

Residents Doubt Hart's Guilt

By Michael Lee
LOCUST GROVE —
The capture of Gene Leroy Hart Thursday afternoon didn't bring any sighs of relief from residents of this community because many people here say they weren't afraid of him

and don't think he committed the crime.

"Him running loose never did worry me," said Harold Andrew, who says he's known Hart all his life.

"The Leroy Hart I knew wasn't a dangerous person. I don't

know if his running has made him a desperate man.

"I think they've been chasing the wrong man," he said.

Hart was arrested at 4:15 p.m. Thursday at a rural residence in the Cookson Hills area of

northeastern Oklahoma. He is charged with the sex-slayings of three Girl Scouts at Camp Scott near Locust Grove last June.

Parents of the girls could not be reached for comment Thursday.
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Hart Crime Doubted

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night. Relatives at the homes of Dr. and Mrs. Charles Farmer and Mr. and Mrs. Walter Milner said those couples had been notified of Hart's capture.

Hart grew up in Locust Grove, where he starred in football in high school.

"No, I didn't feel threatened by his being loose," said Mrs. Terry P. Crow. "I don't really believe he's really guilty."

Other persons — 15 in all — called at random from the Locust Grove telephone directory had similar comments.

Mrs. Chester Bell, who said she lives near

Camp Scott, where the slayings took place, said, "If he's guilty I would say I'm proud they've got him, but no one knows that he did it."

"I've always had a feeling in the back of my mind that I don't think he did it. I don't know the man, I don't know the little girls, but its something about the way it was investigated that makes me think that," she said.

Charles T. Keene said he didn't feel any relief with the capture and expressed doubt that Hart did it.

"There's always doubt. I've heard so much of the pro and con I'll just stand back

and let them (law officials) go at it," he said.

Mrs. J.D. Howard, who says she knows Hart's mother, said, "I never was really afraid of him."

"I never just really felt any reason to be afraid. That's the same thing most of the people around here have been telling me."

Thomas Nichols said, "It didn't bother me none. He never bothered us."

Mrs. Don O'Canas, the mother of two daughters, said his capture has given her some relief but she, too, says "I for one don't believe he's guilty. But I'm sure there are others who think he is."

Mrs. O'Canas, who said she knew Hart, said most people she talked to in the Mayes County community don't think Hart committed the slayings.

"That's the general feeling around here. He's a local boy and everybody knew him."

J.D. Stuck agreed, saying Hart was "well liked in this neighborhood."

"Oh man, we had no fear of Hart over here. I can't think of any of my neighbors who were afraid of him."

"We don't have any feelings of satisfaction at all. We really don't think he did it," Stuck said.

To Be Found

By Robert B. Allen
Staff Writer

PRYOR — Gene Leroy Hart, whose capture Thursday ended a frustrating 10-month search, was returned Friday to the Mayes County jail, which couldn't hold him in 1973.

At the conclusion of a 29-minute arraignment on charges he killed three Girl Scouts, District Judge William J. Whistler continued proceedings until 3 p.m. Tuesday at Hart's request so that he might retain an attorney.

Bond Denied

Whistler ordered the 34-year-old convicted rapist held in jail here without bond on the three first-degree murder charges lodged against him last June 23, 10 days following the slayings.

In ordering the 220-pound Hart to the custody of the sheriff, Judge Whistler specified that he be held in a maximum security unit of the remodeled county jail. Sheriff Pete Weaver, who said earlier

or he preferred that Hart be returned to the state penitentiary at McAlester, where he was held overnight, announced that he had assigned a special guard to watch Hart in the 11-by-14-foot cell.

Suspect Calm

Hart, a former Locust Grove High School football star, has been

charged with the June 13 slayings of Lori Lee Farmer, 8; Doris Denise Miller, 10, and Michelle Guse, 9, whose bodies were found outside of their tents at Camp Scott near the small town of Locust Grove.

Hart, who appeared calm and sometimes smiled, stood before the judge as each of the complaints was slowly read by Mayes County District Attorney Sid-

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SLAYING SUSPECT GIVEN CHANCE TO HIRE ATTORNEY

Gene Leroy Hart Hearing Delayed Until Tuesday

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ney Wise.

He also was charged with three counts of second-degree burglary, possession of a firearm, injuring public property and escape.

Hart fled the Mayes County jail on May 20, 1973, only to be captured 11 days later, and then broke out again on Sept. 16 of the same year after being transferred from the state penitentiary to await a post-conviction appeals hearing.

After Wise read the first complaint, charging the suspect with the strangulation of Denise

Milner, Hart asked the judge to grant his request to waive reading the other complaints. Whistler refused.

The other two complaints accuse Hart of slaying the other victims by striking them with a blunt instrument.

Hart, who was captured Thursday in Cherokee County, was brought to Pryor by plane, then brought five miles from the airport in a three-car motorcade.

Agents of the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, sheriff officers and highway patrolmen elbowed

their way through hordes of spectators as they ushered Hart into the sheriff's office, where he was formally booked at 3:54 p.m.

Dressed in a blue knit shirt and brown slacks, Hart then was taken across the street to the courthouse for his arraignment before Judge Whistler.

A big crowd, mostly reporters and photographers, spilled onto the street and lawns during the suspect's short walk.

Just before Hart entered the courthouse, a woman in the crowd shouted, "He didn't do it."

Two other women along the sidewalk sobbed loudly. Hart glanced at them briefly, then turned his eyes toward the door of the courthouse and was marched up three flights of steps to the courtroom.

He held copies of arrest warrants in his hands, which were tightly drawn together by handcuffs on the wrists.

In the courtroom, Hart smiled briefly and then turned back to read the complaints which were issued for his arrest shortly after he arrived at the Pryor airport.

"This is a big load off of my shoulders," said Sheriff Weaver. "We were lucky to get him just when we did. The

follage is coming out and if it had gotten any heavier, he probably would have taken off back to the hills and we would have been still searching."

Wise praised OSBI agents for their continued search, saying that his office has been kept abreast of developments.

He told reporters that he was relieved that the fugitive had been apprehended and added:

"Now the responsibility in this whole case shifts back to the district attorney's office."

As added precaution, Sheriff Weaver prohibited visitors to the jail.

He said he believed that Hart's 1973 escapes came when

friends slipped him a hacksaw which enabled him to saw his way to freedom.

In one escape, Hart is accused of fleeing across the roof of the county courthouse and dropping to the ground before disappearing.

"He's a good runner," Weaver said. "But this time he will have no visitors and we are keeping a special guard on top of his cell every minute of the night and day."

Hart Pleads Innocent in Triple Killing

By Robert B. Allen
Staff Writer

PRYOR — Gene Leroy Hart pleaded innocent Tuesday to the strangulation and beating deaths of three Girl Scouts last summer and will face a preliminary hearing June 6.

At the conclusion of his arraignment, District Judge William Whistler ordered the 34-year-old defendant returned to the Oklahoma State Penitentiary at McAlester after a motions hearing at 10 a.m. next Tuesday.

Hart was confined at the state prison overnight Thursday following his capture in Cherokee County's Cookson Hills, which ended a 10-month search.

The innocent plea for Hart, charged with three counts of first-degree murder, came in a courtroom so crowded that spectators lined the walls and packed the aisles. More than a dozen law enforcement officers stood guard.

Judge Whistler decreed that the three murder cases would be consolidated for the 10 a.m. pre-

liminary hearing in June.

Hart, a former Locust Grove high school football star, is charged with the slayings of Lori Lee Farmer, 8, Doris Denise Milner, 10, both of Tulsa, and Michelle Guse, 8, of Broken Arrow.

An estimated 300 persons congregated on the courthouse lawn as the 220-pound shackled suspect was brought across the street from his cell in the Mayes County sheriff's department.

There was no demonstration but a large sign
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Hart Enters Innocent Plea

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was posted on the lawn reading, "Help justice . . . Leroy Hart and family." The banner was erected by Mrs. Mary Jo Potts, co-operator of a Locust Grove tavern, and Mrs. Della Barnes, who describes herself as an Indian medicine woman from Terralta, near Tahlequah.

Hart's plea of innocent Tuesday afternoon was officially entered by Garvin Isaacs, an attorney for the Native American Center in Oklahoma City. Two other Oklahoma City attorneys flanked the dark-haired defendant as he stood calmly before Judge Whistler. They were R.L. Duke Wheeler and Gary Pitchlynn.

"He is not guilty of all the charges," Isaacs said slowly as Hart stood erect, staring straight at the judge.

Larry Oliver, a Tulsa attorney who was expected to be Hart's chief legal counsel, was in Pryor Tuesday but failed to make a court appearance and it was announced to the judge that he had officially withdrawn from the case.

Oliver declined to comment on the reason for his withdrawal.

Hart's alleged prior crimes. At the time of his escape, the suspect was serving a sentence for rape of a Tulsa woman.

Wise said he felt that if the defense motion was granted, it would constitute a gag order.

Three other motions filed by the defense are to be argued and will be taken up by Special Judge Jess Clanton next Tuesday. Two of the motions filed by Isaacs and his legal associates pertain to discovery, one requesting copies of chemical, medical, toxicological and fingerprint reports, while the other requests photographs, all tapes, adhesive and other evidence gathered at the scene in Camp Scott near Locust Grove where the scouts were found slain.

The defense also urged the court to make available slides of semen taken from the bodies of the victims.

The third motion contends that the court has no jurisdiction in the case and the complaint against the former Locust Grove athlete was improperly drawn.

SUPPORTERS FEAR PLOT

Moving of Hart Attacked

By Ed Montgomery
and Paul Wenske

The Court of Criminal Appeals was asked Monday to prohibit Mayes County officials from holding Gene Leroy Hart anyplace except in their county jail.

Attorneys for Hart, who faces separate

murder charges in the deaths of three camping Girl Scouts last June 13, denied that there is any substance to reports of threats to break Hart out of the county jail at Pryor.

They also denied that the three attorneys for Hart, Garvin A. Isaacs, R.L. Duke Wheeler and Gary S. Putschlynn, have any connection with the militant American Indian Movement.

"Threats of a jail break by Gene Leroy Hart are without foundation," the attorneys said in their petition to the appellate court. "Such rumors released to the press by prosecutor Sidney J. Wise, Sheriff Pete Weaver and the OSBI (Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation) are fabricated and released to the press for the purpose of denying Gene Leroy Hart a fair trial and effective assistance of counsel."

Earlier, Wheeler filed a petition for a writ of habeas corpus, alleging that Hart was moved from the Pryor jail to an undisclosed place between 8:30 a.m. Saturday and 12:30 p.m. Sunday.

Isaacs said Hart was "safe and secure" in the county jail when he visited him about 8 p.m. Saturday.

Weaver filed a response which said that Hart was being held at the state penitentiary at McAlester and was expected to return during the day Monday in response to an order issued by the Mayes County district court.

Presiding Judge Hez J. Bussey of the Court of Criminal Appeals said the three members of the appellate court were studying the filings late Monday and that no action was contemplated before Tuesday.

The attorneys, in their petition for writs of mandamus and prohibition, named as respondents Dist. Judge William J. Whistler, Dist. Attorney Wise and Weaver.

They told of numerous fruitless calls to judicial and law enforcement officials when they learned that Hart had been taken from the Pryor jail.

The defense attorneys said they have

opened an office in Pryor in anticipation of a complicated case which may involve 200 or 300 witnesses.

Meanwhile, a spokesperson for the Oklahoma American Indian Movement charged in Oklahoma City Monday that Hart is being "set up" for physical harm

by law enforcement officials who don't want the accused slayer to "make it to trial."

Protesting the movement of Hart back and forth from Pryor to the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester, state AIM leader Frances Wise said, "A Cont. on Page 2, Col. 4

Hart Shuffle Draws Fire

Cont. From Page 1

stage is being set in order for officials to get Gene Hart out of the way."

Hotly denying reports that the Indian community planned to storm the Mayes County jail to free Hart, Ma. Wise said, "Gene Hart is in the greatest danger from people within the system because they have the most to gain from his not going to trial."

She accused officials of trying to place Hart in a position where he might try to run or give them "the excuse to kill him and then to say he tried to run."

She charged officials with being fearful of the case going to trial because of "flimsy" evidence connecting Hart to the sex slayings.

"A lot of time and effort went into pointing the finger at Gene Hart," she said, claiming officials were pressured by case's notoriety to come up with a suspect after futile attempts to garner leads in the early days of the investigation.

Pryor Doctor Tests Hart Blood, Saliva Samples

By Robert B. Allen
Staff Writer

PRYOR — A Pryor doctor Tuesday took saliva, blood and hair samples from accused Girl Scout slayer Gene Leroy Hart after defense lawyers voiced no opposition to the procedure.

After an hour and a half behind guarded doors of the Grand Valley Hospital's emergency room, the 34-year-old defendant was hurriedly escorted to waiting cars and returned to the state prison at McAlester by Highway Patrol motorcade.

The samples, taken by Dr. Richard Martin, came after Special Judge Jess Clamton granted a prosecution request at the conclusion of a motions hearing.

After Mayes County District Attorney Sidney Wise introduced his motion, the judge asked Hart's defense attorneys if they had any objections to such a procedure.

"We'll give you all the spit you want from Gene Leroy Hart and all the blood if you don't take more than a pint," defense attorney Garvin Isaacs responded.

Asked by the judge about another motion, Isaacs replied, "They can have the hair, too."

Hart is charged with three counts of murder while in the commission of forcible rape. His preliminary hearing has been set for June 6 here.

The defense was granted written statements connected with the murder investigation, all technical reports with any photographs which might be attached, as well as copies of chemical, medical and toxicological findings.

The judge, however, denied Hart's lawyers access to actual physical evidence which may have been recovered at the scene of the June 13 slaying of the three Girl Scouts at Camp Scott near Locust Grove.

Fellow Inmate Relates Stevens' Story of Killing Girl Scouts, OSBI Report Says

By Judy Fossett

Saying he first studied Camp Scott as he once studied an enemy camp in Vietnam, Kansas convict William Alton Stevens allegedly told a friend he selected a tent most isolated from the rest before killing the three Girl Scouts inside, according to a statement contained in an Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation report.

The report, dated Jan. 6, details a Jan. 3 interview by OSBI agents Larry Bowles and Tom Puckett with Dwayne Peters at a Kansas prison where Peters and Stevens are serving life sentences for the rape, robbery and kidnapping of a Garden City schoolteacher.

Three days later, the agents also interviewed Stevens at the prison and quoted him as denying both the slayings and the alleged confession.

Attorneys for Gene L. Hart said Stevens was the actual slayer of the three Girl Scouts killed June 13, 1977, in the successful defense of Hart last month.

Peters is quoted as telling the agents that Stevens admitted slaying the Scouts while the two men were driving around in Stevens' car near Okmulgee Lake in October of 1977, "drinking beer and smoking marijuana."

Still quoting Peters, the report states, "Stevens further stated that he had been working on an oil drilling rig near the area of Camp Scott, and having been reared in that area, knew that Girl Scouts would be coming to Camp Scott and the date they would arrive."

"Stevens allegedly surveilled the Camp Scott area as he said he once did an enemy camp in

Vietnam, selecting a tent most isolated from the rest," the report states.

"Stevens didn't go into minute detail with Peters of the actual killings but did say he covered the lens of a flashlight with strips of tape and cut a small hole in the tape so a small amount of light would be emitted."

"He entered a tent and then showed Peters how he placed his hand over one of the girls' mouth to silence her after she awoke, but never mentioned the use of any weapon, nor did he say where or how the Girl Scouts were actually killed or what was done with their bodies."

The OSBI report quotes Peters as saying he refused to believe Stevens until he "saw him abduct a woman, beat and rape her."

Peters told the agents Stevens had borrowed a flashlight from Mrs. Joyce Paine shortly before the Girl Scouts were killed, and described it as a two-cell silver flashlight. He also drew agents a picture of it, the report states.

The flashlight Mrs. Paine identified during her testimony at Hart's murder trial as being the one she loaned to Stevens is a red plastic lantern-type light.

Stevens, a former resident of Seminole and Okmulgee counties, told agents he was unfamiliar with the Camp Scott area, had never worked on an oil drilling rig in that area, had never owned a flashlight like the one found at the camp and "had never heard of Camp Scott" before hearing about the killings.



William Alton Stevens

Perjury Trial Testimony Countered

By Mary Jean Sell

PRYOR — A Kansas convict, testifying here Tuesday in the perjury trial of Joyce Paine and Larry Short, said he first found out they had implicated him in the 1977 slaying of three Oklahoma Girl Scouts when he read newspaper accounts of the Gene Leroy Hart trial in his prison cell.

