'Playful' Shot by White Man Kills Negro at Wake Forest

By TOM NIMMAN.

A young Wake Forest Negro died from a pistol bullet in his back about 9 a.m., Saturday. He was identified as James Williams, about 20.

Charged with manslaughter in the shooting is Roger Earl Williams, also of Wake Forest. The deceased had been Williams' best friend, and was shot to death by Negro.

Walter Cooley, deputy Ed Watkins and Jake Turner investigated the shooting. Williams is in jail under bond to appear at an inquest June 15, they said.

The shooting took place at Cooley's store. It is understood that Williams attempted to return a pistol he had borrowed and to pick up a load of gasoline. He was killed for his "till dinner," they said.

He had spoken with a man about 40 minutes earlier at the same store, and the man had agreed to work for him. Williams told the police the story.

When Williams was at the store the first time, he told the investigator the story of how the man said he would help him in the store. He said he could have sold him the store, but not his brother, who was in jail.

Buck Cooley, owner of the store, said it was the understanding that the man was to work for Williams. He said the person helped him clean up around the store and that Williams returned about 9 a.m.

Williams drove up to the store in a pickup truck. With him were Albert Williams, Route 1, Youngsville, and Willie Davenport, another friend. Williams said that as he approached the store, William R. Pearson ran out into a corn field. Williams told the sheriff's officers he then pulled up to the store, stopped, and got out.

Pershing, and Williams reached into the glove compartment of the car to the pistol which he was returning to Cooley. When he fired two shots, Pearson was over 400 feet away, he said.

The pistol was a .35-cal. automatic. He had borrowed it June 4 to kill hogs, he told the deputies.

Cooley, the store owner, corroborated this statement.

Williams said that the first shot hit the shop around the car, and walked into the store with his companions. He had no intention of shooting Pearson, and didn't know who had told the deputies.

Pearson then ran off onto the street where he was run down, and his wife's man. Rosa Williams ran into the highway towards the street, at the same time.

Elmer Williams said he heard the pistol go off to Cooley, saying he had just fired twice outside, and running towards the street. Pearson told him he had run fast if someone was shooting him.

Store owner Cooley told officers Williams and his friend then bought soft drinks, and began walking.

Outside, the dead man's wife, Rosa Mae Person, had seen him fall, and called to Ralph Person, who was at the store entrance. She told the investigating officers that when she reached her husband he was lying face down in a bean patch adjacent to the cornfield he ran across. He was still alive, but did not answer when she spoke to him, she said.

Ralph Person ran back to the store after seeing his wounded brother. Inside, he said, "Mr. Earl, you have shot William."

Earl Williams said he jumped up, but thought Ralph was killing him. He then ran out of the store and over the cornfield to the dying man. Ralph Person borrowed Cooley's pickup and drove the distance.

The dying man was loaded into the truck and hurried to the office of Dr. G. B. Corbin. Williams helped put the wounded man on the truck and followed to the doctor's office.

Person was dead on arrival. The deputies said they talked with the dead man's wife, brothers, mother and father, and received positive statements that Williams and Person were on the best of terms.

The officers measured the distance from where Williams fired the shots to the spot where Person fell. It was 400 feet, they reported.

The bullet entered his back just right of the spine.

Williams is in jail under $5,000 bond to appear at an inquest June 15. The hearing will be held in the Wake Forest Municipal Building at 6 p.m. Deputies Turner and Watkins said.