



# The Indianapolis Times

FORECAST: Fair and colder tonight and tomorrow. Low tonight, 5 above. High tomorrow, 20.

59th YEAR—NUMBER 296

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1949

Entered as Second-Class Matter at Post Office  
Indianapolis, Ind. Issued Daily

FINAL  
HOME

PRICE FIVE CENTS

## Watts Presses Battle To Escape Chair as 30-Day Reprieve Comes

U. S. Supreme Court Gives Killer New Lease On Life With Dramatic Stay of Execution

The day that he feared he might not live to see—today—found condemned slayer Robert Austin Watts ready to continue his fight for his life in the nation's highest court.

The 27-year-old former Indianapolis city truck driver who was to have been executed at midnight was given a 30-day reprieve from death last night, just a few hours before the scheduled execution.

Watts woke early this morning, still in the "death cell" at Indiana State Prison at Michigan City. Because the reprieve came so late last night, he was not transferred back to his regular cell.

He was to be transferred back upstairs early today, to the seclusion barracks which houses him and four other men awaiting execution.

### Will Start to Work

As soon as he is settled back in his cell, Watts is expected to start work on his appeal to the Supreme Court for a setting aside of the verdicts of the Indiana courts.

In granting the 30-day reprieve yesterday, the U. S. court ruled that Watts' formal appeal must be filed by Feb. 14.

Lawyers from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in New York are preparing legal documents.

### Handwritten Plea

His last appeal to the Indiana Supreme Court consisted of five separate documents—all handwritten on lined paper but in good legal form. He filed another handwritten appeal to the U. S. court after the Indiana court refused his appeal and declined to take further jurisdiction.

Prison officials said Watts was sitting down to eat what was to have been his "last supper" at about 6:30 p. m. last night when he was informed that the stay had been granted.

Warden Ralph Howard, Deputy Warden L. C. Schmehl and three members of the board of trustees took him the message. Warden Howard learned of the stay from Gov. Schricker at 4:30 p. m. but waited for the official confirming telegram from the court itself before telling Watts.

### Takes News Calmly

Prison officials said Watts took the news calmly.

### "I'm Glad," he said as Warden Howard read the message to him.

Then he laughed and said:

"I sure hate to miss that supper, though."

The supper consisted of shrimp, candied sweet potatoes, combination salad, strawberry ice cream and milk.

The prison officials joked about splitting the shrimp between them then told Watts he might eat the meal.

### Mother Breaks Down

Earlier Watts said goodby to his mother Mrs. Elizabeth Watts, Indianapolis, and his sister, Mrs. Lucille Hardiman, Chicago. The visit lasted less than a half hour and ended when Mrs. Watts broke down. Watts' young wife, who stood beside him during his trial, did not visit him.

It was the third time the courts have given Watts a new lease on life at the 11th hour. He was convicted by a Shelby County jury in January, 1948, of murder in an attempt to attack Mrs. Mary Lois Burney, North Side Indianapolis housewife, in November, 1947.

### First Date in May, 1948

He was first scheduled to die in May, 1948. He won two reprieves from the Indiana Supreme Court as they considered his appeals.

Watts confessed slayer of both Mrs. Burney and Mrs. Mabel Merrifield, has asked for a new trial, charging that his indictment by the Marion County Grand Jury was faulty because Negroes have been systematically barred from duty on the grand jury. He also maintains remarks made by former Prosecutor Judge L. Stark during the trial were prejudicial and that his confessions were obtained under duress.

**U. S. Seeks Pact Talks**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 1 (UPI)—The United States hopes to discuss soon "with Norway and other governments" whether they would be willing to enter the projected North Atlantic Security Pact, the State Department hinted strongly today.

**Good Seats Left For Golden Gloves**

Get your tickets early if you want the BEST seats for Friday night's semifinals of the Times-Legion Golden Gloves tournament in the N. Pennsylvania St. Armory.

They're available at: Room 20, Jefferson, 136 E. Washington St. or The Sportsman's Store, 126 N. Pennsylvania St.

Prices are: Ringside and first row balcony, \$2; downstairs reserved, \$1.50. Prices include tax. General admission—\$1 for both children and adults—go on sale at 6:30 p. m. fight night at the Armory.