Bill Stevens, who testified for more than four hours Tuesday, disputed testimony by Mrs. Paine and her son at Hart's 1979 trial.

The pair testified Stevens came to their Okmulgee home the morning the three young girls were found slain at Camp Scott near Locust Grove. They testified Stevens had scratch marks on his arm and face, and red stains on his boots that morning.

The defense used the testimony to suggest it was possible that Stevens, and not Hart, killed the girls.

At the Hart trial, Mrs. Paine also identified a flashlight found at the scene of the slayings as one she had loaned to Stevens and said he had never returned it.

Mrs. Paine and Short were arrested on perjury charges shortly after Hart's acquittal. Hart later died of a heart attack in prison where he was serving terms on other convictions.

Stevens said Tuesday he was working on a Seminole construction site the morning the bodies were found because he remembered hearing about the triple slayings on news broadcasts that day.

Stevens was convicted in 1977 of kidnapping, robbing and raping a Garden City woman and is imprisoned at a Kansas reformatory.

The convict said he did not learn he was implicated in the Girl Scout killings until a prison guard brought a newspaper story to him in his cell about Mrs. Paine's testimony at the Hart trial.

That night, Stevens said, he was moved from the cell he shared with Mrs. Paine's common-law husband, Dwayne Peters, to an isolation cell.

Defense attorneys objected to Stevens being called as a witness, claiming he was not on a list of prospective witnesses given them by the prosecution.

District Judge Byron Ed Williams, however, allowed Stevens to take the stand, saying the defense had known the convict was being kept in the Pryor jail, and had not taken the opportunity to question him or the witness list.

Scouts' Deaths Remain Unsolved

By Robby Trammell
Staff Writer

"I have never at any time had any doubt that Gene Leroy Hart was totally, completely innocent."

So says prominent Oklahoma City defense attorney Garvin A. Isaacs 16 years after the brutal slayings of three young Girl Scouts at Camp Scott near Locust Grove.

The June 13, 1977, deaths, described as a "gruesome massacre" and a "horror movie come true," shocked the nation and led to one of the largest manhunts in Oklahoma history.

The sensational case, which *The Oklahoman* extensively covered, ranks as one of the state's most notorious and controversial unsolved crimes.

Hart, a convicted rapist who had been

on the run since escaping from the Mayes County Jail at Pryor in 1973, was charged with the slayings on June 20, 1977. His mother lived near Camp Scott.

He eluded the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation for 10 months before agents captured him in a backwoods shack in the Cookson Hills of Cherokee County.

On March 30, 1979, Hart was acquitted after a monthlong trial in the slayings of Michele Guse, 9, of Broken Arrow; and Lori Lee Farmer, 8, and Doris Denise Milner, 10, both of Tulsa.

Their molested, bludgeoned or strangled bodies were found stuffed inside sleeping bags outside their bloody tent. They had been murdered on their first night of summer

camp, having arrived the prior day with some 140 other Scouts.

In a bizarre twist of fate, Hart died just over two months later on June 4, 1979, after suffering a heart attack while jogging at the state penitentiary in McAlester. Hart, 35, was serving sentences for earlier rape, burglary and escape convictions.

The untimely death led to speculation that the inmate himself may have been murdered, but his attorney is convinced Hart's death was due to a bad heart.

"Dr. Fred Jordan, who is our medical examiner, is a man that I know and respect. He did the autopsy on Gene Leroy Hart and he and I have discussed that autopsy," Isaacs said. "His autopsy findings were that Hart had ... three

arteries that were 95 or 98 percent blocked and the other arteries were not those of a healthy person."

Isaacs said Hart's brother died of a heart attack at age 38 and his father died of a heart condition when

he was a young man.

Most investigators, including then-Mayes County Sheriff Pete Weaver, continued to maintain Hart was the killer. The state bureau of investigation still has the case open, but inactive.

Truth, Attorney Testifies

By Robert B. Allen

PRYOR — Attorney Garvin Isaacs, who successfully defended Gene Leroy Hart in his 1979 murder trial, testified Friday that Joyce Paine told the truth in linking another man to the slaying of three Girl Scouts.

The Oklahoma City lawyer was the lead witness for Mrs. Paine's defense.

Earlier Friday, prosecutors rested their case in the fourth day of the perjury trial here for Mrs. Paine, 40, and her 19-year-old son, Larry Short.

"I took every precaution to make sure no perjury was committed," Isaacs told a seven-woman, five-man district court jury.

"Mrs. Paine contacted me and advised she had information on a man identified as Bill A. Stevens."

Isaacs said Mrs. Paine told him Stevens had appeared at her Okmulgee home early June 13, 1977, the day three young girls were found dead at a scout camp near Locust Grove.

He said Mrs. Paine claimed Stevens had arm lacerations

and what appeared to be blood stains on his boots.

Stevens currently is serving a 15-year-to-life sentence in Kansas for the abduction, robbery and rape of a Garden City, Kan., woman five months after the Girl Scout slayings.

Isaacs' testimony triggered a heated exchange between defense and prosecutors when he tried to elaborate on some answers. The uproar caused snickering and laughing from spectators, and District Judge Byron Ed Williams cleared the courtroom.

One of the largest crowds since the trial began was on hand Friday. Among the spectators were Dr. and Mrs. Charles Farmer, Tulsa, parents of one of the scout victims. Another parent of a victim, Richard Guse of Broken Arrow, was at Thursday's proceedings.

More trouble erupted later in the day when prosecutor Austin O. Webb asked the judge to strike the testimony of Isaacs and lawyer Barry Cousins, who served as a defense investigator at Hart's trial.

Webb accused Cousins, who also appeared as a witness, of discussing the case outside the courtroom and comparing notes with other witnesses. The charge prompted Williams to dismiss the jury an hour early while attorneys argued the point. The judge later refused to strike the testimony.

During his testimony, Isaacs emphatically denied he had offered a possible parole to Dwayne Peters, 22, who first said Stevens confessed to him that he murdered the scouts.

Peters, who also is serving a Kansas sentence, testified earlier that he first claimed he had obtained a confession from Stevens because it had been suggested by Mrs. Paine, his girlfriend. He later denied it and said his claim was really a hoax.

Cousins, a Lawton attorney said he visited Peters at the Kansas prison and heard the original story, but that on March 19, 1979, Peters denied he had ever obtained a confession.

Hart was found innocent of the scout slayings.

Gene Hart Cousin Arrested in Rape Of Teen Relative

By Jim Etter
Staff Writer

PRYOR — A cousin of the late Gene Leroy Hart who gave investigators "valuable information" implicating Hart in the sex-slayings of three Girl Scouts two years ago has been charged with raping a 13-year-old girl, authorities confirmed Thursday.

The alleged rape victim is also a relative of the suspect, authorities said.

Jon Clayton Potts, 23, Locust Grove, was freed from the Mayes County jail Thursday after posting \$10,000 bond on the first-degree rape charge, said Sheriff Pete Weaver. An Aug. 16 preliminary hearing date was set.

Potts, who lived in the vicinity of the Girl Scout Camp near Locust Grove where the three young girls were slain June 13, 1977, was questioned by authorities soon after the murders but was ruled out as a suspect, authorities said.

"He was talked to. In fact, he was talked to during the early stages of the investigation. He provided some valuable information to us, and shortly after that

Hart was charged," Weaver said.

Potts had told investigators he was Hart's cousin, but apparently was not well acquainted with Hart, 33, who was a fugitive from the Mayes County jail at the time the Scouts were killed, the sheriff said. Hart was acquitted of the murder charges by a jury last March and died in June of a heart attack.

Potts was arrested and charged after the girl told Locust Grove police on Sunday a man entered her home where she was sleeping with three other children, forced her at knifepoint drive with him to a backcountry road near Salina where she was raped three times.

The girl also told police she was raped about three weeks before by the same man under similar circumstances. She told police he told her she would be killed if she told authorities.

Weaver said that in the Girl Scouts slaying investigation, Potts "identified mug shots of Hart and had Hart at the scene within a matter of hours of the time the murders were com-

mitted," Weaver said.

Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation spokesman Ted Limpke reiterated that Potts was ruled out as a suspect during the probe of the Scout murders and that he still is not a suspect. "Our investigation from his standpoint didn't pan out. It didn't jell in his direction," he said.

'System' to Nab Scouts' Killer?

By Paul Wensko

LOCUST GROVE — It's only a matter of time until the "system" catches up with Gene Leroy Hart, suspect in the slaying of three Girl Scouts near here June 13, a law enforcement official said Thursday.

Saying it won't be by "Sherlock Holmesian" deductions or by personal heroics, a spokesman for the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation predicted "the system is going to catch Gene Hart."

"The law of averages is going to prevail and he's (Hart) going to be at the right place at the wrong time with the right individual and

he's going to be caught," the spokesman said.

The OSBI spokesman said the latest development in the search for Hart, a message dated "7-17-77" and left on the wall of a cave near the death scene, is going to add little to the hunt.

"It doesn't get us any closer," the spokesman said.

The message, boldly lettered, on the walls of a cave located just west of Camp Scott, mocked searchers with the words, "The killer was here . . . Bye bye fools."

Fallis' Role in Slayings Case Hinged on Time

By Robert B. Allen

PRYOR — Tulsa County District Attorney S. M. "Buddy" Fallis Jr., who was called in to help prosecute Gene LeRoy Hart, may be relieved of those duties if the controversial defendant does not go on trial until early next year, it was disclosed Thursday.

T. Jack Graves, newly elected district attorney for Mayes County where Hart faces three murder charges, said Thursday he is

undecided whether to ask Fallis to join his staff as a special prosecutor.

Hart is charged in the slaying of three Girl Scouts on June 13, 1977, at Camp Scott near Locust Grove. District Judge William Whistler has tentatively set Hart's trial date for Nov. 27, but observers say it is unlikely the case will begin before early January.

Sidney Wise, the present Mayes County prosecutor, did not seek re-election and is

scheduled to leave office in the first week of January. Wise requested and received Fallis' assistance during the 34-year-old murder defendant's three-week preliminary hearing two months ago.

Graves said he will take charge of the prosecution when he assumes office, but has not reached a decision on whether to ask for Fallis' help. He said he attended three days of the preliminary hearing and kept up with the case in news

accounts.

"I intend to fully review the case before deciding whether to seek Buddy Fallis' assistance," said Graves, who won the Democratic nomination Tuesday and faces no Republican opposition.

"I would be a fool not to request Mr. Fallis to help if we decide we need him. But it is too early to make a definite decision at this point."

Meanwhile, Fallis, who handled much of the prosecution's case

during the preliminary hearing, said the decision of whether he assists in the trial will be entirely up to Graves.

"We responded to the request of Mr. Wise and if the new district attorney desires, we will certainly lend ourselves to him," Fallis said. "But it certainly is his decision."

Wise, who ran unsuccessfully for the attorney general's office in this week's primary election, said he is hopeful Graves will keep Fallis on the case if the trial does not begin until after Wise has left the district attorney's office.

Wise, who coordinated the investigation and headed the prosecution team during the preliminary hearing, said he brought Fallis into the case to give it "continuity and on the basis of Buddy Fallis' exceptional experience and ability as an aggressive prosecutor."

"If the Hart trial begins in November as scheduled, Mr. Fallis very definitely will again assist with the state's prosecution," said Wise, who said he will stay in office until the last day of his term.

"I will resist passing this case to my successor until my term expires," Wise said.

The prosecution has asked the court to try Hart separately on each of the three murder counts, but defense attorneys recently filed a motion requesting that the cases be consolidated for trial, just as they were during the preliminary hearing earlier this summer.

Graves said that if the defendant is tried separately for each homicide, he is hopeful at least one trial would be concluded before he takes over as prosecutor.

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Counts Junked Against 2 Men In Hart Search

By Jim Etter
Staff Writer

TAHLEQUAH — Cherokee County District Attorney John Russell said Thursday he is dropping criminal charges filed more than two years ago against two men who were accused of hiding Gene Leroy Hart while he was hunted as a suspect in the 1977 murders of three Girl Scouts.

He said the two men were guilty of "no willful violation of the white man's law, but adherence to Indian customs."

"It's time we closed these files," he said.

Russell said he is dismissing felony counts of harboring a fugitive against William Lee Smith, 60, of rural Vian, who was known among the Cherokee tribe as a "medicine man," and Sam Pigeon, 68, a laborer in a Tahlequah nursery who lives in the Tailholt community in Cherokee County. They were named in the charges April 12, 1978.



Sam Pigeon

Scout Board Selling Site of Campers' Unsolved Murders

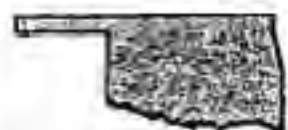
LOCUST GROVE
(AP) — A camp that was the site of the unsolved murders of three Girl Scouts 11 years ago is for sale, scout officials say.

"It was determined by the board that we would not be using that site, so we are selling it," said Bonnie Brewster, director of the Magic Empire Council of the Girl Scouts.

Camp Scott, owned by the Tulsa-based council since 1928, has not been used since the June 1977 murders.

"We're selling it because we don't use it anymore and that's about all there is to say about it," Brewster said.

Three Tulsa County Girl Scouts — Lori



Farmer, Denise Milner and Michelle Guse — were slain at the camp 11 years ago.

The deaths touched off a \$2 million manhunt, which was one of the most intensive searches in state history.

Authorities believed that Gene Leroy Hart, a prison escapee who was under a sentence for rape and kidnapping convictions at the time of the girls' deaths, was the culprit. But a Mayes County jury later acquitted the Locust Grove resident of murder charges.

Hart died of a heart attack shortly after returning to the Oklaho-

ma State Penitentiary at McAlester to complete his term for the rape and kidnapping charges.

A local prosecutor said the Camp Scott

case is "officially open" but probably inactive.

"I think they (law enforcement) have always thought that they had the right man,"

the prosecutor said.

An OSBI agent who was involved in the 1977 case said state agents are still working on the case.

"The OSBI is still fol-

lowing up on any leads as they come in, if they appear to be worth investigating, and in some cases if they don't appear worth investigating," he said.

Corban Development Corp. president Gregory McLane said the 180-acre site is valued "in the range of \$225,000."

The camp is densely

forested with big pine trees over most of the property, he said.

Council officials said several acres on the south end of the former camp site were sold

last spring.

Brewster said the remaining land has been on the market "officially" for several months, but the sign was erected only last month.

KANSAS OFFICIALS CITE DESIRE FOR PARDON

Inmate Reportedly Lied

By Judy Fossett
Staff Writer

PRYOR — A purported confession by an Oklahoma man imprisoned in Kansas that he killed three Girl Scouts in 1977 was part of a plan concocted by inmate DeWayne Peters and his common-law wife, Joyce Paine, to win a pardon for Peters, a Kansas crime bureau report contends.

The report is dated March 25, just two days before Mrs. Paine testified at the murder trial of Gene Leroy Hart that Bill Stevens had come to her Okmulgee home the morning of the Girl Scout slaying with what appeared to be blood on his shoes. She also said a flashlight found at the scene of the killings was one she had loaned to Stevens.

Mrs. Paine and her son, Larry, were bound over for trial Thursday on charges they committed perjury when they testified they saw

Stevens that morning.

Mayes County Associate District Judge Bill Thomas Thursday ordered the two held for jury trial after hearing testimony from a Wolf couple that Stevens was working for them on a construction job in Seminole on the morning the bodies of the three Girl Scouts were found at Camp Scott, near Locust Grove.

The Kansas Bureau of Investigation report was not used during the preliminary hearing. However, Assistant District Attorney Austin Webb said Peters and Stevens are expected to testify for the prosecution at the trial of Mrs. Paine and her son in the fall.

Both Peters and Stevens are imprisoned at a Kansas reformatory on life sentences in the November 1977 kidnapping-robbery-rape of a Garden City teacher.

The KBI report shows Peters told agents about the plan to blame

the Girl Scout murders on Stevens on March 19, after Hart's trial had started. The statement was a reversal of an earlier statement to Oklahoma agents in which he said Stevens had confessed to killing the Girl Scouts.

Stevens emerged as a central figure in the trial of Hart last spring when Hart's attorney, Garvin Isaacs, said it was Stevens who killed the three Scouts.

Prosecutor S.M. Fallis said Stevens was a straw man concocted by the defense to confuse the jury. An expert witness called by the prosecution said examination of sperm samples taken from Stevens eliminated him as a suspect in the Girl Scout case.

According to the KBI report, Peters reversed his earlier story that Stevens had confessed the slayings to him, and told investigators he and Mrs. Paine tried to

blame the killings on Stevens in order to win a pardon for himself.

Investigating agents said Peters told them in March he thought he would be transferred to an Oklahoma prison during the investigation and trial of Stevens, and that eventually he would receive a pardon in exchange for his testimony.

