the corlibrary, especially during Na- ner of East Carolina Avenue tional Library Week. and South Woodrow Street.

program to provide \$100,000 for PC upon the settlement of his estate after death.

surance executive in tailoring

For Presbyterian

Wyatt pointed out that his insurance policy-worked into his total estate planning programwill enable him to make the ommended in outlining the promos effective provisions to help gram of work for the coming Presbyterian College at some future date while realizing an immediate persenal advantage in ship meeting Tuesday morning income tax deductions on annual at the Hotel Mary Musgrove. premiums.



division. Wyatt recently completed a three year term on the PC board of trustees, and his son is cur- time. rently enrolled here. He and other family members provided Charles T. "Buddy" Oakley the Wyatt Chapel wing of PC's

#### **Oratorical Contest** At Bell St. Monday

fessors will deliver papers be-The junior class of Bell Street fore the annual meeting of the Oakley was nominated in the High School will present its an- South Carolina Academy of Sci-

Democratic primary last June, nual oratorical contest Monday ence this Saturday in Columbia. Converse College dramatics Dinner music will be provided and his term will extend for evening at 8 o'clock in the school Dr. K. Nolon Carter, chairman auditorium. of the PC chemistry depart-

In spite of the fact that Oakley Speakers are to be as follows: ment, is scheduled to present was nominated in a primary, Mae Frances Carwile, Darolene his findings on "Polyethylene the actual appointment is made Clark, Sarah Copeland, Vivian Gas Cells for Infrared Spectroby the Governor upon recom- Harley, Mary Jean Kinard, Bet- scopy." The paper deals with mendation of the County's Sena- tie Simpson, Georgia Suber, the use of polythylene bags as tor. The nominee for the post is Spencie Ann Kinard, Albertine containers for analyzing gases not entered in the General Elec- Williams, and Johnny Brown. by infrared spectroscopy. The public is invited to attend Dr. Alex B. Stump, biology

department chairman, will give a progress report on hih experimentation in raising unicellular animals. During the past year of research, he has

suceeded in isolating several amoeba-like animals and feels that he has virtually solved the problem of raising these animals, The PC scientist said: "Earlier workers in this field saw sexual reproduction in these animals, but I am convinced from my experiments that in

sexuality is present." In addition to the presentation of papers, both Dr. Carter and Dr. Stump will preside over sec-Mrs. Vernon Trammen an- tional meetings of their special-

> George Corley Continues III

George Corley, local policeman, who was injured recently by a falling building, continues

will allow more space and bet.

ter displays for merchandise.



### Larry V. Fulmer

Larry V. Fulmer has joined by D. B. Smith, manager.

berry High School and attended day.

These goals will be brought tary Academy, training school before he board of direcors f for National Guard officers.

He is a member of Colony and will be made public at that Lutheran Church, Newberry.

mer Nancy Dowd of Newberry and they have a son, Larry, Jr.

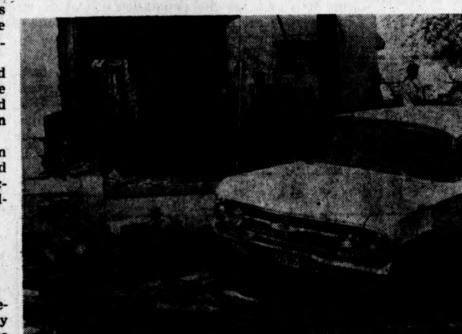
#### **Kiwanis Club To Entertain Farmers Tonight**

7 o'clock.

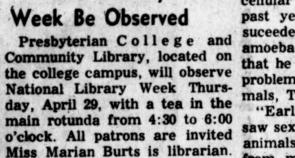
the meeting.

cipal speaker.

Haigler, home demonstration stand.



Bridges testified he was disturbed because he and his wife were planning to leave the following morning for a trip to a. N. C. "I knew something was wrong," he said. He called neighbors and others without success, then drove to Clinton where he immediately noticed lights still burning in the office there. "I rushed up the stairs," he said. "The door was open . . . saw her lying on her back . . She was in a bloody mess Her clothes were torn . . . knew she was dead for could possibly live in that on dition." He said he called for (Continued on page 4)



#### **Kindergarten** Pupils Being Enrolled Now

National Library

nounces the enrollment. of the ties during the conference. Calvary Baptist Church Kindergarten for the coming year. All children must be at least five years of age to enroll. If interested please call Mrs. Trammell at 833-1273.

orations, antiques and flowers.

has been rebuilt and a new front

added.

The interior of the building

**Oakley** To Assume will assume the post as Magis- new auditorium.

ing already received his com-

CHARLES T. OAKLEY

**Magistrate** Post

Belk's Store in Clinton is observing Founder's Days, accord. ing to their advertisement in today's paper.

The store, through D. B. Smith, manager, announces "nine big days of values, offering exciting storewide savings for everyone."

The local store joins with the undreds of other units in the well-known chain all over the Southeast in honoring their under, the late William Henry Belk, who started in a small way in Monroe, N. C., 77 years

Limbs Crash Into House Two large limbs, broken by strong winds last Thursday night, crashed onto the roof of this house at 108 Washington St., owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Bobby Quinn. Damage to the home was said to be considerable, and household furnishings were also damaged from the heavy rain which accompanied the storm. Mrs. Quinn, who was in the house at the time, was uninjured. Mr. Quinn was returning home from a neighborhood errand and saw the crash from across the street.—Photo by Paul Quinton.

The Oaklane Shop ill in Self Memorial Hospital, Greenwood, where he is undergoing treatment. **Opens on S. Broad** Johnson's Men's Shop The Oaklane Shop opened in its new locaiton yesterday on South Broad Street, and has announced a grand opening for the balance of the week. The shop is owned by Mrs. Charles H. Johnson, owner, stat-Fred Holcombe, who will be as- ed this week. sisted by Mrs. Forrest Adair. The store will feature gifts, dec- building on East Main Street

To Change Location Johnson's Men's Shop will change locations early in May, The store will move into the formerly occupied by Murray Garber's, which, Johnson said,



This car went out of control Monday about 5:00 p. m. and crashed into a garage apartment on the lot of Marvin DeYoung at the corner of Davidson and Shands Streets. John Thomas Banks, driver, is said to have attempted to make a turn from Davidson Street into Shands, went across DeYoung's yard and hit the apartment occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Dan Wood, sonin-law and daughter of Mr. and Mrs. DeYoung. Damage to the apartment is said to amount to about \$800, including contents of the corner room where the car struck the house. The car is reported to be owned by Banks' father, Rboert O'Dell Banks of Cross Hill .-- " Photo by Paul Quinton.