### Other Features on Inside Pages

Amusements: 6 Forum . . . . . 10 Movies . . . . . 6 Society . . . . . 11  
Business . . . . . 4 Metros . . . . . 13 Othman . . . . . 9 Sports . . . . . 14, 15  
Classified: 16-18 Hollywood . . . . . 6 Radio . . . . . 7 Teen Prob. . . . . 13  
Comics . . . . . 19 Inside Indiana . . . . . 9 Records . . . . . 20 Earl Wilson . . . . .  
Crossword . . . . . 8 Dr. Jordan . . . . . 13 Ruark . . . . . 9 Weather . . . . . 13  
Editorials . . . . . 10 Labor . . . . . 10 Scherer . . . . . 10 Women's . . . . . 13  
Food . . . . . 13 Mrs. Manners . . . . . 8 Side Glances . . . . . 10 World At . . . . . 10

# Father Hurt In 2d Story Leap From Fire With Baby In Arms



## 55 Prep Pupils Overcome by Gas

### Chlorine Tank Topples At Chicago School

CHICAGO, Feb. 1 (UPI)—More than 55 children were overcome or made ill today when poisonous chlorine gas seeped through Kelvin Park High School.

Fifteen of the victims were taken to hospitals, but none was reported in serious condition. The rest were treated in neighboring homes by ambulance crews, fire department rescue squads and private doctors.

The gas was used at the school to purify water in the swimming pool.

### Tank Topples

The tank in which it was stored in the school basement toppled, breaking a connector with a pipe which led to the pool. School authorities said the fumes were sent through the school by the ventilating system.

A janitor discovered the toppled tank. The firm alarm bell rang and the school's 1450 pupils began filing out of the building in orderly fashion, as they had been instructed to do in fire drills.

Some collapsible in the corridors, however, and were carried from the building by their schoolmates.

### GOP Senator Seeking U. S. Funds for Wabash

A Republican state senator moved today to request Congress to provide additional flood control facilities in the Wabash River.

A similar resolution has been introduced in the House by a Republican representative, but the measure is still in committee.

Sen. Wesley Malone (R. Clinton) introduced the senate concurrent resolution today. The measure in the House was introduced Jan. 25 by Rep. Lang Helt (R. Dana).

### Milk Prices Drop

ANDERSON, Feb. 1—Retail milk prices dropped one cent a quart here today to 19 cents. Dairymen said the decline in the cost of the milk purchased from farmers made possible the reduction.

### Two Hurt When Cab Collides With Auto

Two persons were injured, neither seriously, today when a Red Cab Co. vehicle collided with another car at Highland Ave. and Ohio St.

Harlan Ray Sims, 17, of 2202 E. Dudley St., is in fair condition after suffering bruises on his face, head and left leg. A passenger in the car driven by Sims, Henry Adams, 60, of 2039 E. 10th St., received an injury to his right thumb and bruises to his left leg but refused treatment at the hospital, police said.

Driver of the cab, Robert E. Jackson, 22, 1828 N. Alabama St., was not hurt.

### On the Inside

Red forces take over Peiping amid fanfare . . .

Around the World . . . a capsule review of today's news . . . . . Page 2

Schricker names ex-CIO director as secretary of Public Service Commission . . . . . Page 2

Harden takes dim view of Jenner-Capehart attempt . . . . . Page 3

to oust Gates . . . . . Page 3

Director Cyrus Ching battles change in control of mediation board . . . . . other news from halls of Congress . . . . . Page 4

Cut a slice of "meat of tomorrow" . . . . . America's \$50 million quiz program No. 2 . . . . . a series . . . . . Page 4

Review of Shaw's "Man and Superman" by Henry Butler . . . . . Johnson covers his Hollywood beat . . . . . other amusement notes . . . . . Page 6

Murder on the Highways . . . . . No. 13 . . . . . a graphic report on the Jasper post by Victor Peterson . . . . . other section page features . . . . . Page 9

First fox hunt colorful event . . . . . Our Town . . . . . by Anton Scherr . . . . . other local and national observations . . . . . Page 10

The formula to slipcover magic . . . . . for the ladies on pages of interest to them . . . . . Pages 11-12-13

Basketball reports from Butler, Purdue . . . . . Ownie Bush dazzles the experts . . . . . third in a series . . . . . other sports . . . . . Pages 14-15