The report says Peters enlisted Mrs. Paine's help in seeing to it that Stevens' alleged involvement came to the attention of the authorities.

A polygraph examination administered to Peters in March at the request of Lewis Ambler, Mrs. Paine's attorney, shows Peters was telling the truth when he said Stevens had not confessed the killings to him.

Agents of the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation interviewed Peters in January at the Kansas reformatory

after Mrs. Paine and her attorney told them about Stevens' alleged involvement in the Girl Scout case. OSBI reports show Peters told agents Stevens had confessed the killings.

Mrs. Paine and her sons Larry and Owen Short were used as defense witnesses after the three passed lie detector tests administered in early March in Tulsa. The questions asked during that examination focused on the flashlight found at the scene of the murders which Mrs. Paine and her sons said belonged to her.

Neither the questions asked the three nor the questions asked during the polygraph examination of Peters dealt specifically with whether Stevens showed up at Mrs. Paine's home the morning the girls were killed.

That testimony by Mrs. Paine and Larry Short is the basis for the perjury charge.

Gene Leroy Hart Eludes Hunters

By Robert B. Allen
Staff Writer

LOCUST GROVE — Mayes County Sheriff Pete Weaver stood gazing up at the dark hills in northeastern Oklahoma, then grimly observed: "Some folks disagree, but I say he's still in there somewhere. We'll get him. No man can hide forever."

Yet as the six-month anniversary of the brutal Camp Scott murders of three Girl Scouts nears, Gene Leroy Hart remains at large.

FBI agents continue to filter in and out of this rugged Mayes County hill country. Three agents of the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation have been assigned to the area almost around-the-clock, and the 56-year-old Weaver has turned most of his regular duties over to his undersheriff to devote nearly full time to the June 13 crime that shocked both the state and nation.

The case will be six months old Tuesday, still without a trace of the 34-year-old wanted fugitive, who already has served prison terms for rape, kidnapping and burglary. Actually, Hart has been sought since 1973 when he fled the county jail at Pryor while awaiting a hearing stemming from his burglary conviction.

But what has amounted to probably Oklahoma's most discouraging manhunt in years started shortly after that warm Monday morning in June when a counselor at nearby Camp Scott came upon a horrible scene.

Still in their sleeping bags were the beaten and strangled bodies of Lori Lee Farmer, 8, and Doris Denise Milner, 10, both of Tulsa, and Michele Guse, 9, Broken Arrow. It had been their first night in camp as they gathered with nearly 140 other girls for a summer scout outing at the 40-year-old campsite.

Investigators said the small victims probably were slain inside their tents before their bodies were dragged into a clearing in one section of the 410-acre camp. All three had been sexually molested.

"The case is never far from our minds," said Dist. Atty. Sid Wise, who says hardly a day passes without at least one tip or possible lead. So far, they've all proved fruitless.

A letter to the sheriff's office this past week suggested Hart's hiding place. It didn't pan out.

Jeff Laird, director of the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, visited the area this past week. It was learned, raising speculation that a break in the case might be near. Nothing happened.

Some local residents scoff at the theory that Hart, a native of the rugged hill country, still is in the area, although reports have surfaced that he has been seen in recent weeks in Locust Grove, where he once was a high school football hero.

"You can hear all kinds of stories," said a local merchant, "but you have to discount most of them. As terrible as the tragedy was, we just wish we could put it behind us and return to normal."

Then shaking his head, he added: "I guess that's just too much to hope — unless they finally catch him."

So far, Hart has managed to elude some of the most experienced county, state and federal lawmen, who spearheaded a search force that at one time numbered more than 200.

Trained dogs were unable to track him down. Airplanes with sophisticated heat sensors found only wild animals.

Both Weaver and Wise believe Hart is constantly shifting from house to house in the hills south of here and "holing up" with relatives and friends. The suspect's mother, however, insists her son is innocent and hasn't been in Mayes County in years.

"They've gone over my house with a fine tooth comb, and they've harassed me," said Mrs. Ella Mae Buckskin. "But he's not around here. I don't think he is even in Oklahoma."

There are others who are inclined to agree with the Locust Grove mother.

One officer, who asked not to be identified, said: "He's probably sitting on a curb with a bunch of his Indian friends in Albuquerque, N.M., while we're out hunting here." Hart is a Cherokee.

Pryor editor Ron Grimsley, who acted as the district attorney's in-

formation officer at the height of the search last summer, also doubts that Hart still is in Mayes County.

"In all due respect to the sheriff, it is simply unrealistic to believe anybody can live in those hills for six months without somebody coming across him," Grimsley said.

Sheriff Weaver, however, believes that Hart needs the support and help he can find only in the hills where he has friends and relatives.

"There's too much heat on him to hide out anywhere else in the country," Weaver said, stressing that the area will continue as the focal point in the search for the elusive fugitive.

Meanwhile, Camp Scott is a ghost town. It has been closed since the slayings and remains hauntingly quiet, except for the occasional noise of chain saws clearing away trees around campsites.

The Magic Empire Council of Girl Scouts hopes to reopen the camp in 1979 by bolstering security measures with additional guards, well-lighted park settings and tree thinning to make areas more visible.

"But this camp probably will never be the same again," said camp ranger Ben Woodward, who estimat-

ed a fourth of the trees will be gone before the area is again opened.

"There will be a lot more security when we get going again," he said. "But we've got to catch the killer of those little girls before anybody is going to feel safe again."

In the six months since the slayings, parents of two of the victims have filed a \$3 million damage suit against the girl scout organization, charging negligence.

Already, more than \$15,000 has been raised in a reward fund for the arrest and conviction of the person responsible for the murders.

Gov. David Boren says he is continuing to keep in close touch with the situation and has instructed state investigators to maintain all-out efforts in solving the case. He announced this past week that his office is prepared to furnish any additional manpower, if needed.

Frustration is not the only emotion that the gruesome death case stirs in Weaver. There is also fear. He fears that while he and his men chase dead-end leads, the killer will kill again.

"I vow we'll get him," Weaver said. "It may be in the next five minutes — maybe in the next five years."

Inmate Claims Hart Death Makes Him Target for Revenge

By Ed Kelley
Staff Writer

McALESTER — An Oklahoma City convict claimed Sunday that the death of Gene Leroy Hart, once accused of killing three Girl Scouts, and a mysterious poison have made him a target for assassination inside the Oklahoma State Penitentiary.

Jesse E. Cochran used an appear-

ance before the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board to plead for release "to take the heat off me" from possibly vengeful convicts still incensed that he collaborated with prison officials shortly after Hart's death.

"This man is walking with death at his shoulder constantly, with what he's done here to better this institution," declared Ed Edmondson,

Paroles OK'd

—Page 9

the inmate's attorney.

The parole board rejected Cochran's plea, partly because he has a record of drug use while incarcerated.

Still, his story of how he allegedly uncovered a large amount of poison as a "pickup man" for prison offi-

cials attracted considerable attention from the clemency panel, meeting at the state penitentiary here.

He blamed Hart's death on June 4, 1979, as the event that "brought all the heat on me," and led to his unusual agreement between he and then Warden Norman Hess' staff.

Hart, 35, collapsed while jogging in the prison yard, and an autopsy showed he died of a heart attack.

Several weeks before his death, Hart was acquitted in the June 13, 1977, slayings of three Girl Scouts at a northeastern Oklahoma summer camp. Following the murder trial, Hart returned to the penitentiary to resume serving other prison terms dating back to 1966.

Cochran — serving a 10-year to life sentence for the 1974 strangulation death of an Oklahoma City

woman — said he was working in the prison hospital when news of Hart's death quickly circulated through the prison population.

Despite the autopsy's findings, many inmates, Cochran said, believed Hart was actually poisoned.

"All the Indians started coming over to the infirmary to me, wanting to know what kind of poison it was,"

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Inmate

From Page 1

Cochran, 48, said.

The group — which knew Hart well because he was a Cherokee Indian — considered contacting Cherokee tribal officials if foul play was involved, Cochran told the parole board.

Later, when rumors circulated that there "was enough poison in here to kill everybody in McAlester," Cochran said he was asked by Hess' staff to find the powdery substance and bring it to prison officials.

In return for his help, Cochran said he was promised he would be aided at a 1979 appearance before the board.

That claim has been denied by Hess and for-

mer Deputy Warden Bill Arends, although Cochran was later transferred to the Stringtown Correctional Center, about 30 miles south of here.

Cochran said he received the poison from an inmate — named Lucky Williams, who is now dead.

Edmondson, of Muskogee, said the convict has received support from more than 20 guards and officials here for his undercover work.

"I don't think there's any question he's put himself in danger for what he's done for as long as he's behind

these walls," Edmondson said.

Parole board members cited Cochran's drug use at Stringtown and a protest from Oklahoma City authorities who described him as a "serious threat to society" as reasons for his denial.

Disqualify Prosecutors, Attorney for Hart Asks

By Ed Montgomery

An attorney for Gene Leroy Hart asked the state Court of Criminal Appeals Thursday to disqualify three prosecutors from participating in Hart's murder trial.

Hart is scheduled to go on trial March 5 at Pryor. He faces three counts of first-degree murder in the deaths of three Girl Scouts near Locust Grove in Mayes County in 1977.

Garvin A. Isaacs, Oklahoma City attorney representing Hart, asked the appellate court to disqualify District Attorney S. M. Fallis Jr. of Tulsa, Ron Shaffer of Fallis' office and Royce Hobbs, who was an assistant to former District Attorney Sidney D. Wise whose district included Mayes County.

District Judge William J. Whistler of Vinita overruled motions to disqualify the prosecutors on Nov. 28.

A brief filed by Isaacs takes the position that Fallis, Shaffer and Hobbs were all Wise's assistants at the time the lower court motion to disqualify was filed.

The brief refers to allegations that Wise had a financial interest in the Hart case because he had signed a co-authorship agreement with R. L. Grimsley of Cushing, a former newspaperman, to write a book about the case.

"Public trust and confidence have been undermined, and all prosecutors should be disqualified," Isaacs'

brief says. "Prosecutor Wise is no longer in office, but his assistants Fallis, Shaffer and Hobbs remain in the case. The law requires that every citizen including the accused have confidence in our

prosecutors."

Isaacs asked the Court of Criminal Appeals to hear oral arguments on his petition at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday and to stay trial proceedings until it has reached a decision.

Parole Board Asks Mercy For Convict

By a Staff Writer

GRANITE — Clemency was unanimously recommended Sunday for a 25-year-old Mayes County man convicted of raping one of two Tulsa women he was accused of kidnapping and locking in the trunk of his automobile.

In reaccounting the 1966 crime, Gene Leroy Hart admitted before the pardon and parole board that he assaulted one of the women. He denied, however, that either the 19-year-old victim or her friend was kidnapped.

Hart is serving two 10-year concurrent sentences in the state reformatory at Granite after being convicted on rape and kidnap charges.

Questioned by board members, Hart said that publicity and evidence brought out at his trial was only partially true. He was convicted of taking the two women at gunpoint near a Tulsa night club and driving them across the line into Mayes County where one of the women was assaulted.

Hart was one of more than 60 reformatory inmates being considered for parole at the clemency group's two-day meeting.

Hart Lawyers Ask Halt

PRYOR (AP) — Attorneys for Gene Leroy Hart, charged with first-degree murder in the June 13, 1977, slaying of three Girl Scouts, have asked a district court judge to declare unconstitutional the questioning of prospective jurors on their feelings concerning imposition of the death penalty.

Hart is scheduled to face trial March 5 in the slayings of the three Tulsa-area Scouts on the first day of what was to have been a two-week encampment at Camp Scott near Locust Grove.

Hart was returned to the Mayes County jail Friday from the state prison at McAlester, where he has spent most of his time since his capture last April.

Hart had been a fugitive for nearly five years following an escape from the Mayes County jail when he was charged with three counts of first-degree murder 10 days after the girls' bodies were found with their sleeping bags. He was captured more than nine

months later at a shack some 50 miles from the camp.

Garvin Isaacs, Hart's chief defense attorney, said in a motion filed Friday that the use of "death qualifications" during jury selection violated Hart's right to an impartial jury.

That phase of jury questioning "excludes from the jury an identifiable segment of the community opposed to the death penalty," Isaacs said.

In another motion filed Friday, Isaacs asked that the panel of 900 prospective jurors be quashed because the method of selecting the panel through voter registrations denies "full participation of native Americans in the jury process," thus

denying Hart the right to a "fair trial by a jury of his peers."

Hart is a Cherokee.

A third motion filed Friday asks for further preliminary hearing, contending that additional witnesses for the state were endorsed after the month-long preliminary hearing ended last summer.

Hart was bound over following that hearing

for trial in the deaths of Lori Farmer, 8, Doris Denise Milner, 10, both of Tulsa, and Michelle Guse, 9, of Broken Arrow.

District Judge William Whistler is expected to receive the defense motion in a hearing Monday.

'BISECTOMY' LISTED

Medical Entry For Hart Odd

By Judy Fossett

Gene Leroy Hart had a "bisectomy" in 1965, his prison medical record dated in 1966 shows.

But what is a bisectomy?

Medical personnel say there is no type of surgery by that name and that because the word "bisect" means to cut something in two, the term bisectomy is meaningless standing alone.

There have been widespread reports in the Pryor-Locust Grove area that Hart, accused in the slaying of three Girl Scouts last June, underwent a vasectomy in the 1960s. So perhaps the use of the term bisectomy is actually a misprint.

Hart's attorney Garvin Isaacs first said only "no comment" when asked if his client had undergone a vasectomy, then said, "I don't know."

Employees in the surgery department of the University of Oklahoma Medical School said Friday they had never heard of a bisectomy. OU urologist Dr. James Geyer said the term was meaningless to him and suggested it could be a type of knee operation.

But OU orthopedist Dr. Richard Gross said the term meant only to cut something in half and suggested it could refer to a vasectomy. In that operation, the vas deferens, a tube, is cut to sterilize the male patient. If the operation is successful, no sperm would be found in the semen.

The sterility question could be key to both defense and prosecution in the Hart case since there has been conflicting testimony during this month's preliminary hearing over whether semen and sperm were found in the bodies of the slain scouts.

Law Officers Threatened

PRYOR — A man who once signed a motel register as "Gene Leroy Hart" has been making threats against Mayes County lawmen who arrested Hart, Sheriff Pete Weaver said Wednesday.

Weaver said an informant has told him the unidentified man made various threats to "cause some trouble" during the preliminary hearing for Hart, charged in the slayings of three Girl Scouts.

The informant was "evasive — he didn't specify what the man was going to do," Weaver said.

Weaver said his office "knew the individual the informant was referring to — this individual had checked into a motel as Gene Hart."

Weaver said the threats were "nothing out of the ordinary in a case of this magnitude which has received this much publicity."

Kansas Links Probed In Girl Scout Incidents

By Judy Fossett

TOPEKA, Kan. — Authorities here have exchanged information with the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation in an attempt to see if there is any link between the 1977 slayings of three Oklahoma Girl Scouts at Locust Grove, OK, and a Wednesday morning incident at a scout camp just southwest of here, an investigator said Thursday.

Shawnee County Sheriff's Detective Jerry Federgreen said he has spoken to OSBI Agent Cary Thurman, who is mailing him information about possible suspects in the continuing investigation of the Oklahoma case.

In the Kansas incident, Federgreen said a counselor at Camp Daisy Hindman awoke when she heard a noise shortly after midnight. She discovered a nude man wearing only shoes in a tent where "five or six" girls aged 12 and 13 were sleeping.

The counselor chased

and caught the man, who hit her on the head with a flashlight and fled.

While OSBI officials maintain their position that Gene Leroy Hart killed the three Tulsa area Scouts at Camp Scott on June 13, 1977, the case remained officially open with Hart's acquittal of murder charges last spring.

Hart, 35, died of a

heart attack in June at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary.

Federgreen said Thurman told him at the time the Oklahoma girls were killed, investigators received reports of similar incidents which occurred in the past but have received none since.

The detective said if a link between the two incidents exists, the

suspect involved might have been in prison or other institution for the past two years.

The man in the Kansas camp is described as being 20 to 25 years old, five feet, 11 inches tall, with long, blond hair tied in a pony tail.

On his chest is a red and white tattoo of a skull and crossbones about five to six inches in diameter.

Answers About Scout Murders Die With Stabbed Ex-Suspect

By Judy Rossell

Did Kansas prison inmate William A. Stevens really have something to do with the 1977 murders of three Girl Scouts near Locust Grove, as his co-defendant in a brutal kidnapping once alleged?

