7★ EDITION — PARENTS OF SIX FIRE VICTIMS TALK FOR AFRO — TWENTY-FOUR PAGES

SIX BOYS PERISH IN FLAMES

Largest Audited Circulation of Any Colored Newspaper in the United States

THE AFRO-AMERICAN

Entered in the Postoffice at Baltimore, Md., as Second-Class Matter. Under Act of March 8, 1897. (Trade-Mark. Registered)

44th Year, No. 13. BALTIMORE, MD., WEEK OF JANUARY 5, 1935 Prices: 6 CENTS IN CITY 7 CENTS IN STATE AND D.C.

Play Retreat Is Turned into Inferno, 6 Die

Celluloid Explodes, Trapping Sextet in Fiery Dungeon.

SEVENTH BOY IN HOSPITAL MAY DIE

Anxious Parents Storm the Morgue Seeking Children.

THE KNOWN DEAD

REGINALD WILSON, 1409 Ashland Ave.
EDWARD ROBINSON, 1218 E. Madison St.
ANDREW BOGIER, 1231 E. Madison St.
WILLIAM REDDICK, 802 Aisquith St.
RALPH HINTON, 1105 E. Madison St.
WILMER SUTTON, 817 Somerset St.

CRITICALLY BURNED

RICHARD SMITH, 817 Somerset St.

What was believed to have been the playful prank by a ten-year-old boy cost his life and that of five of his youthful companions, Thursday night, when a fire was inadvertently started in their rendezvous — the basement of a building at 752-754 N. Gay Street.

Only one of the seven youths, whose ages ranged from ten to fourteen years, survived to tell the tale of the tragedy, which ended a game of cards in what the youngsters habitually used as a meeting place on cold nights. He is Richard Smith, 12, of 817 Somerset Street.

Poker Ignites Celluloid

According to the account which young Smith gave Northeastern district police, as Johns Hopkins Hospital doctors fought to save his life, the blaze was started when Reginald Wilson, 10, of 1409 Ashland Avenue, dropped a red-hot poker into a bucket of celluloid buttons.

Wilson, who had joined the group shortly after 7:30 p.m., during the absence of the janitor, William Heath, 20, of 617 Bethel Street, let the poker, which he had heated in the furnace, slip from his hand as he waved it playfully around in the room.

Perhaps a dozen buckets of the highly inflammable buttons, kept in the basement by Harry Mohen, white, who runs a tailor shop on the first floor of the building, immediately caught fire and exploded, flying into all parts of the room.

One Escaped to Street

As Wilson began to step on the blazing fragments of celluloid, Smith told police, he (Smith) discovered that his clothes were ablaze and ran up the steps into the street.

Howard Watkins, 1414 E. Preston Street, a passerby, saw the blazing boy, and throwing his coat around him, tossed him into the gutter and extinguished the flames. He then placed the boy in the car of a passing white motorist, and took him to the hospital.

The charred bodies of the other six boys, burned almost beyond recognition and floating in three feet of water, were not discovered until firemen went into the basement to investigate the cause of the fire.

Little hope for Smith's recovery was held out by hospital authorities late this morning (Friday). He was badly burned about the back and hands and was still unconscious at the time of the latest report.

William Sutton, 14, half-brother of Smith, lived with his mother, Mrs. Helen Smith, and his stepfather, Richard Smith, Sr., at 817 Somerset Street. He was a pupil in Class 5-B at School 133.

Sutton is also survived by another half-brother, James Smith, and two half sisters, Annabelle

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GRIEF STRICKEN Mrs. Irene Robinson, 1218 E. Madison Street, Baltimore, mother of 11-year-old Edward Robinson, one of six school boys burned to death Thursday night in a basement of a building at 754 N. Gay Street.

Ritchie Sets Date for Pair to Hang

Death Warrants Signed for Two of D. C. Bandit Trio

Gov. Ritchie Commutes Third Sentence to Life Imprisonment.