"Masket spooner" makes debut this week with two new discs . . . . . Off the Record . . . . . a regular Tuesday feature . . . . . Page 20

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Amusements: 6 Forum . . . . . 10 Movies . . . . . 6 Society . . . . . 11

Business . . . . . 4 Metros . . . . . 13 Othman . . . . . 9 Sports . . . . . 14, 15

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Food . . . . . 13 Mrs. Manners . . . . . 8 Side Glances . . . . . 10 World At . . . . . 10



## Block Subsides As Mine Caves In

### Four Persons Hurt; 14 Homes Damaged

CARBONDALE, Pa., Feb. 1—A whole city block in this anthracite community subsided today when an underground mine caved in. At least four persons were reported injured and 14 homes badly damaged.

Some sections in the cave-in area dropped more than 20 feet below the surface.

The subsidence, over a mine of 200 feet in northwest Indiana, was the second subsidence in the last week in this town of about 20,000 persons in northeastern Pennsylvania.

### \$39,900 Repaid State By Job Fund Claimants

Some \$39,900 repaid into Indiana's unemployment compensation benefit fund during 1948 testified today that collecting jobless checks illegally is not a profitable business. Everett L. Gardner, director of the Indiana Employment Security Division, pointed out to day.

Detected by Division representatives, the claimants, all of whom faced legal prosecution, repaid the sums they had unlawfully collected in fraudulent claims.

Col. Gardner added that persons convicted of obtaining unemployment benefits by fraud are subject to a maximum fine of \$100 or a jail sentence for as long as 60 days, or both. For veterans who try to collect readjustment allowances to which they are not entitled, the G. I. Bill of Rights provides a fine of \$100 or less or imprisonment up to one year, or both.

The plan, which has long been sought by many Indiana parents, was incorporated in a measure introduced yesterday by Sen. William A. Butcher (R. South Bend) and Sen. Jack O'Grady (D. Terre Haute).

The bill also provides for the levying of a tax rate up to 2½ cents on each \$100 of assessed valuation to finance the program.

### Senate Studies Free Kindergarten

Legislative Calendar, Page 15

A free kindergarten bill, which would offer pre-primary training to all Hoosier children between the ages of 5 and 6, was being studied today by a Senate committee on education.

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The bill also provides for the levying of a tax rate up to 2½ cents on each \$100 of assessed valuation to finance the program.

### Star Horse, Champion, Will Appear at Ayres

Champion, the horse of Gene Autry, film cowboy and singing star, will make an appearance tomorrow from 2:30 to 3:30 p. m. in Ayres' Downstairs Store youth center.

Officers of the firm presented him with flowers and a birthday cake with one candle. Mr. Hardy was transferred here from Worcester, Mass.

Champion will perform in a special corral. The horse, directed by his trainer, will perform some of the tricks which made him famous with moviegoers.

### Dun & Bradstreet Manager Honored

Cecil G. Hardy, 6028 Park Ave., was honored today at a luncheon party upon his completion of one year as district manager of Dun & Bradstreet here.

Officers of the firm presented him with flowers and a birthday cake with one candle. Mr. Hardy was transferred here from Worcester, Mass.

### Change Meeting Date

The Indianapolis Bar Association, formerly scheduled to meet tomorrow, will meet instead on Feb. 9. Kurt F. Pantzer is program chairman.

### RITES FOR PRILLS HEAD

WASHINGTON, Feb. 1 (UPI)—Funeral services were to be held today for Fleming Newbold, president of the Washington Star.

He died at his home here yesterday. He had been president of the Star less than a year.

### The Best He Had

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., Feb. 1 (UPI)—A set of jacks and a rubber ball apparently the most prized possession of a child were found among March 4-Dimes contributions, officials said today.



## Catches Son Dropped to Him From Window

### Then Breaks Fall Of Mother-in-Law; Back Feared Broken

By HEZE CLARK

A 25-year-old Navy and Merchant Marine veteran was severely injured early today when he leaped from a second story window of his blazing home with his 19-month-old daughter in his arms.

Struggling back to his feet after the 14 or 15-foot drop, the veteran caught his 4½-month-old son, dropped from the same window. He then broke the fall of his mother-in-law before collapsing.

The veteran, Clifford Goodwin Sr., is in General Hospital with a broken left ankle, an injured right ankle and a probable broken back.