Or was the former Okmulgee man a victim himself of a bizarre scheme designed to win freedom for his co-defendant and cellmate?

The answers died with Stevens, 27, on Saturday when he was stabbed to death in his cell at the Kansas State Penitentiary at Lansing. His body was discovered as prisoners were going to breakfast shortly before 6:30 a.m., penitentiary spokesman Troy Baker said.

Stevens, then 22, became a key figure in the 1979 murder trial of Gene Leroy Hart when an Okmulgee woman and her son testified Stevens had come to their home the day the Girl Scouts were killed with scratches on his arms and red stains on his shoes. They also linked a flashlight found at the murder scene to Stevens.

The woman's boyfriend — Stevens' co-defendant DeWayne Peters, who also was Stevens' cellmate — earlier had told Oklahoma authorities that Stevens once claimed to have killed the girls while having war-game hallucinations.

Peters, of Wewoka said he re-

fused to believe Stevens until he "saw him abduct a woman, beat and rape her."

Stevens always maintained he was working in Seminole the day Lori Farmer, Michelle Guse and Doris Denise Milner were killed at Camp Scott. Stevens' employers confirmed his story with a canceled paycheck and a time-card.

Later, Peters recanted his tale of Stevens' purported confession and said his girlfriend, Joyce Ellen Paine, fed him bits and pieces of information about the case so his story linking Stevens to the crime would sound more credible.

Peters said Mrs. Paine thought that if he implicated his fellow inmate, he might be freed or transferred to an Oklahoma prison.

Mrs. Paine, however, denied concocting a story.

Despite her denials, Mrs. Paine and her son, Larry Short, were charged with perjury. After one trial ended with the jury deadlocked, she pleaded no contest to a reduced misdemeanor charge of compounding a felony and was sentenced in early 1981 to a suspended six-month term.

The charge against her son was dismissed.

Although Stevens had been eliminated by the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation as a suspect before the trial of Hart

began in the spring of 1977, Hart's lawyer, Garvin Isaacs, said Sunday he continued to think of Stevens as a suspect.

Isaacs told *The Oklahoman* he still has questions about that flashlight, which Mrs. Paine said she had given to Stevens and which her son said he had repaired. Both identified it by the scratches and tape on it.

Isaacs said he also wonders about one unidentified fingerprint on the flashlight, which he thought may have belonged to Stevens.

And he said he still thinks about the testimony of Mrs. Dean Boyd, a waitress in Chouteau, 12 miles from Camp Scott, who contacted defense attorneys during Hart's trial after seeing a photograph of Stevens on television.

Mrs. Boyd testified as a rebuttal witness for the defense that a man who looked "too much" like Stevens came into the cafe where she worked between 5 a.m. and 6 a.m. on June 13, 1977.

"He took his shirt off," Mrs. Boyd said, "and he kept looking down at his hands. He said something about car trouble. I noticed he also kept looking at his boots."

Mrs. Boyd testified the man frightened her and that she called authorities after he left.

Probe Should Continue, Says DA

TULSA (AP) — Questions surrounding the 1977 slayings of three Girl Scouts at a northeastern Oklahoma summer camp remain unanswered, and for that reason the investigation should continue, Tulsa County District Attorney S.M. Fallis Jr. says.

Fallis prosecuted Gene Leroy Hart on three charges of first-degree murder in the slayings at Camp Scott near Locust Grove.

Hart was acquitted March 30 and died following a heart attack at the state prison June 4 while serving time for earlier convictions.

Fallis said his opinion had not changed about the case.

"Quite frankly, in my mind there is no question about the man's guilt," Fallis said.

"But I think the investigation will and should continue because I'm satisfied there had to be many people hide him (Hart), there had to be many people concealing evidence, and there have to be many people who have knowledge of the

crime," Fallis said.

"There could have been more than one person involved..." he said.

Hart was charged 10 days after the June 13, 1977 slayings of Lori Lee Farmer, 8, Michele Guse, 9, and Doris Denise Milner, 10. He had been a fugitive following a September 1973 escape from the Mayes County jail. Hart

was recaptured April 6, 1978 at a cabin 50 miles from the camp.

Fallis, in a Wednesday speech before the Tulsa Downtown Rotary Club, revealed a state fertility expert examined laboratory slides taken from Hart during an autopsy on his body.

Dr. John MacLeod compared sperm taken in the autopsy with

samples of sperm he earlier recovered from underwear taken from Hart while he was jailed.

MacLeod said he found nothing to change an opinion he stated at the trial. He said samples from Hart and from the bodies of the victims revealed similar numbers of deformed or decomposed sperm.

State Patrol Goes Home

By Ed Kelley

LOCUST GROVE —

The search for the man charged in the sex slayings of three Girl Scouts at nearby Camp Scott June 13 was reduced Thursday as the last of 50 highway patrol troopers were sent home.

Lawmen who have operated since June 13 from wooden-frame buildings at Camp Scott will now move to Pryor, officials said.

"I think we can be as effective in Pryor as we were out there," Mayes County Sheriff Pete Weaver said.

Weaver said the decision to reduce the search for Gene Leroy Hart, a 33-year-old Cherokee Indian accused in the girls' murders, was reached
Cont. on Page 2, Col. 4

State Patrol Goes Home

Cont. From Page One
Thursday by local, state and federal agencies investigating the case.

"People will still be in the area and the contacts will be made," he said. "Back there in the brush, we'd done what we needed to do.

"What we need to do now is to talk to folks," the sheriff said.

All highway patrol troopers, including a 9-man tactical squadron, were sent home Thursday, said Rob Carleton, a patrol information officer.

He said the patrol mobile command post set up in Camp Scott during the investigation will be removed and returned to Oklahoma City.

Also leaving the death scene patrol was Capt. Don Mentzer, coordinator of the search for Hart, a convicted rapist who has remained free since es-

caping the Mayes County jail in September 1973.

Weaver said Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation agents who have been probing the slayings will probably regroup in nearby Tahlequah.

He said FBI agents are headquartered at a Pryor motel.

Thursday's decision to pull out the patrol troopers came one week after Hart was charged with three counts of first-degree murder.

The bodies of the girls, Lori Lee Farmer, 8, and Doris Denise Milner, 10, both of Tulsa, and Michelle Guse, 9, of Broken Arrow, were found zipped up in their sleeping bags outside their tent about 6:30 a.m. June 13.

Investigators said all three girls were sexually molested. One died from strangulation. The other two were beaten to death with a blunt instrument.

Meanwhile, conflicting reports continued Thursday about whether Hart was in the Locust Grove area the day before and several days after the deaths.

Patrol spokesman Lt. Kenneth Vanhoy discounted an Associated Press report that Hart has been recently seen in southern Mayes County.

However, Weaver said the FBI "has turned up something to that effect."

Writing Analyst Sees Hart Link

By Robert B. Allen
Staff Writer

PRYOR — A self-described handwriting analyst said Friday he is convinced a cryptic message found on the wall of a mountain cave reading "The killer was here — bye bye fools!" was printed by Gene Leroy Hart.

Thomas Edwin Pittman, Muskogee, made his statement to newsmen outside a preliminary hearing room where security was tightened after a reported threat to the 34-year-old defendant accused of killing three Girl Scouts last summer near Locust Grove.

"I viewed the cave message, and I spent three weeks last August comparing the writing with letters of Hart," Pittman said after his testimony from the witness stand was cut short by the judge's ruling in sustaining a defense objection.

Pittman, a Muskogee

pawn shop operator and owner of a loan company, said both the message and the five or six Hart letters he inspected contained the same "clear-cut characteristics."

"I realize a man's reputation and life may be at stake," the Muskogee witness said

"But I have to be honest about my examination. The message and his letters so closely resemble that it's like he was signing his name."

Courtroom testimony of Pittman, a defense witness in the third week of the Hart hearing, was halted during cross-examination when defense attorney Garvin Isaacs, Oklahoma City, leaped to his feet.

He objected to any further statements by the witness on the grounds that he was not a qualified grapho-analyst. Pittman said he was a graduate of several handwriting courses and had volunteered his services to authorities in the investigation of the June 13, 1977, See Page 2, Column 8

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slaying of three Girl Scouts at nearby Camp Scott.

Hart is charged in the slayings of Doris Denise Milner, 10, Michele Guse, 9, and Lori Farmer, 8, all of the Tulsa area.

Friday's session was marked by security measures that seemed to catch spectators by surprise. Hart was taken from the Mayes County Jail across the street to the courthouse on the run and ushered into a different door than he usually enters.

For the first time since the preliminary hearing began early this month, Hart elected not to leave the courthouse at noon for lunch and requested that his meal be sent in.

Sheriff Pete Weaver was reluctant to talk about the new developments, but later conceded "certain activities" in the community

had prompted new security measures.

It was learned Weaver had conferred with Presiding Judge Jess B. Clanton Jr. about "an anonymous report" and decided to bolster security.

In other developments Friday, a state chemist for the second time in three weeks linked hair of Hart with those found at the year-old death scene and also others recovered at a cave in Skunk Mountain, three miles west of Locust Grove.

Ann G. Reed, a chemist for the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, testified hair taken from the tent where the victims had been sleeping and also from another cave matched the same basic characteristics as those of the defendant.

In the third week of the Hart hearing, the defense has called 35 lawmen.

Judge Orders Hart Held for Death Trial

By Robert B. Allen
Staff Writer

PRYOR — Gene Leroy Hart was ordered held for trial Thursday on three first-degree murder charges in the year-old sex slayings of three Girl Scouts at a nearby wooded camp.

The ruling by Special Judge Jess B. Clanton Jr. came on the 14th day of a preliminary hearing punctuated by a bomb threat which prompted evacuation of the third floor of the Mayes County Courthouse here.

At the conclusion of the lengthy hearing for the 34-year-old former Locust Grove High School star athlete, District Attorney Sidney Wise announced he will push for a jury trial within 60 days, saying he is hopeful that it can be held in mid-August or no later than early September.

There was no emotion in the crowded courtroom as the judge slowly read his verdict. Hart stared straight ahead, the expression on his face never changing as Judge Clanton began by saying that his court "finds a crime of murder in the first-degree has been committed and there is probable cause to believe the defendant, Gene Leroy

"The judge already has indicated that in a case of this magnitude it will necessitate a special court term," Wise told reporters. "We are ready and we will be prepared with additional evidence when we go before a jury."

Hart, committed the crime."

The judge repeated his decision three times, referring to the three deaths in the June 13, 1977 sex slayings of Lori Lee Farmer, 8, Michele Guse, 9, and Doris Denise Milner, 10, all of the Tulsa area.

The bodies of the young victims were found in the early morning hours about

150 yards from their tent at Camp Scott, only hours after they had arrived at the long-time Scout site with other campers.

The father and mother of the Farmer girl as well as the mothers of the other two victims were seated on a front row in the small courtroom as the verdict was read. Just across the aisle, mem- See Page 2, Column 1



Gene Leroy Hart

Chief defense counsel Garvin Isaacs, Oklahoma City, quickly announced that he will seek to block any such attempts for an early trial, saying that the defense cannot be ready within the next 60 days. He said the defense will argue to delay the case until early next year, possibly in January.

Less than an hour after the judge's ruling climaxed one of the longest preliminary hearings in state history, Hart was moved back to the Oklahoma State Penitentiary at McAlester where he was held briefly following his April 6 capture in a Cookson Hills cabin near Tahlequah.

The judge was hopeful that Hart could be confined to the Mayes County Jail pending his July 18 arraignment but County Sheriff Pete Weaver elected to move him back to the prison for what he termed security reasons and "hardship" for his staff.

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members of Hart's family sat, but displayed no emotion as Judge Clanton handed down his decision.

Hart, who already is facing a maximum of more than 300 years in prison after being convicted of crimes ranging from burglary to rape, apparently was bound over on the strength of matching hair samples, testimony of similarity in sperm and evidence of clues linking him to the Camp Scott crime scene.

A state chemist said that hair found on one of the victims had the same microscopic characteristics as Hart's hair, while another testified that sperm found on Hart's undershorts was similar to that found in the victims.

Still, special prosecutor S.M. "Buddy" Fallis Jr., admitted to reporters following the hearing that there could be difficulty in selecting a jury "because of the many opinions formulated in this community."

Fallis, who is Tulsa County district attorney, said there were no provisions in which the state could seek to move the trial elsewhere in the state.

Of the large number of witnesses called during the hearing, which ended in its fourth week, 75 were summoned by the defense as it launched a "discovery" mission.

Twenty-three of those taking the witness stand were called in the early stages by the prosecution.

The hearing came to an end early in the afternoon, but not before a bomb scare erupted after an unidentified man telephoned deputy court clerk Vicki Deffenbaugh and announced, "There's a bomb set to go off in the courthouse at 10:30."

After the anonymous caller hung up, the clerk passed the word to court clerk Eloise Cist, who relayed the information to Judge Clanton. He ordered a recess at 9:13 a.m., and a minute later told courtroom spectators to file down the stairs and move out of the north door of the courthouse.

Investigators scurried over the third floor and reported at 10:34 a.m. they had found no evidence of a bomb. Twelve minutes later, spectators returned to the courtroom and the hearing continued.

Killer Called Sadistic, Savage

SEQUOYAH STATE PARK (AP) — The killer of three Girl Scouts is a sexual sadist and will strike again — soon — if he is not captured.

He is suffering from an overwhelming inferiority complex, hates himself and the world. Despite drugs, testing and sophisticated treatment programs it is doubtful the person who sexually molested and killed the Tulsa area Girl Scouts last

month at Camp Scott near Locust Grove can ever be rehabilitated.

While not legally crazy, he survives on such a savage, animal level it would be impossible to change him.

Those are the views of Dr. Robert Phillips, a clinical psychologist who for 25 years has treated criminals and the criminally insane.

Phillips, a staff member of the statewide Barkouras Foundation, which diagnoses criminals for the court sys-

tem, was a speaker Saturday at the Associated Press-Oklahoma News Executives annual meeting this weekend at Western Hills State Lodge here.

Phillips painted a grim psychological profile of the killer of Lori Farmer, 8; Doris Milner, 10, and Michelle Guse, 9. Their bodies were discovered June 13 about 150 yards from a tent where they were spending the firstnight of a two-week camping trip.

"He does not have a chronic psychosis," Phillips said. "He calculated and planned his deed in a cold-blooded manner. He took the tools he needed to do the terrible deed and then escaped.

"He was caught up in his deed. He lost all control. In a demonic way, he carried the girls outside and continued to violate them.

"At that second he was completely mad — a monster — an animal," Phillips said.

Gene Hart Trial Set for Oct. 4

By Judy Fossett

PRYOR — Gene Leroy Hart is to be tried Oct. 4 for the sex-slayings of three Boy Scouts at a camp near Locust Grove last June.

Mayes County District Judge William Whistler set the tentative trial date at a hearing here Tuesday morning.

The judge also postponed the date of Hart's arraignment on the three murder charges from July 18 until 9:30 a.m. Aug.

because the transcript of Hart's lengthy preliminary hearing won't be available until early August.

At the Aug. 23 proceeding, the judge is to hear a number of anticipated defense motions before Hart enters a plea, including one challenging the sufficiency of the preliminary hearing.

Still set for July 18 is a 3 p.m. hearing on a defense motion to set aside Hart's

plea of guilty to rape and kidnapping charges. The motion alleges Hart knew nothing of his constitutional rights when he entered the guilty pleas and that he had been denied effective assistance of court-appointed counsel.

Hart, a former Locust Grove football star, was sentenced to three 10-year sentences to run concurrently on the rape and kidnapping charges after pleading guilty.

The hearing Tuesday was on a defense motion requesting that Hart be returned to the Mayes County jail here from the state penitentiary at McAlester where he was taken for security reasons at the conclusion of the preliminary hearing Thursday.

Gary Pitchlynn, one of Hart's attorneys, argued unsuccessfully that Hart is

virtually inaccessible to his lawyers at the penitentiary and is being denied effective counsel.

In the motion filed last week, attorney Garvin Isaacs listed a dozen reasons why he said Hart's imprisonment in the county jail rather than the McAlester prison is vital to the defense, including the 110-mile distance between Pryor and McAlester and that 24-hour notice must be given to penitentiary officials before Hart's lawyers can visit him.

The defense attorneys also complained the cost of driving between Pryor, McAlester and their Oklahoma City homes is putting a drain on a nearly-depleted defense fund. During the preliminary hearing, the defense team was headquartered in Locust Grove, 20 miles away.

The motion stated that only \$2,500 remains in the fund, but Pitchlynn told Whistler Tuesday that there is now less than \$1,000.