KILLED BARBECUE STAND OPERATOR

Driver of Bandit Cad Led Cops to Two Pals.

ANNAPOLIS—Death warrants for two of the three men convicted of the murder of a white barbecue stand operator at Priest Bridge, last summer, were signed Wednesday by Governor Albert C. Ritchie, with date of execution fixed for January 18.

The sentence of the third, Donald Parker, 24, was commuted to life imprisonment because of information he had given authorities which led to the arrest of his accomplices, and testimony to the effect that he had not participated in the actual killing.

The trio, John A. Gross, 25, and Gordon Dent, 30, both of Washington, and Parker were sentenced to death on July 25, in the Prince Georges County Circuit Court at Upper Marlboro.

Accused of 1-Night Terror Reign

Their victim, John T. Geary, white, met his death in one of a series of holdups committed on the night of May 22, which caused the bandits to be branded the "three black Dillingers."

A Washington filling station operator who was their first victim, was held up and severely beaten at the outset of the one-night crime wave. Lawrence Dayton, white, town bailiff of Bladensburg, was robbed of his cash and his police car, threatened and abandoned on a lonely road near Seat Pleasant.

Wounded Man Opened Safe

In the bailiff's car, the trio staged several store and highway robbers, climaxed by the Geary case, in which their victim was shot and then made to open the safe before he died.

Parker, who was the first of the three to be arrested, stayed in the car while the other two robbd and murdered Geary, according to testimony.

In granting the commutation to Parker, Governor Ritchie quoted the Prince Georges County sheriff as saying the arrest of Gross and Dent would not have been made without the assistance of Parker.

AFRO VISITORS

Those who visited the AFRO office last week were:

Mesdames G. Haynes, Margaret Cannon, Elizabeth Henderson, W. I. Gibson, Edna Gray, Grace Murphy, Gertrude Wilkins, Emma Henson;

Marie Murphy, Sadie Murphy, Vashti Murphy, Harry Gilbert, Gwendolyn Lewis, A. L. Lewis, Waltye Murphy, Samuel Snowden, James Spriggs.

Clinton Knox, Daniel N. Clark, Garett Rawlings, all of Baltimore.

Mrs. Florence Collins, Henry Collins, John Chambers of Washington, D.C., Mrs. Delilah Murray, Alexandria, Va.

Mrs. Emerson Brown, Mrs Brown, Mrs. George B. Murphy, Jr., of Washington, D.C.

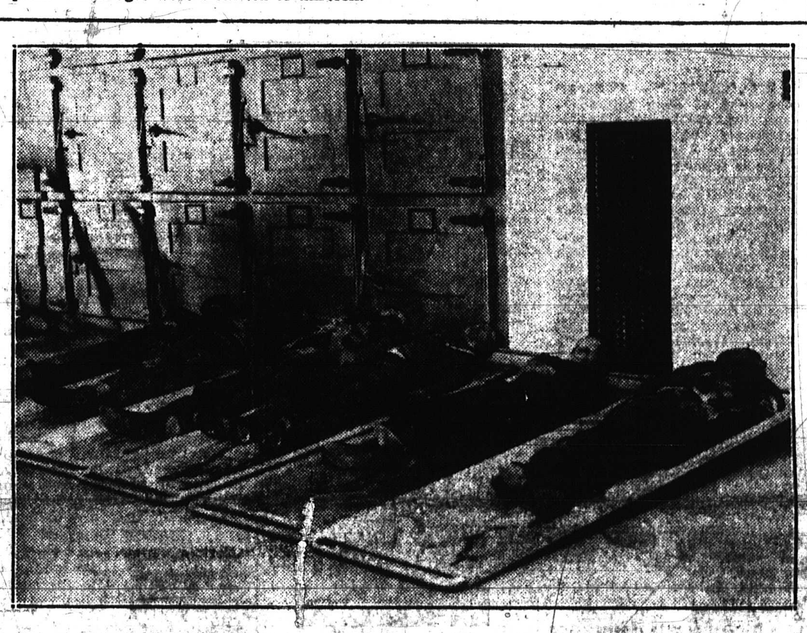
Mattie L. Dickerson, Basil Hutchins, Boston, Mass.; Robert H. Brown, Jr., Cambridge, Mass; Olga G. Ferguson, Roxbury, Mass.