Judge Whistler told Pitchlynn that McAlester is no farther from Oklahoma City than Pryor is, and he ordered Hart to remain in the state penitentiary until his arraignment. He added that Hart could be brought to Pryor as early as 24 hours before the arraignment to confer with his lawyers.

Hart is being held on death row at the penitentiary. When in Pryor, Hart is held alone in an eight-man cell under Oklahoma Highway Patrol guard.

Hart escaped from the Mayes County jail twice and had been a fugitive since 1973 when the three Scouts were killed on June 13, 1977, at Camp Scott near Locust Grove.

Hart was hustled off to McAlester Thursday after authorities received several threats against both Hart and Mayes County Sheriff Pete Weaver.

Hart Defense Fund Swells

LOCUST GROVE — The Gene Leroy Hart defense fund swelled by \$1,400 after proceeds from a Cherokee-English gospel sing were tallied over the weekend.

The sing, held Friday night in the community center here, drew more than 400 friends and relatives of Hart, who is charged in the slaying of three Girl Scouts at Camp Scott a year ago.

Hart's family members said other fund raisers including a catfish fry and watermelon picnic are being planned.

Parents of 2 Slain Girls File Appeal

TULSA (AP) — The parents of two of the three girls murdered at a Girl Scout camp near Locust Grove in 1977 have decided to appeal to the Oklahoma Supreme Court a Tulsa jury's refusal to award damages for the deaths.

Jack Gaither, attorney for Dr. and Mrs. Charles Farmer, Walter Milner and Bettye Milner, filed an appeal notice Wednesday.

The parents sued the Magic Empire Council of Girl Scouts and the council's insurer, the Hartford

Co., for \$5 million in damages for the deaths. The jury found in favor of the council and the insurance company in March. On May 6, Judge Bill Beasley refused to grant a new trial in the case.

Lori Lee Farmer, 8, Doris Denise Milner, 10, both of Tulsa, and Michele Guse, 9, of Broken Arrow, were slain in June 1977 at Camp Scott.

Gene Leroy Hart, a convicted rapist and Mayes County Jail escapee, was acquitted of the murders in 1979.

Slain Scout's Mom Vows to Learn of Killing

By Debby Baxter
Staff Writer

PRYOR — Fighting back tears while standing on the side steps of the Mayes County Courthouse, the mother of slain Girl Scout Lori Lee Farmer vowed to "be here every day" of a preliminary hearing for Gene Leroy Hart.

Hart is accused in the slayings of three Girl Scouts who were killed a year ago at Camp Scott near Locust Grove.

The preliminary hearing being

held this week in Pryor will determine whether Hart will face trial in the deaths.

"I don't know if he did it," Mrs. Charles Farmer said. But she asserted, "I'm going to be here every day" to learn as much as she can about her 8-year-old daughter's death.

Mrs. Farmer, supported at her elbow by her husband, said she realizes that many Locust Grove residents are convinced Hart is inno-

As the Farmers, of Tulsa, sit each day in the row of courtroom seats reserved for the dead girls' families and listen intently to witnesses describe how their daughter died, many of the skeptical Mayes County people sit nearby in the gallery.

They are listening just as intently, waiting to hear for themselves why the state doesn't think Hart is innocent.

Court spectators waiting in line each morning for the courtroom to open remark openly of their view that Hart was framed — that he is being used as a scapegoat in the case.

"People who don't know more about it than we do shouldn't say they don't believe he did it," Mrs. Farmer said.

Hart's relatives sat quietly across the aisle from the victims' families, on another front row bench that placed them within earshot of the defendant.

Courtroom spectators — many who remained neutral about Hart's guilt or innocence — had plenty to say about why they were at the hearing.

"I'm here because I want to be 100 percent sure they've got the right man — not 98 percent sure or 99 percent sure," Locust Grove resident Norma Fleming said.

June 9 1978

The Daily Oklahoman

Inmate Parole Claim Denied By Boren Aide

Associated Press

An aide to Gov. David Boren confirmed Thursday that Boren granted a leave of absence from prison to a convicted car thief and previous escapee for his help in hunting Gene Leroy Hart, who is charged with killing three Girl Scouts.

But the aide, while acknowledging Boren granted the leave of absence for Larry Dry, denied Dry's claim that the governor and Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation agents promised him a parole in return for his help.

Barbara Webb, Boren's press secretary, said Boren paroled Dry because the parole was recommended unanimously by the Pardon and Parole Board.

She said the governor made no agreement with Dry or the OSBI to parole him.

She added, however, that Dry's assistance in apprehending Hart was "a positive factor" in Boren's decision to parole him.

"They asked me if I thought I knew where he (Hart) was," Larry Dry said in an interview from a jail cell in Delaware County. "They told me I would get a parole if they were able to catch Gene Hart."

"I came through on my end as best I could," the 30-year-old Dry said.

Dry, who escaped from jail twice with Hart and lived with him for four months in a cellar in the woods, said: "I knew just about where Hart was and then they got the rest of the information from another person."

Records show Dry was signed out on leave from the state reformatory in Granite March 28 by Boren and put in custody of the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation.

Hart was captured April 6. Dry was recommended for parole April 25 and the parole was signed by Boren May 18.

Since his parole, Dry has been arrested and charged with armed robbery and larceny.

Dry sawed his way out of the Mayes County jail in 1973 with Hart. Both men were caught a short time later.

The two escaped again, however, and Dry said they went to an old woodlands cellar about three miles from Camp Scott where they lived for four months. Dry was captured in 1974 but Hart remained at large until nearly a year after the Girl Scouts were slain at Camp Scott.

Hart, charged with first-degree murder in the scout killings, is undergoing a preliminary hearing in connection with the slayings this week at Pryor.

Dry said he is a longtime friend of Hart.

Slain Scout's Mom Vows to Learn of Killing

By Debby Baxter
Staff Writer

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June 9 1978

The Daily Oklahoman

Fingerprints Fail To Link Gene Hart

By Robert B. Allen
Staff Writer

PRYOR — A state fingerprint expert testified Friday that prints were found on a flashlight near where three slain Girl Scouts were found last June and also on a tent cot where the victims had slept, but there was no evidence that the fingerprints belonged to Gene Leroy Hart, the man accused of slaying the small youngsters.

Larry Mullins, a technician for the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, described the fingerprints as "unidenti-

fied.

Under cross-examination by defense lawyer Garvin Isaacs of Oklahoma City, the witness told of analyzing prints taken from the reflector after the flashlight had been disassembled. Mullins also testified about finding blood in the Camp Scott tent where the girls had been sleeping before their strangled and beaten bodies were found on the morning of June 13.

Mullins was one of 12 witnesses testifying during the day in a preliminary hearing to determine whether there is enough

evidence to hold Hart for trial in the three slayings.

As the hearing adjourned Friday afternoon, Special District Judge Jess B. Clanton Jr. ordered proceedings to resume Monday at 9:45 a.m., when a state crime bureau chemist will begin the fourth day's testimony.

The court also heard Friday about two photographs taken in 1968 at Granite which were found near a cave in a remote wooded area about three miles southwest of the Locust Grove Girl Scout camp.

See Page 2, Column 7

Girl Scout Murders Still Touching Lives Two Decades Later

By Charles T. Jones
Staff Writer

The lives of countless men, women and children in many walks of life were forever changed 20 years ago by an act of madness. A June night in 1977 left three Girl Scouts slain at Camp Scott near Locust Grove.

What has become etched in Oklahoma's history as "the Girl Scout murders" of 1977 today provides lessons to those new to grieving and the yearning left by the murder of a child, mate, friend: The pain never really ends but can be softened by time, sweet memories, faith and good work.

Parents, prosecutors, law officers, brothers,

sisters — all are forever changed and unavoidably diminished by the deaths. Here, 20 years later, are updates on some of those scarred by the Girl Scout murders:

Walter Milner, whose daughter, Denise Milner, was killed at Camp Scott, died last year, less than four months after he had ended a nearly 32-year career as a Tulsa police patrolman.

He died unexpectedly of a heart attack. The heart that failed Walter Milner had, for nearly 20 years, ached with the loss of his daughter.

For many years after the Camp Scott incident, Milner feared and avoid-

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ed close relationships, said his ex-wife, Bettye Milner.

Walter Milner attended the preliminary hearing for Gene Leroy Hart in 1979, but privately he told prosecutor Buddy Fallis he'd skip the trial. "He just flat suggested that he could not trust himself not to do violence to the man who'd done this," Fallis said.

Last year, Milner received the Medal of Valor from the Tulsa Police Department and another from the Oklahoma Association of Chiefs of Police. He received the awards for his part in a June 1996 gunbattle with a shotgun-wielding robbery suspect who had killed one officer and wounded another.

"Walter was very sensitive about things like that," Bettye Milner said. "He couldn't have taken a life very easily. He did what he had to do in the line of duty, but it wouldn't have been an easy thing for him to accept, that he had something to do with taking a life."

"It's amazing he lasted so many years in the police department," she said.

The night of the shooting, Milner called his daughter, Kathleen, "just to chat." It was after 1 a.m.

"He was reaching out to her; he needed somebody to talk to ... he really didn't come out and say that — just that he'd called to tell her he was OK."

Walter Milner died on Valentine's Day.

•
Bettye Milner, 52, suffers a constant, numbing grief that rises with the seasons of her daughter's



Denise Milner

birth and death.

"It's not a very settled time for me," she said recently. "Just, somehow, my body knows when it's close to her birthday, or the anniversary of her death. I'm just feeling tired all the time."

For reasons she doesn't understand, she's been unable to visit her daughter's grave. She nurtures Denise Milner's memories in other ways.

"I remember her walking into a room, the way she was, the things she said. And I see her in my other two children."

"Sometimes, I would have to go in and look at her picture, or lay on her bed, to feel close to her — to know that she did exist; that she wasn't just something that I dreamed about. It was just the most unimaginable horror. It was all I could do to deal with that," she said.

Bettye Milner went to college, became a medical lab technician and has worked in a Tulsa hospital for 16 years.

"I haven't experienced the bitterness. My grief was more of fear — an intense fear."

Timeline



OKLAHOMAN ARCHIVES

A car carrying Girl Scouts leaves Camp Scott on June 13, 1977, after three young girls were found killed earlier that morning.

■ **June 13, 1977:** Lori Farmer, 8, Michele Guse, 9, and Denise Milner, 10, are found dead by a counselor at the Camp Scott Girl Scout camp. Investigators later determine that each girl was sexually molested. The camp, operated by the Magic Empire of Girl Scouts since 1928, closes the next day and never reopens.



OKLAHOMAN ARCHIVES

Gene Leroy Hart waits with head bowed outside Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester accompanied by Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation agent Larry Bowles after his arrest on April, 6, 1978.

■ **June 23, 1977:** Gene Leroy "Sonny" Hart is charged with three counts of first-degree murder. Hart, who has two rape convictions, escaped from the Mayes County jail four years earlier and had been at large ever since. One of the largest man-hunts in state history follows, involving more than 400 law enforcement agents.

■ **April 6, 1978:** Nearly 10 months after the manhunt begins, Hart is arrested 50 miles from the camp.

■ **March 5, 1979:** Jury selection in Hart's trial begins in Mayes County. It takes 10 days to seat a jury.

■ **March 19, 1979:** Opening statements begin, 20 months and 19 days after the crime is committed.

Gene Leroy Hart covers his face at the moment the jury acquitted him of murder, and is comforted by attorney Gary Pitchlynn, in this photo taken through a door window from outside the court.



BY MEL ROOT, OKLAHOMAN ARCHIVES

■ **March 29, 1979:** The jury takes six hours to acquit Hart. Hart returns to jail to finish 305 years left on his previous convictions.

■ **June 4, 1979:** Hart dies of an apparent heart attack while jogging in the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester.

Nude Man Chased From Tent Of Sleeping Girl Scouts

TOPEKA, Kan. (UPI) — Authorities say if they fail to locate a man who was chased from a tent of sleeping Girl Scouts they might consult Oklahoma officials who investigated the brutal killings in 1977 of three Girl Scouts.

The nude man struck a camp counselor in the head and escaped at Camp Daisy Hindman, about 10 miles southwest of Topeka, late Tuesday. More than 150 girls were staying at the facility.

Wakened by a noise shortly before midnight, counselor Jacqueline Carter, 24, of Lawrence, Kan., discovered the man, who wore only shoes, in a tent where four girls were sleeping.

When the man ran out of the tent, the counselor chased and caught him. However, she was struck in the head with what officers thought was a flashlight.

A police dog was used to track the man to the back gate of the camp where the man apparently entered a car and drove away.

Federgreen said if the local investigation is not successful, authorities are considering conferring with Oklahoma officials who investigated the slayings of three Girl Scouts at Camp Scott in northeastern Oklahoma.

In that case, the girls' bodies and their blood-soaked sleeping bags, were found outside their tent by counselors

on June 13, 1977. Oklahoma authorities said the girls had been sexually molested and beaten to death with a blunt object.

Gene Leroy Hart, 35, who died from heart failure in an Oklahoma prison last month, had been charged in connection with that case, but was acquitted by a jury.

(continued)

The suspect was described as having long, sandy hair, pulled back into a pony tail. In the center of the man's chest was a tattoo of a skull and crossbones, about 5 or 6 inches in diameter, officials said.

Additional precautions were being taken at the camp.

Shawnee County sheriff's Detective Jerry Federgreen said a composite drawing from the description of the suspect was made and distributed to the news media. Authorities were hopeful the picture would help the public locate the man.

Future of Camp Scott Remains in Doubt

Girl Scout Reservation Has Never Reopened Since

By Don Hayden
Staff Writer

LOCUST GROVE — Camp Scott, the 410-acre Girl Scout reservation south of Locust Grove where three youngsters were slain June 13, 1977, has never reopened.

Its fate remains in limbo.

Bonnie Brewster, executive director of the Tulsa based Magic Empire Council of Girl Scouts, said no decision has been made on the camp's future.

"The only decision that has been made is to retain the camp for the foreseeable future," she said. "Each year the board re-evaluates whether it should be reopened. I would say there is a 50-50 chance it will be reopened some time."

Brewster said the council has added some security measures at other camps, but declined to specify what changes have been made.

"We are doing the best we can to operate all camps in a safe and secure fashion," she said. "We live in a different world than we did 15 to 20 years ago. We now have some new understandings."

The impact of the slayings of Lori Lee Farmer, 8, and Doris Denise Milner, 10, both of Tulsa, and Michelle Guse, 9, of Broken Arrow, "goes on for ever and ever," Brewster said.

Lawsuits charging the council with negligence and seeking damages totaling some \$3.5 million have been filed by the parents of the Milner and Farmer girls.

Jack Gaither, attorney for the parents of two of the slain Girl

Scouts, said the lawsuits are still pending, although various aspects of the case have been before the Oklahoma Supreme Court on two occasions.

"I hope we can get the case to trial within the next few months," he said. "The discovery and preparation has been very difficult. One of the big problems we've had is that nobody will help us get the information we need. A lot of the parents wouldn't let their girls talk to us and the Scout employees have been hard to track down."

Today, the narrow half-mile-long road leading to Camp Scott from State Highway 82 is seldom traveled.

A heavy gate bars the curious and signs warn the area is guarded by camp ranger R.A. Martin.

Martin and his wife are among the camp's few visitors.

Occasionally, youths from the nearby Camp Garland Boy Scout Camp come over, but only for a short time, Mrs. Martin said.

Before the nightmare that was June 13, 1977, the camp accommodated as many as 800 girls each summer.

Ben Woodward, who was the camp ranger at the time of the slayings, moved to Coffeyville, Kan. in the years following the tragedy. He said earlier the camp shouldn't be opened "until that maniac is caught."

And whether a "maniac" has been caught depends upon who you listen to.

Glen "Pete" Weaver, who was Mayes County Sheriff during the investigation is among those who feel that chief suspect — a Cherokee Indian named Gene Leroy Hart — was responsible for the slayings.

But a jury said Hart was innocent.

Following the acquittal Weaver said there "wasn't a lawman who worked on the case" who wasn't convinced of Hart's guilt.

Paul Smith, who replaced Weaver as the sheriff for Mayes County, takes a different position.

"I have to believe in our system of justice. Hart was acquitted by a jury of his peers and as far as I am concerned the case is not closed," he said.

Smith, who has been in office for about 18 months, said he has three suspects in mind. He said two are believed to live in Oklahoma but declined to elaborate on their whereabouts.

He said that today, five years after the slaying and three years following Hart's acquittal, his office keeps receiving tips on the case.

"But we get a lot of crank calls, too," he said.

"Just the other day a woman called to say we had a man in our jail who knew all about the killings. We checked it out, but there was nothing to it," he said.

He said there are "too many miles and too little help" to carry on an active investigation, but hoped that would change someday.

"We have 620 square miles to patrol and only three deputies to do it

with. The state statutes say we need six deputies," Smith said.

Smith theorizes the killers were attempting to drag the bodies of the three young girls to a waiting car, when they became startled and fled.

"If I could find that car, I could solve the case," he said.

The bodies of the three girls were found about 100 yards from the scout's tent.

Smith said he believes if the killers hadn't been startled, the bodies might never have been found.

Within hours after the discovery, the most intensive investigation in state history was under way.

Within a week following the slayings, scores of lawmen, tracking dogs from out-of-state, helicopters with infrared sensors and hundreds of private citizens joined in the search for the slayer.

Less than a year later, Hart was captured in a ramshackled house, 30 miles southeast of the campsite.

Slain Scout's Parents Form Group

TULSA (AP) — Charles and Sheri Farmer, parents of a Girl Scout murdered seven years ago, are organizing an Oklahoma chapter of Parents of Murdered Children.

The couple said they hope to put their heart-rending experience to use helping others.

Their daughter, Lori, was slain in 1978 with two other Girl Scouts as they slept in tents at Camp Scott, near Locust Grove.

Lori, 8, was raped and beaten to death. Her body was found with those of Michelle Guse, 9, of Broken Arrow, and Doris Denise Milner, 10, of Tulsa, about 150 yards from their tent.

Gene Leroy Hart was tried for the murders and found innocent after a lengthy trial. He died of a heart attack at Oklahoma State Penitentiary, where he was serving a sentence for another crime.

"My daughter would have been 16 on the 18th," Mrs. Farmer

said. "I want this (organization) to be something to honor her birth, not her death."

Parents of Murdered Children was formed in 1978 by Bob and Charlotte Hollinger, of Cincinnati, Ohio, shortly after their teen-age daughter was killed by a former boyfriend. The group now has chapters in nearly every state in the union, Mrs. Farmer

said.

Mrs. Farmer said the Oklahoma chapter currently consists of her husband and herself. She said she hopes more people will join when an organizing meeting is held Tuesday.

"Although the name of the group is Parents of Murdered Children, anyone who has been affected by murder is wel-

come to attend," Mrs. Farmer said.

She said priority will be given at the meeting to informing victims' families of their rights.

"That's one of the most difficult things my husband and I went through after Lori's death — trying to find out things and deal with the justice system," she said.

Muskogee Teen Drowns In Lake Fort Gibson

A 13-year-old boy drowned Saturday morning while swimming in Lake Fort Gibson with other members of a Muskogee church group, the Oklahoma Highway Patrol reported.

Chad Crawford Walker, of Muskogee, was taken to Wagoner Community Hospital, where he was dead on arrival about 5 p.m., the patrol said.

Walker reportedly

drowned about 11:30 a.m., after two females he was swimming with near the marina on Sequoyah Bay left that area of the lake, officials said.

Officials were investigating the drowning Saturday.



Artist's retouching of photo of Gene Leroy Hart adds shoulder length hair believed worn by fugitive.

Hunted Man Has Record of Rape, Burglary

By Kevin Donovan

Gene Leroy Hart, accused of slaying three Girl Scouts near Locust Grove and now the most wanted man in Oklahoma, began his criminal career with the rape of a pregnant teen-ager in 1966.

He was sentenced in October 1966 to serve three 10-year sentences concurrently after pleading guilty to kidnapping two pregnant women outside a Tulsa nightclub and assaulting one of them.

He drove them to Mayes County where he bound, gagged and raped one of the women, records show.

After he had served 28 months at the state reformatory in Granite and about four and a half

months in the Mayes County jail, his parole was recommended by a 4-0 vote of the pardon and parole board. One member of the board, Roehm West, was absent from the March 19, 1969 hearing.

Former board members contacted Friday said they did not remember Hart's case, saying a caseload of about 100 convicts a month prevented them from recalling Hart's hearing.

Accounts of the hearing indicate Hart admitted assaulting one of the women, but denied that the 19-year-old victim or her 18-year-old companion had been kidnapped.

Questioned by board members Frank Carey Jr.,

Dr. Robert Taylor and Robert Lockwood, and board president Charles Chesnut, Hart told them that publicity and evidence brought out in the case were only partially true.

Less than three months after his parole was signed by Gov. Dewey Bartlett, Hart was arrested after allegedly breaking into the apartment of a Tulsa policewoman.

While he was in the hands of lawmen, investigators linked him to four burglaries in the Tulsa area.

In successive months — October, November sentences years for

convictions on first-degree burglary charges. In February 1970, he received a 50-year sentence on another first-degree burglary conviction.

Three years later, on April 25, 1973, Hart was transferred from the state penitentiary in McAlester to the Mayes County jail in Pryor to appear at a post-conviction relief hearing. Less than a month later, on May 20, 1973, Hart and another prisoner escaped after sawing through bars.

Hart was captured six days later and was charged with a burglary in Strang.

Hart escaped again from the Mayes County jail on Sept. 16, 1973. Again he sawed through bars.

He has been at large since then.

Murder case's lore, mystery keep growing

By Ron Jackson
Staff Writer

Thirty-one years later, the debate rages over whether Gene Leroy Hart murdered three Girl Scouts in the rain-soaked woods near Locust Grove.

To date, Hart remains the only person ever charged with those grisly slayings, and he was acquitted. The truth may have died forever when he dropped dead of a heart attack in 1979 at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester while serving time for a string of rape, burglary, and kidnapping charges.

Yet the mystery deepens as time passes.

Theories have long existed

See **MURDER**, Page 20A

Murder

Continued from Page 19A

regarding other suspects, as well as the possibility that Hart either didn't act alone or was innocent. Internet blog sites are filled with various opinions about the famous case, from the reasonable to the irresponsible.

One blogger ventured so far as to even name a sexually abusive and violent "uncle" as a prime suspect.

"There's a growing lore to the Girl Scouts murders," said S.M. "Buddy" Fallis, a former Tulsa prosecutor who tried Hart. "It's like Jesse James. Everyone wanted to know, 'Was he really buried in that grave?' ...

"I don't have any question Gene Leroy Hart was there. Whether he did it alone is probably the only question I have in my mind."

Former Mayes County Sheriff Paul Smith added to the legend in May 1984 when he announced he had "three prime suspects" in the Girl Scout slayings. Smith declined to reveal the names of the suspects, saying only that they were all Locust Grove natives.

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Gene Leroy Hart Summarizes His Life:



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"I am not a hero," the Cherokee Indian said simply.

It was Hart's only public statement during his four-week trial in

Hart Dies:
Reactions Vary —Page 1

connection with the rape-slayings of three young girls found dead June 13, 1977, near their bloody tents on the grounds of Camp Scott, a Girl Scout retreat hidden among the wooded hills and gulches near Hart's home town.

"I have no desire to be a hero," Hart, then 35, had said. "Maybe I represent the fears and doubts that many people have about a case like this in the system that we have."

But that "system we have" on March 30, 1979, acquitted the convicted rapist, kidnapper and burglar in connection with the murders of Lori Lee Farmer, 8; Michele Guse, 9; and Denise Milner, 10.

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woman was quoted as saying. "All they had was circumstantial evidence."

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But it was not until 10 months after the rape-slayings — on April 6, 1978 — that Hart was arrested when a band of state crime bureau agents swarmed a small shack near Tahlequah in Cherokee County where Hart had been living with an Indian medicine man.

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The experts admitted such tests could not positively identify the source of the hair or sperm.

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"I can sympathize with the families," Hart said of the parents of the slain girls during that trial interview.

He concluded the press conference by describing himself as a religious man who valued his family.



Gene Leroy Hart, acquitted March 30 in the sex-slayings of three Girl Scouts at a northeastern Oklahoma summer camp in 1977, meets with reporters during a news conference after a jury was selected for his trial.



Lawmen say this one-story tarpaper cabin in eastern Oklahoma housed Gene Leroy Hart

Officers Hunting a Maniac In Slaying of Three Girls

Officers Hunt Maniac Killer

Cont. From Page One
Bureau of Investigation, had planned to use dogs brought in from the Lexington Training Center, but changed their minds before sundown.

Weaver said whoever committed the murders apparently had fled the area.

A local caretaker said the camp gate, described as the only entrance to the unfenced camp, was locked Sunday night. Officers theorized that the killer had walked into the heavily wooded area.

A landowner who lives less than a mile away said there was quite a bit of vehicular traffic heard on the remote country road near the camp between 2:30 and 3 a.m. Weaver surmised the slayings occurred between 2 and 4 a.m.

Late Monday authorities clamped tight security on the area, refusing admission to newsmen. Reporters were taken on tours into the area earlier, but were not permitted to visit the crime scene.

Shortly after the slayings were discovered, Gov. David Boren ordered a task force of OSBI agents and highway troopers to the camp to assist Mayes County authorities in the investigation.

"Apparently, from viewing the scene and the bodies, the little girls were beaten to death," said OSBI agent in charge Ted Lampke.

"There is also some evidence of sexual molestation of at least one of the victims," he said.

Camp officials said they detected no commotion or any type of disturbance during the night. Apparently no one was awakened and the discovery was not made until about 6 a.m., one authority said.

There were, however, reports that a couple of girls said they heard screams during the



Map locates area near Locust Grove where three Girl Scouts were found slain. (AP Laserphoto)

night. Associated Press said, though, that the girls were reportedly told that everything was all right and to go to sleep.

It appeared the two younger girls died in the tent from blows, officials said. Blood soaked through their mattresses and dripped onto the floor, they said.

Deputy Sheriff A.H. Davis said large pools of blood were found on the left side of the platform tent, where the two younger victims had been sleeping. He said there was no blood found near the bed of the Milner child, indicating she may have been pulled from the tent and sleeping bag and killed outside the tent.

Normally, camp authorities said, four girls were assigned to each of the tents, but only the three victims were assigned to their tent.

Sheriff Weaver said it appeared one of the victims had been strangled to death, but a factual determination could not be made pending an autopsy report.

The camp, operated by the Magic Empire Council of Girl Scouts since 1928, was closed at midday. Other campers were turned over to their parents or taken to the Tulsa area by bus.

Wooded Scout Camp Combed for Clues; There's No Suspect

By Robert B. Allen
Staff Writer

LOCUST GROVE — Grim officers fanned out across a heavily wooded camp late Monday seeking clues to the bizarre slaying of three young Girl Scouts whose nude bodies were found outside their tent at Camp Scott about 6 a.m.

Mayes County Sheriff Glen "Pete" Weaver said all three of the small victims had been beaten and one possibly strangled. The sheriff said it appeared one of the girls also may have been sexually molested.

The victims were identified as Michelle Guse, 9, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Guse, Broken Arrow; Lori Lee Farmer, 8, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Charles Farmer, and Dark Denise Milner, 10, daughter of Mrs. Betty Milner, both of Tulsa.

Their bodies were found about 150 feet from their tent shortly before 6:30 a.m. by camp administrator Barbara Day.

Weaver said all three had lengths of cord around their necks and had been gagged and bound with two-inch wide electrical tape. Their clothes were found a few feet from the bodies, authorities said.

"We've got a maniac somewhere around," Weaver said. "This thing is horrible. It's the work of a demented person."

Sheriff's officers said they still had no suspects, but were combing the 610-acre camp three miles southeast of Locust Grove at the junction of Spring Creek and Snake Creek, both tributaries of Grand River. The camp is in a wooded area 45 miles east of Tulsa.

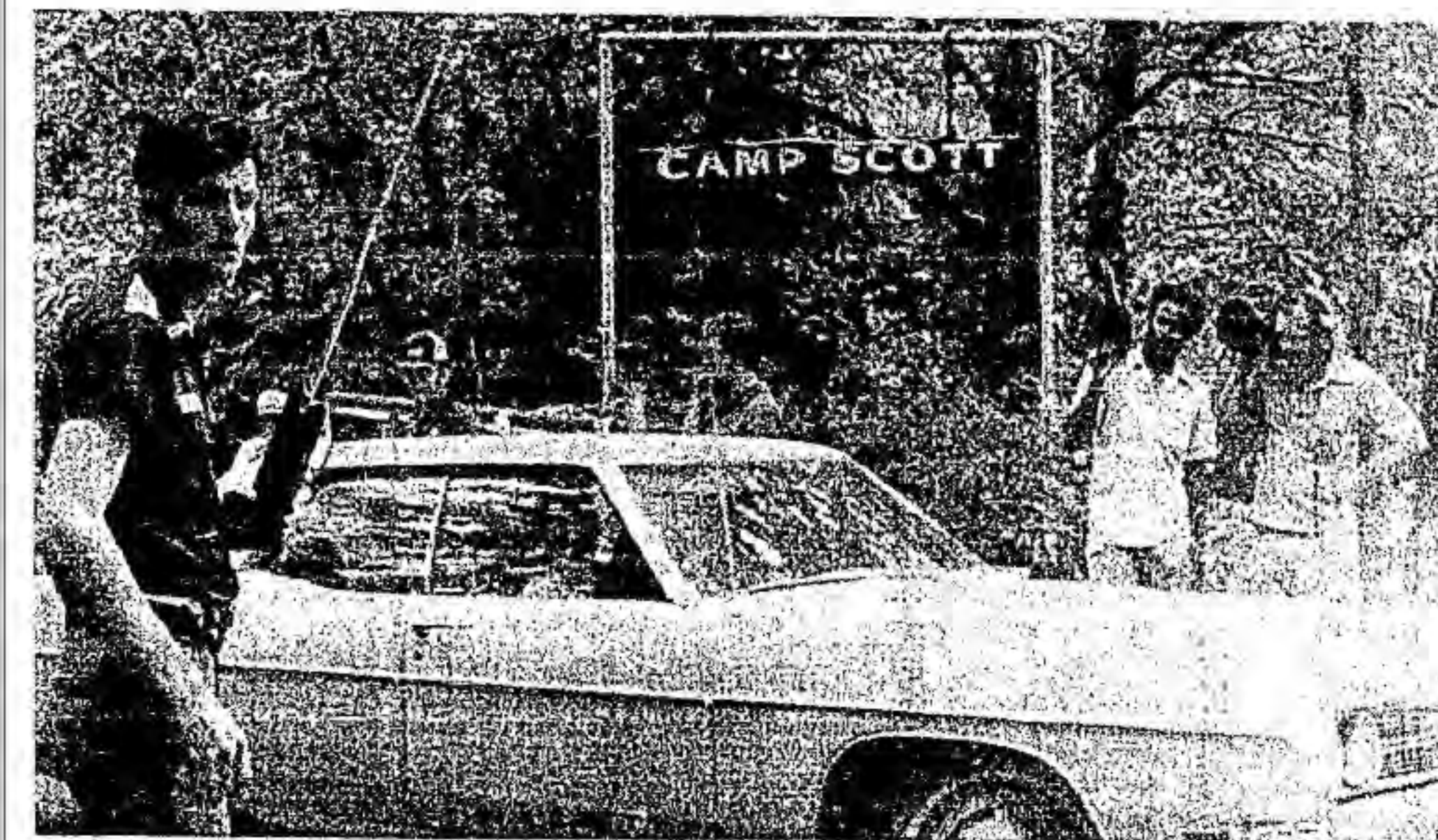
Officers brought in wreckers to move heavy equipment into the wooded area. A power generator was brought to furnish lights. A vacuum-like piece of equipment was being used to scour for clues. Power saws were used to clear out timber and underbrush.

The victims were among more than 100 campers, Girl Scouts and Brownies, who arrived there about 2:30 p.m. Sunday. The slain girls were housed in a 12-by-14 foot platform tent. The tent was located about 150 yards from where four of the camp counselors were sleeping.

The young victims were members of the Kiowa District, making up a Girl Scout contingent which numbered

Investigators said the only clue so far is a large six-volt flashlight found near the girls' bodies. Tape matching that used to gag the victims was on the flashlight battery, officials said.

Investigators, including the Oklahoma State
Cont. on Page 2, Col. 1



Dinner to Benefit Hart

By Michael Lee

LOCUST GROVE — The family of Gene Leroy Hart, accused slayers of three Girl Scouts last summer, will hold a benefit dinner here Friday to raise funds for his defense.

Mrs. Nancy Baker, Hart's sister, said Thursday the fried chicken dinner will be held at 7 p.m. at the community center and will be followed by gospel singing by local groups.

Meals will sell for \$1.75 for adults and 75 cents for children, she said. A hand-made quilt and a box of groceries also will be raffled off at the fund-raiser.

"We're expecting quite a few people or else we're going to be left with a lot of fried chicken," Mrs. Baker said.

She said the fund-raiser will probably be the first of many for Hart, who faces a preliminary hearing on three first-degree murder charges June 7 in Pryor.