Carroll M. Ellis, Milton Campbell, Chicago, Ill.; Everet W. Carter, Annapolis, Md.

Augusta Baker New York City; William O. Fauntleroy, Ivoryton, Conn.; Mrs. Elsie Walker, Cesar Walker, Middletown, Conn.; Spaulding Seitts, Jersey City, N.J.

Godmother Wants Police to Find Child She Reared

PALS IN DEATH TOO Charred remains of six school boys, victims of fire which trapped them in the basement of a building at 754 N. Gay Street, where they were playing Thursday night. They were taken to Baltimore City morgue, where parents identified them. A seventh boy is in a serious condition in a local hospital. Their ages were from ten to thirteen.



Janitor of Building Where 6 Boys Died Is Missing

Death Cellar Was a Fire Hazzard

That the basement at 725 N. Gay Street where six boys met death was a recognized fire hazard was confirmed by reports on file at Fire Department Headquarters, Friday.

According to records on file three complaints have been lodged against the place by inspectors.

On November 1, the fire alarm system was reported out of order.

On November 22, an accumulation of ashes was reported as dangerous, and their removal was ordered.

On November 24, an accumulation of rubbish was said to endanger the premises and the removal of the same was ordered.

On November 28, the wiring was reported to be affected to the point that it constituted a fire hazard.

William Heath, 20, janitor of the building at 752 North Gay Street where six young boys lost their lives in a fire, Thursday night, could not be located by friends and relatives here this morning (Friday).

The original fear that Heath might have perished in the holocaust was dispelled, however, by information that he was seen after the fire. Mrs. Elvner Euell, of 802 Aisquith Street, told reporters this morning that Heath had described the tragedy to her at ten o'clock Thursday night.

Mother Warned Janitor

Mrs. Lillie Heath of 617 Bethel Street, mother of the young janitor, declared that her uneasiness over her son's practice of allowing the group of boys to play in the basement had prompted her to caution him of the dangers involved.

"Not more than a week ago," Mrs. Heath stated, "I asked him to stop letting them come there. He told me he would, but I understand that boys have been seen going in and out of the place regularly since that time."

Persons who frequent the neighborhood declare that the basement windows in the three-story brick building were kept covered, and that it was impossible to see inside from the street. No one has been able to supply an authentic account as to the nature of the boys' customary activity upon their visits to the place.

That other persons have been apprehensive of the dangers involved in the use of the basement as a playhouse was revealed by Mrs. Peggy O'Neil, white, who ocupies the second-floor apartment in the building.

Mrs. O'Neil, who discovered the fire and awakened Mr. and Mrs. Morris Reuben, white, who lived on the third floor, expressed the conviction that blame for the tragedy should not be placed upon the youths, but upon those in control of the premises.

The presence of the celluloid buttons, a bucket of which were allegedly ignited by a red-hot poker, was a familiar source of danger, according to Mrs. O'Neil, and had prompted a series of complaints registered with the central fire bureau.

Other previous discussions of the danger were evidenced by reports that Heath had told friends that he had attempted to keep the boys out of the building, although Richard Smith, sole survivor among the group of boys, indicated to police that Heath was present when the first of the youths arrived on Thursday night.

Dr. Moton Improved, Now in Norfolk, Va.

DR. R. R. MOTON

NORFOLK, Va.—Dr. R. R. Moton, president of Tuskegee Institute, here under the care of physicians and dentists, has been in no condition to send out his usual Christmas message, his secretary, G. Lake Imes, told the AFRO-AMERICAN, Saturday.

According to Mr. Imes, Dr. Moton is steadily improving, but for the present is being relieved of the consideration of such matters.