The family also began a letter campaign to publications across the country asking for funds to defend Hart.

The letter, written by Mrs. Baker and another sister, Millie Littledave, asks "the public for support in the (family's) efforts to defend Gene against the at-

tempt of the State of Oklahoma to railroad an innocent man."

The letter states the prosecution will "attempt to overwhelm the efforts of the defense counsel with a high-priced production of experts and technicians."

The letter asks that donations be sent to a Hart defense fund in Locust Grove or to the Native American Coalition in Tulsa.

Several businesses here also are collecting donations for his defense.

Mrs. Baker said she doesn't know how much money has been raised for her brother so far.

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Autopsy Shows Hart Died of 'Plain Heart Attack'

By Judy Fessett
and Dan Manley

Gene Leroy Hart died of "a plain, simple heart attack," and apparently had suffered one before, State Medical Examiner Dr. A. Jay Chapman ruled Tuesday after conducting a lengthy autopsy on the body of the 35-year-old man acquitted in the 1977 slayings of three Girl Scouts.

Dr. Chapman said he found arterial sclerosis or hardening of two of the three main

arteries. He said scar tissue in the heart indicates Hart suffered a previous heart attack three months ago or longer.

"We have heard he experienced some chest pains three years ago, but this is hearsay," Chapman said. He explained that after three months, it is impossible to look at scar tissue and tell its age.

Chapman said one artery was 80 to 85 percent closed, and the other 98 percent closed. "Only a tiny pinpoint of blood was going

Letter From Hart

—Page 5

through to the heart," he said.

Hart had been lifting weights for about 45 minutes and was jogging in an exercise yard at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester early Monday evening when he collapsed, prison officials said.

Hart was taken to the prison infirmary, then rushed to McAlester Regional Hospital

where attempts to revive him were unsuccessful.

Dr. Chapman said the attack "probably caused Hart to suddenly collapse and be unconscious," and he suggested immediate resuscitation attempts might have revived him.

Dr. Chapman said "no one can tell the relationship" between Hart's physical activity Monday and the heart attack, but said the exercising could have brought on the attack.

He said Hart probably felt little pain. "It's the best way to go," he said.

It was reported that Hart's family was suspicious of the official penitentiary explanation of his death and feared he was the victim of foul play.

Family members were in seclusion Tuesday and couldn't be reached for comment.

The medical examiner said that while it was obvious to him Hart died of "acute car-

See Page 2, Column 6

Gene Hart Autopsy Indicates A 'Plain, Simple Heart Attack'

From Page 1
diac dysfunction," other tests will be conducted to rule out any other possible causes of death. The results will be announced by the end of the week, he said.

Dr. Chapman said he ordinarily sees hearts as diseased as Hart's in much older people, and added, "I wouldn't expect this amount of heart disease in someone his age." However, he said he has also seen similar heart disease in much younger people.

Funeral services for Hart have been set for 2 p.m. Friday in the gymnasium of Locust Grove High School, at which he had been a star football player.

School Superintendent Leonard Yarbrough said Hart's family is "welcome to use it." He said he remembers Hart as "a good fellow while he was in school here."

A spokesman for Jones Wilson-Cunningham Funeral Home in Locust Grove said Rev. Ross Bolin and Rev. Bill Grass will officiate at the service.

While funeral arrangements were being made in Locust Grove Tuesday, agents of the Oklahoma State Bureau

of Investigation were continuing their interviews with inmates and guards who were in contact with Hart Monday.

State Department of Corrections spokesman Nancy Nunnally said agents routinely investigate any death occurring at the prison, and in this case were trying to determine if there had been any threats against Hart or if Hart had complained about his health.

Deputy Warden Bill Arends said guard Paul Moody was apparently the first to see Hart fall as he watched from the tower atop a 30-foot wall. He quoted Moody as telling prison officials he saw Hart collapse at 6:40 p.m. and immediately notified the captain's office which sent a stretcher, picked up Hart and took him to the infirmary.

Hart was in prison serving 308 years on rape and burglary convictions and his two 1973 escapes from the Mayes County jail.

He was acquitted in March of the June 13, 1977, deaths of Girl Scouts Lori Lee Farmer, 8, and Doris Denise Milner, 10, both of Tulsa, and Michelle Guse, 9, of Broken Arrow, at Camp Scott near Locust Grove.

Dr. Chapman said his examination of the body showed no marks, and

the presence of no poison and only one drug Lidocaine, a heart controlling drug used by doctors who attempted to revive the inmate.

The chief medical examiner said Hart's attorneys, as well as representatives of the Mayes County District Attorney's office were not allowed to view the autopsy procedure.

"An autopsy is a medical procedure. It is not a legal procedure until it is brought to court," he said.

Witness Describes Finding Slain Girls

By Robert B. Allen
Staff Writer

PRYOR — A 19-year-old camp counselor graphically described Wednesday to a crowded, hushed courtroom how she stumbled onto a nightmarish death scene at Camp Scott.

Defense Spills
— Page 19



Trooper Dennis Dulish on special assignment from the Oklahoma Highway Patrol at Bristow escorts Hart into Mayes County Courthouse Wednesday for preliminary hearings on charges of killing three Girl Scouts.

4 Charged In Motor Home Thefts

By Paul Wenske

PAWNEE — Four out-of-state residents were charged Wednesday in Pawnee County District Court in connection with the thefts of two luxury motor homes which officials say may have been stolen in a large interstate operation.

The suspects, from Texas and Missouri, were apprehended on the Cimarron Turnpike Tuesday night by Oklahoma highway patrolmen after an Oklahoma City area trooper became suspicious of the four.

Four Found

The patrol reported the three men and a woman were driving a \$44,000 model reported as stolen from Jackie Cooper's Automobile, Yukon, and a \$25,000 model reportedly stolen in Wichita, Kan.

The suspects were identified as Arlie E. McClanahan, 35, Brynn, Texas; Katherine Elaine Pense, 20, Kansas City, Mo.; Ronald Giltner, Kansas City; and Grace Goulette Giltner, Gladstone, Mo.

The four were charged with unauthorized use of a motor vehicle and had a net of \$13,000 each.

Man Held

Another man, Wil-



Mrs. Farmer wipes away a tear

Slain Scout's Mother Vows to Learn of Killing

By Debby Baxter
Staff Writer

PRYOR — Fighting back tears while standing on the side steps of the Mayes County Courthouse, the mother of slain Girl Scout Lori Lee Farmer vowed to "be here every day" of a preliminary hearing for Gene Leroy Hart.

Hart is accused in the slayings of three Girl Scouts who were killed a year ago at Camp Scott near Locust Grove.

The preliminary hearing being held this week in Pryor will determine whether Hart will face trial in the deaths.

"I don't know if he did it," Mrs. Charles Farmer said. But she asserted, "I'm going to be here eve-

ry day" to learn as much as she can about her 8-year-old daughter's death.

Mrs. Farmer, supported at her elbow by her husband, said she realizes that many Locust Grove residents are convinced Hart is innocent.

As the Farmers, of Tulsa, sit each day in the row of courtroom seats reserved for the dead girls' families and listen intently to witnesses describe how their daughter died, many of the skeptical Mayes County people sit nearby in the gallery.

They are listening just as intently, waiting to hear for themselves why the state doesn't think Hart is innocent.

Court spectators waiting in line each morning for the courtroom to open remark openly of their view that Hart was framed — that he is being used as a scapegoat in the case.

"People who don't know more about it than we do shouldn't say they don't believe he did it," Mrs. Farmer said.

Hart's relatives sat quietly across the aisle from the victims' families, on another front row bench that placed them within earshot of the defendant.

Courtroom spectators — many who remained neutral about Hart's guilt or innocence — had plenty to say about why they were at the hearing.

"I'm here because I want to be 100 percent sure they've got the right man — not 98 percent sure or 99 percent sure," Locust Grove resident Norma Fleming said.

"The big fear in everybody's heart is that they'll execute the wrong man for the murders," she said.

Locust Grove residents are still living in fear from last year's slayings, she said. "I keep my doors locked, even my car doors. Everybody does. We never did that before," she said.

"Somebody out there killed those girls. Somebody is going to have to answer for it," she said.

Camp Trouble Sign Preceded Killings

Threatening Note Aired By Witness

By Robert B. Allen
Staff Writer

PRYOR — Trouble signs, including a reported death note, plagued Camp Scott last year even before three Girl Scouts were found slain, courtroom testimony revealed Thursday.

Two of four witnesses in the second day of a preliminary hearing

Parole Claim Denied
— Page 9

for Gene Leroy Hart, charged with first-degree murder in the sex slayings, told of burglaries, slashed tents, a breakdown in the camp communications system and a mystery car near the campsite on the night before the victims' bodies were found.

Hart Not Linked

After two days of testimony by six prosecution witnesses no evidence has been introduced linking the 34-year-old Hart to the slayings at Camp Scott near Locust Grove.

Camp Director Barbara Day testified she heard that "several" months prior to the June 13 slayings, a threatening note had been found at the campsite by a scout participating in a weekend camp-out.

Deaths Warned

Mrs. Day said it was not until August that she learned of the note, which she was told read: "Four little girls will be killed."

She acknowledged on cross-examination that she actually never saw the note.

Meanwhile, both the prosecution and defense insisted they have no such note to present as evidence, and there were indications it no longer exists.

Under direct examination by Tulsa County District Attorney S.M. "Buddy" Fallis, who joined the prosecution team earlier this month, Mrs. Day told of hurrying to the death scene on the morning of June 13 after being notified of the tragedy that was to shock both the state and nation.

Victim Found

She said one of the victims, her head smashed and nude from the waist down, lay across a sleeping bag 150 yards from where the small girls had been sleeping. She identified the body as that

"A short time later," Mrs. Day testified.
See Page 2, Column 1

From Page 1

"counselor Susan Emily held up one or two sleeping bags and screamed: 'They're in here'."

It was later discovered that the zipped-up sleeping bags contained the strangled and beaten bodies of Lori Lee Farmer, 8, Tulsa and Michelle Guse, 9, Broken Arrow.

Under cross examination by defense lawyer Garvin Isaacs of Oklahoma City, Mrs. Day also told of seeing a "mystery" car just outside a camp gate only a few hours after 137 Girl Scouts arrived in camp.

She said she and her husband, Richard, left camp about 7:30 p.m. on June 12 and saw the car on the side of the road just beyond the gate. She said the vehicle, which she described as "not American-made," was occupied by four persons, some apparently lying down.

She said the car was gone when she and her husband returned to the camp about 30 minutes later after purchasing a milk supply for the camp.

Mrs. Day said the camp's public address system broke down suddenly and was to be repaired on the day the bodies were found.

Earlier, she testified, one Girl Scout became hysterical in the woods when she thought she saw a body hanging from a tree in the heavily wooded, 140-acre camp.

"But it was just a figment of a child's imagination," Mrs. Day told the court.

She said an investigation disclosed that several tree branches twisted and torn by a wind and rain storm had been mistaken for a person.

Ben Woodward, camp ranger for the Magic Empire Scout Council, admitted that there had been burglaries at Camp Scott several

weeks before the slayings, but insisted that only a small amount of food had been taken.

During 40 minutes on the stand, the camp employee also testified that two tents had been found mysteriously slashed shortly before the Girl Scouts arrived on June 12 for a week's encampment.

Neither slashings, however, occurred in the Kiowa tent perimeter, where the three victims had been housed.

Another witness, Highway Patrol Trooper Harold Berry, who was the first officer to reach the camp

after the deaths were reported, told of inspecting the crime scene. He said he observed tape and a flashlight near where the bodies were discovered.

An ambulance driver, David Ray Parker, said when he took the bodies to a local funeral home, he found a cotton rope tightly knotted about the neck of one of the young victims.

The threatening note was the focus of much of the courtroom questioning, but there are indications it may have been discarded before its possible significance was learned.

Mrs. Darrell Hoffman, in a telephone interview from her Owasso home, said her 16-year-old daughter, Michelle, found the note in April 1977 and gave it to Mrs. Day.

"It's my understanding," said Mrs. Hoffman, "that the note was thought to be a prank by one of the girls and that it was simply thrown away."

Special District Judge Jess B. Clanton Jr. ordered the hearing into its third day Friday amid indications that the preliminary for the former Locust Grove athlete may continue through most of next week.

Pathologist Neil Hoffman, Tulsa, who performed an autopsy on the bodies of the victims, is scheduled to be the prosecution's first witness Friday.

Sisters Rap Boren Role

Reported Parole Offer Criticized

By Judy Foxsett

PRYOR — The sisters of Gene Leroy Hart criticized Gov. David Boren Friday for reportedly promising a parole to a convicted car thief in exchange for help in locating Hart.

Nancy Baker and Millie Littlejohn accused Boren of joining prosecutors in the attempt to "railroad" their brother who is accused of slaying three Girl Scouts at a camp near here last

June.

Convict Larry Dry, arraigned Friday as a material witness against Hart, has said he was promised a parole if his information led to the capture of Hart.

Dry, who escaped from jail twice with Hart and was with him for four months in a

cellar in the woods, said, "I knew just about where Hart was and then they got the rest of the information from another person."

Dry was signed out on leave from the state reformatory in Granite March 28 by Gov. Boren and put in custody of the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation.

Hart was captured April 6. Dry was recommended for parole on April 25, and the parole was signed by Boren on May 18.

An aide to Boren confirmed the governor had granted a leave of absence to Dry, but denied Dry's claim he had been promised a parole.

Since his parole, Dry has been arrested and charged with armed robbery and larceny.

"We wonder if Gov. See Page 2, Column 1

Sisters Rap Boren Role

From Page 1

Boren is as ready to pay for the consequences of these actions (the parole) as he was ready to jump on our brother," the sisters said.

They called Dry "the biggest liar that ever walked," and suggested Boren may have been duped into releasing him.

About 45 minutes after Hart's hearing adjourned for the weekend, Dry was hurried into the near empty courtroom, which was then locked, and arraigned as a material witness.

He was remanded to the custody of Mayes

County Sheriff Pete Weaver on a \$5,000 bond, and was taken to the county jail here.

The sisters said Dry would make a poor wit-

ness for the prosecution, and "if they think that Larry Dry is going to convince people in this county with his lies they're in trouble."

Scouts

From Page 1

that killed Walter Milner had, for nearly 20 years, ached with the loss of his daughter.

For many years after the Camp Scott incident, Milner feared and avoided close relationships, said his ex-wife, Bettye Milner.

Walter Milner attended the preliminary hearing for Gene Leroy Hart in 1979, but privately he told prosecutor Buddy Fallis he'd skip the trial. "He just flat suggested that he could not trust himself not to do violence to the man who'd done this," Fallis said.

Last year, Milner received the Medal of Valor from the Tulsa Police Department and another from the Oklahoma Association of Chiefs of Police. He received the awards for his part in a June 1966 gunbattle with a shotgun-wielding robbery suspect who had killed one officer and wounded another.

"Walter was very sensitive about things like that," Bettye Milner said. "He couldn't have taken a life very easily. He did what he had to do in the line of duty, but it wouldn't have been an easy thing for him to accept, that he had something to do with taking a life."

"It's amazing he lasted so many years in the police department," she said.

The night of the shooting, Milner called his daughter, Kathleen, "just to chat." It was after 1 a.m.

"He was reaching out to her, he needed somebody to talk to. He really didn't come out and say that — just that he'd called to tell her he was OK."

Walter Milner died



Denise Milner on Valentine's Day.

Bettye Milner, 32, suffers a constant, numbing grief that rises with the seasons of her daughter's birth and death.

"It's not a very settled time for me," she said recently. "Just, somehow, my body knows when it's close to her birthday or the anniversary of her death. I'm just feeling tired all the time."

For reasons she doesn't understand, she's been unable to visit her daughter's grave. She nurtures Denise Milner's memory in other ways.

"I remember her walking into a room, the way she was, the things she said. And I see her in my other two children."

"Sometimes, I would have to go in and look at her picture or lay on her bed to feel close to her — to know that she did exist; that she wasn't just something that I dreamed about. It was just the most unimaginable horror. It was all I could do to deal with that," she said.

Bettye Milner went to college, became a medical lab technician and has worked in a Tulsa hospital for 16 years.

"I haven't experienced the bitterness. My grief was more of fear — an intense fear. Just the shock of



Lori Farmer

a feeling that I could have had this child, and helped her and loved her that long, and have something so horrific happen to her. It was more than I could do to deal with that — I couldn't deal with bitterness or anger."

Over the years, she channeled her fear into "my faith in God and the fact that I had two other children to raise. I didn't want their lives affected any more than they had to be."