Dr. Moton is staying, while here, at 302 Charlotte Street.

AFRO-AMERICAN
HOME OFFICE
Baltimore,
628 N. Eutaw Street
Phone, Vernon 6016

Net Paid Circulation for 12 Months
Period Ending June 30, 1934
63,460

(Audited Net Paid Statement)
The AFRO-AMERICAN is a member of The A.B.C. (Audit Bureau of Circulations)

England's Race Hate Too Much for Robeson

FLASH

RIGA, Russia—Six Soviet wireless officials have been removed from their offices for permitting a phonograph record of the voice of Paul Robeson singing "Steal Away to Jesus" to be played over the air.

Robeson, himself, is now on his first visit to Moscow at the invitation of a white film producer.

Russian newspapers explain that although Mr. Robeson's spirituals are of a semi-religious nature, they are merely a protest against the treatment of the colored race under a capitalistic government like the United States.

For several years Mr. Robeson has studied the Russian language and Russian music, which he says is closely akin to the slave songs of his own country.

LONDON, England (ANP)—"I am unquestionably leaving England," declared Paul Robeson, the famous actor and singer, in an address, Friday night, before the League of Colored People in London.

"I refuse to live under the sword of Damocles all my life," continued Mr. Robeson, who,

(Continued on Next Page)

It has been said that the easiest way to a man's

Heart

. . . is through his stomach. Meaning you've got to feed "the brute" if you want to get along with him.

But be sure to feed him good food and be sure you don't spend more than you have to—to do it.

If you will follow the food specials advertised in the AFRO each week you'll be able to eat good food at a price you can afford to pay.

Read

AFRO Food Ads EVERY WEEK

D.C. Woman Seeks Mother Who Took Child from Her

Asks Baltimore Police to Help Find Parent Believed Here

REARED CHILD FROM BABE OF 3 MONTHS

Claims She was Lured Away and Put in Home.

When does a mother forfeit the right to keep her own child?

That is the question that Baltimore and Washington authorities will have to decide, when and if they ever locate Mrs. Anne Green, who formerly lived 861 N. Gilmor Street, who has since disappeared.

A request was made of local police to locate Mrs. Green, who is said to be a native of Washington, D.C., by Mrs. Alberta E. Scott of 620 K Street, Washington, D.C.

In a pathetic letter punctuated with pleas for assistance, that almost vibrate mother-love and devotion, Mrs. Scott urges the authorities to conduct a search for the missing woman in order that she may learn the whereabouts of her seven year-old-daughter, Mabel Green, who is now in the mother's care.

Mrs. Scott declares that the child was left with her by the mother when she was only three months old and that she reared her as her own and became very much attached to the child. A short while ago, the letter states, the child was lured away from the Scott home and neither the mother nor the child has been seen since.

Fear Ill Treatment

In her letter, Mrs. Scott alleges that she has information to substantiate the belief that the child is not being properly cared for and is not receiving the proper schooling. All of her efforts to locate the child have been futile because the mother is said to move every time she thinks she has located her.

According to local police reports, the mother cannot be found at any of the addresses given by Mrs. Scott and the address does not even exist.

Mrs. Scott's letter states that she believes that Mrs. Green has since coming to Baltimore married a man whose first name she knows only as Dennis.

"I raised her from the time she was three months until she was seven and she was doing good while she was with me," says Mrs. Scott's letter.

May be in Home

Mrs. Scott also declares that she has learned that the child has been placed in a home for orphans.

If this is true, Mrs. Scott says, and the child can be located, she Mrs. Scott and one address does her guardianship of the child.

All information leading to the whereabouts of the mother or child is sought by Chief Inspector Henry at the Central police station.

THE WEATHER

FRIDAY AND SATURDAY

North and Middle Atlantic States: Snow over the north and rain over the south portion. Rising temperature Friday.

Sun rise 7:30 a.m. Sun set 4:55 p.m.; moon rise 2:38 a.m. Moon set 12:47 p.m. Moon phases: new 6th; 1st quarter 13th; full 20th; last quarter 28th.

Afro Newsies Thumb Noses at Mercury; Parade 400 Strong in Frigid Weather

Almost four hundred AFRO newsies, led by their own drum and bugle corps, marched in a gala parade through the streets of Baltimore, Monday, halting traffic and lining the sidewalks with cheering parents and smiling spectators.

The festivities of the day began when coffee, cocoa and cake were served to the news vendors in the AFRO building at 10 a.m. A few minutes later, organization plans got under way and the parade units moved into formation.

The temperature took a sudden dive toward the freezing point, but the youngsters made merry, while the drum and bugle corps, led by William Julius, scoutmaster, played the hottest tunes in their album.

Line of March

The line of march started at the AFRO office and wound its way over the following route:

Eutaw Street to Baltimore, Baltimore Street to Howard, Howard Street to Monument, Monument Street to Madison, Madison Street to Dolphin, Dolphin Street to Druid Hill, Druid Hill Avenue to McMechen, McMechen Street to Division, Division Street to Baker; Baker Street to Gilmor, Gilmor Street to Edmondson, Edmondson Avenue to Carrollton, Carrollton Avenue to Harlem, Harlem Avenue to Dolphin, Dolphin Street to Pennsylvania Avenue, and to the Royal Theatre.

Once at the Royal, the drummers and buglers cut a final figure and the late marchers became movie fans of the lusty-lunged, line-shoving variety.

Gather at Church

At 8 in the evening, the newsies gathered at Cosmopolitan Community Church for a Christmas tree and program.

John H. Murphy, Jr., and his assistants in the circulation department of the AFRO, distributed presents to all the boys and girls assembled in the church basement.

When the newsboys' list was exhausted, Mr. Murphy asked every child present who had not received a gift package to raise his hand. Those who had not were lined up and passed before a table which was piled high with packages.

Potential Newsy Invited

One of the youngest to have his name called along with the newsies was Percy Carter, 5, of 745 Dolphin Street, who came to the party on a special invitation.

Too young to sell papers, Percy was observed some time ago with an armful of old papers under his arm, running up and down the street shouting, "AFRO-AMERICAN, AFRO-AMERICAN!"

The AFRO distributor who saw him thus in training for his future career as a newsboy promptly invited him to the AFRO Christmas party.

Buglers to Get Uniforms

Four of the boys in the bugle corps were selected to have their measurements taken for the making of uniforms, this week. The entire group of buglers will be uniformly attired in the near future.

David Johnson, salesman, addressed the gathering on "The Coming Salesman." During his discourse, to emphasize his remarks along the line of punctuality, Mr. Johnson exhibited a medal he had won for being on time over a period of time.

Mrs. Ruth Thompson and company presented "Dr. Jekyl and Mr. Hyde" in a three-act dramatization.

Six-Year Old Missing Many Hours Was Looking for Santa

An anxious mother shaken by thoughts of the Lindbergh and other kidnappings had a dark cloud lifted from her mind a few days before Christmas.

The mother, Mrs. Evelyn Williams, 1203 Edmondson Avenue, sought her six-year old daughter, Georgia for hours on Christmas Eve, and believed her to have been stolen.

Upon being returned home by an obliging stranger, Gloria stated that she had only gone in search of Santa Claus.

GETS PLUM Joseph Rainey, Philadelphia, recently appointed to Pennsylvania State Boxing Commission. Two whites also were appointed. He is shown with the latest Mrs. Rainey in their home in Philly.

IN TROUBLE Members of Lew Leslie's 1934 "Blackbirds" now in London. Second from left is Bessie Dudley, snake-hips dancer who, according to reports, haled Leslie into English courts for firing her and taking "Kahloah," a new hip-swinger, in her place. "Kahloah's" real name is Elizabeth Kelly. She was discovered recently in Chicago.