Today, she said, "I think we're doing pretty good. We live our lives normally every day, just like we would have anyway. But those feelings and experiences that we have, they don't go away."

S.M. "Buddy" Fallis Jr., 62, was Tulsa County district attorney when the murders occurred. He prosecuted the case in neighboring Mayes County at the request of the families of victims Lori Farmer and Michele Guse.

Fallis grew angry and disillusioned after Hart's acquittal. At the insistence of his family, he quit the district attorney's post in 1981, two years into a four-year elected term, to enter private practice. For 26 years, he's handled only civil cases.



Michele Guse

Fallis said leaving criminal prosecutions to others probably was a good move for him.

"Sometimes, as a prosecutor, or in law enforcement, you get to a feeling that everybody's bad. But they're not. I think that's part of why it was a good change for me, to get a better outlook on life."

"It takes its toll. You get sort of burned out. You get mad; you get mad at the world. And Gene Hart's case was another one of those that I thought was a slap in the face of society that enhanced, or exasperated, the frustration."

Fallis said he didn't want to leave criminal work, but, "My family realized that my negative attitude was such that they urged me to reconsider." He joined the firm Nichols, Wolfe, Stamper, Nally, Fallis and Robertson, in 1981.

Richard and GeorgeAnn Guse have grown tired of recounting their daughter's murder and the ways they have coped with their tragedy.

They declined to be interviewed.

Richard Guse agreed to a recent TV interview, but his wife insisted he do it away from the couple's Broken Arrow home.

Guse, a longtime re-

tail credit manager, helped form and was first chairman of the Oklahoma Victims Compensation Board. He's still a member.

In 1987, around the 10-year anniversary of their daughter's murder, they posed for a newspaper photograph, sitting on the floor of Michele Guse's room. It had not changed since the day she left for Camp Scott. The 9-year-old's calendar remained on the wall, forever turned to June 1977.

Dr. Charles and Sheri Farmer traveled, consoled, advised and made speeches for 11 years in the nearly two decades since the death of their daughter, Lori. They traveled to Oklahoma City to help coordinate grief counseling after the Murrah Building bombing.

And that became enough.

"Somewhere after the Oklahoma City bombing, I decided not to do that anymore. It was just time. There comes a time when you need to do something else," Sheri Farmer said.

"We have worked in victims' issues for a long time. We're really proud of the things that we've done. We're proud of the awards. But I'm really proud that our family got through the last 20 years, and our children all turned out to be really neat, wonderful adults."

"I think that's what I would hope — if anything's focused on about our family on this anniversary, is that we got from there to here."

It was never easy. The Farmers struggled for the first two years after their



Gene Leroy Hart

daughter's death, Charles Farmer said.

The Farmers suffered through their grief in different ways. Sheri Farmer talked almost constantly. Her husband hardly talked at all.

"As is typical, I internalized everything — I just kept it in, struggled inside," Charles Farmer said. "It was very difficult to maintain any sense of normalcy in your daily activities and in your environment."

"Husbands and wives don't deal with grief the same way," Sheri Farmer said. "I always tell everybody to give everybody some space. When they say that tragedies bring families closer together, I think they mean somewhere down the road."

One morning in the early days of her grief, Sheri Farmer saw the founders of Parents of Murdered Children on the "Today" show. By noon, she had contacted the network and gotten an address.

After six years of conversations, she was told she was ready to start her own chapter.

"In 1985, when we formed the chapter, there was basically nothing that had anything to do with victims," Sheri Farmer said.

She said she felt a special affinity with the angry families of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman after O.J. Simpson's acquittal in their deaths. Goldman's father rallied against the criminal justice system and demanded reform.

"You're just really shocked at how overwhelming that feeling is — when you're in the middle of a system that you know nothing about, and you see such obvious (possible) changes," she said.

Despite the tragedy, all four of Lori Farmer's siblings — ages 2, 3, 5 and 7 at the time of her death — grew up strong and healthy and are leading productive lives.

Former Mayes County District Attorney Sid Wise was roundly criticized by law enforcement officials and families of the murdered girls. His critics suspected he was using the high-profile murder case to vault himself into the state attorney general's chair.

He was soundly defeated in that election and was discredited for having arranged a book deal on the Girl Scout murder case while that case was in progress.

Pressured by law enforcement, and the Farmers and Guses, Wise consented to being in Fallis to prosecute Hart.

Wise disappeared from the public scene after the murder case.

Mayes County Sheriff Pete Weaver lost his bid for re-election after the Girl Scout murder case, but he regained his old post in a subsequent election. He died in 1991.

6 REFERENCES

Evidence Rarely Mentions Hart

By Robert B. Allen
Staff Writer

PRYOR — Whoever killed three Girl Scouts nearly a year ago was a well organized, methodical killer.

At least that much has been brought out after three days of testimony in a preliminary hearing in this small Mayes County community.

But so far, the man accused in the slayings has been mentioned only six times and seems more like a spectator than a person accused of murder.

The nighttime slayer, who apparently moved silently through this heavily wooded 410-acre Camp Scott area, just on the outskirts of Locust Grove, already had fixed the death pattern before the killings occurred.

The slayer — or slayers — had fashioned a flashlight which beamed only a small pinpoint of light through the lens, sewed together a gag towel and knotted cords and ropes together for strangulation before snuffing out the lives of the young victims last June 13, according to the testimony.

The killer dragged the victims from a tent near the perimeter of Camp Scott to a spot where they were ravished and slain.

Still, after three days of testimony by 12 witnesses in a preliminary hearing, there has been little evidence to link Gene Leroy Hart with the savage slayings, which shocked both the state and nation. The hearing for the 34-year-old former Locust Grove High School athlete is scheduled to resume early Monday morning.

Only six times this past week has the name of Hart come up in a crowded third floor Pryor courtroom. Witnesses paraded to the stand by the prosecution have been asked by defense lawyer Garvin Isaacs of Oklahoma City if they had ever heard of Gene Leroy Hart. See Page 2, Column 5



Gene Leroy Hart

Evidence Rarely Mentions Hart

Cont. From Page 1
Hart.

Most of the witnesses said they had heard of his name only after he was charged with first-degree murder in the slayings and his name appeared in newspapers or on television.

It was admitted from the witness stand that one of the small victims had been found sprawled outside of a sleeping bag, apparently beaten in the head. The other two bodies still were in a zipped sleeping bag nearby beneath a Camp Scott tree just off a scout trail.

Mayes County District Attorney Sidney Wise and Tulsa District Attorney S.M. "Buddy" Fallis Jr., co-prosecutors, have submitted numerous exhibits and physical evidence related to the murders. Only twice Friday did Hart's name emerge in the hearing before a hushed third floor Mayes County courtroom.

Once was when a former clerk at the state reformatory in Granilo, where Hart was serving a sentence for rape and burglary, testified that the accused man had once assailed him in developing photographs.

Louis Linsey of Westminster, Calif., said Hart could have developed certain negatives of a photograph which later were found in a cave near the Locust Grove camp.

"He had access to the darkroom, and it's possible that he could have developed and printed those pictures on his own," Linsey testified.

So far, the photographs found on the ground near a cave two miles from the Scout slayings has been the strongest evidence linking Hart to the killings.

The former Locust Grove athlete is accused of dragging, assaulting and then

killing Lori Lee Farmer, 8, and Doris Denise Milner, 10, both of Tulsa and Michelle Guse, 9, of Broken Arrow.

Throughout the first three days of the preliminary, the dark-haired Hart sat between his defense lawyers calmly writing notes and seldom raising his eyes to watch witnesses.

A state pathologist said two of the girls were bound with tape and rope and another with a sewn towel beneath her neck, which the prosecution contends was used as a gag when the victims were dragged from their small tent to a clearing.

Larry Mullins, a state fingerprint expert, said prints were taken from a flashlight near the death scene and also from a cot in a tent where the victims had been sleeping, but he admitted the prints were unidentifiable.

As the hearing re-

cessed for the weekend, a state chemist, Dennis Reimer of Tahlequah, began telling the court about analyzing clothing and other death scene evidence. The judge, as the hearing moved into the late evening, called a halt to the hearing until Monday.

The state, in filing its charge against Hart, has said the girls were raped, but a state pathologist said an autopsy failed to disclose any signs of sperm. He added that the tests also failed to disclose any sign of semen.

"There were no fingerprints on the bodies of the victims," said Dr. Hoffman.

Speaking before a hushed, crowded courtroom, he told how he discovered two of the bodies heavily bound after they were brought to his Tulsa office.

He said the Guse child had her arms pinned down to her sides, tied with cord

while the Milner Scout's arms were tied behind her back with a terrycloth beneath her chin, a material which had been earlier used as a gag.

"But there were no ties on the Farmer child," he told the tense courtroom.

The bodies were found shortly after 6 a.m. on June 13 of last year by counselors, but the pathologist said they possibly were slain between 4 and 5 a.m. on that day and could have been slain as early as 2 a.m.

In the early stages of the hearing, which has drawn big crowds to the main courtroom and a closed circuit television in another building, the defense has constantly brought up the possibility that a homosexual counselor could have slain the Girl Scouts.

At one point in the preliminary hearing, defense attorney Isaacs asked a counselor if she

had any homosexual tendencies. Counselor Carla Wilhite of Tulsa, snapped back, "No."

She said she knew of any gay persons in the Scout area and then added when she was asked if she might be homosexual, "Well, I'm not one," she said, shrugging her shoulders.

Former prison inmate Larry Gene Dry, who claims he led officers to the whereabouts of Hart before his capture after a 10-month search, is among those scheduled to testify this week.

Dry, who is being held in the Delaware County Jail at Jay, is slated to be called by the prosecution Monday or Tuesday, courthouse sources said. Dry says he was recommended for a parole after agreeing to cooperate with law enforcement officers in the case of Hart, with whom he shared a cell in state prison.

Witnesses Link Hart's Hideout, Death Scene

By Robert B. Allen
Staff Writer

PRYOR — Material traced to the place where three Girl Scouts were found brutally slain matched evidence found near a cave where Gene Leroy Hart once hid out, testimony disclosed Monday.

The hiding place — a cave and cellar — was identified by a former prison cellmate as a spot where Hart took refuge after one of two 1970 jail escapes.

In more than an hour

on the witness stand, convict Larry Gene Dry, who escaped with Hart four years ago, called the accused scout killer a person with a marked reaction around young girls.

Once in 1973, the 26-year-old Dry testified, he held a shotgun and was forced to threaten Hart to prevent him from "doing something" to a 13-year-old girl after they had observed a group of youngsters playing in the woods near a

stream.

"We got into an argument after a discussion about the young girls," said Dry.

Dry appeared as a material witness in the trial after being brought here from Delaware County, where he is being held on armed robbery and second degree burglary complaints.

Photographs to which Hart allegedly had access were found near the cave in a remote area, which has been described as a boyhood playground of Hart, who later became a Locust Grove football star.

There was also testimony by an Oklahoma State Bureau Investigation agent, which came as the strongest evidence against Hart in his four-day old preliminary hearing here. He is charged with three counts of first-degree murder in last year's slayings of the young Girl Scouts in Camp Scott near Locust Grove.

Agent Arthur Linville testified that a piece of green plastic and masking tape which were found near the cave matched items recovered at the death scene nearly three miles away.

It was also brought out in direct examination of witnesses by Mayes County District Attorney Sidney Wise and co-prosecutor S. M. "Buddy" Fallis Jr. that a pair of sunglasses and a case for the glasses were found in the cave and cellar area.

One of the earlier witnesses, scout counselor, Susan Emory, of Tulsa, told the court that a pair of glasses and the case they had been in turned up missing from a counselor's tent shortly after the three girls were found strangled and beaten to death.

Also missing from

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From Page 1

the tent, she said, was a towel which Miss Emory testified had been used to clean tent occupants' shoes after a heavy rainstorm had struck the area.

Investigators later disclosed they had seized a muddy, blood-stained towel which they believed may have been used to mop up blood from a tent where the three slain scouts had been sleeping.

The tent — one of seven in the Kiowa area — was occupied by the three victims, Lori Lee Farmer, 8, and Doris Denise Milner, 10, both of Tulsa, and Michele Guse, 9 from Broken Arrow.

Once during Monday's proceedings, Mrs. Charles Farmer, the mother of Lori Lee, broke down and sobbed, prompting Special District Judge Jess E. Clanton Jr. to recess court so that she could regain her composure.

The mother, sitting on a front row, broke into tears while defense attorney Garvin Isaacs grilled a witness about the flyblown condition of the bodies as they lay in the sun while investigators searched for clues.

As spectators filed out of the courtroom for the recess, Isaacs turned to Dr. Charles Farmer and said, "I'm sorry."

"I'll bet you are," the Tulcan physician and father of one of the victims shot back.

Dry was the chief witness in the session.

Dry, who was paroled in May after serving a sentence for a car theft, has claimed — although Gov. David Boren has denied it — that he was granted clemency for providing information in the search for Hart.

Dry also told the court that while he was confined at the state reformatory in Granite last year, he received letters containing threats from Hart.

He said Hart warned him that if he told anyone where he might be found, he knew that Dry's wife and daughter resided in Vinita, and he also knew how "to get to them."

"It would be easy to do so," Dry said one letter read, "because you can look around and already see what has already happened."

Mother's Wait 'Horrible, Absolutely Horrible'

By Debby Baxter

The mother of a 9-year-old, first-time Girl Scout camper waited one "horrible, absolutely horrible" hour Monday before finding out whether her daughter was safe at Camp Scott near Locust Grove.

Carol Kitzmiller, Stillwater, was "driving one child home from the swimming pool" about 10 a.m. Monday when she heard over her car radio that three Girl Scouts had been found slain at the northeastern Oklahoma camp.

"Nancy was out there but I didn't know what, if anything, had happened to her," Mrs. Kitzmiller

said.

"The radio just said that 8-, 9- and 10-year-old girls had been found killed," she said.

"For an hour, I was stunned. I couldn't find out from anyone if Nancy was all right. Then I got hold of the Locust Grove police and they told me she was safe," the mother said.

The police didn't say, though, that some 100 young scouts were being bused from the camp where the three Tulsa girls were found slain, to a Tulsa Girl Scout center.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Kitzmiller and her husband, Don, began their drive to Locust Grove.

"We were heading for the camp. We passed the buses on our way to Locust Grove, then had to turn back and drive to Tulsa," Mrs. Kitzmiller said.

They met Nancy in Tulsa and shuttled her home.

The girls had been kept in the dark about the slayings, Mrs. Kitzmiller said.

"The parents were terrified. But the girls were mainly disappointed that they couldn't stay for camp," she said.

"The girls saw the police and sheriffs and news-men. But they still didn't really know anything

about what was going on," she said.

"That's good — otherwise there could have been mass panic," Mrs. Kitzmiller said.

Meanwhile, hushed groups of parents gathered at the Tulsa headquarters, wondering how to explain to their daughters why their camping had been cut short.

"Mommy, what happened?" one little camper asked as she was embraced by her mother and father, the Associated Press reported. "We just got there."

Scout officials wanted parents to tell the girls of

Cont. on Page 2, Col. 2



Barbara Day, camp administrator, discovered bodies.

Mom's Wait 'Horrible'

Cont. From Page One
the tragedy.

There were some tears when the buses arrived, AP said, but mostly it was calm.

Mrs. Robert Brooks, who had three daughters at the camp, told AP she recalled the happiness with which they left Sunday.

"They were fighting just to get on the bus," she told AP. "It was such a happy occasion."

Mrs. Brooks was quoted as saying she wasn't sending her daughters camping again. "They can go camping with their Mom and Dad." But, she added, "You can protect your children just so much."

Killings Frighten Nearby Town

LOCUST GROVE — The brutal bludgeoning deaths of three Girl Scouts attending camp three miles southeast of here Monday left Locust Grove residents bewildered that the slayings happened in their close-knit community.

"I can't believe it happened here. Things like that just aren't supposed to happen in Locust Grove, USA," said Mrs. Lynn Flynn. "I have two daughters of my own and I'm a *fraid*," Mrs. Flynn said.

Parents are "afraid to let their kids camp out. It's so bizarre. Nobody can figure who'd do anything like kill those three little girls" at Camp Scott, Mrs. Flynn said.

When Susie Stafford, 17, went to Camp Scott as a child, "we used to tell ghost stories to scare ourselves,

Officers brought in wreckers to move heavy equipment into the wooded area. A power generator was brought to furnish lights. A vacuum-like piece of equipment was being used to scour for clues. Power saws were used to clear out timber and underbrush.

The victims were among more than 100 campers, Girl Scouts and Brownies, who arrived there about 2:30 p.m. Sunday. The slain girls were housed in a 12-by-14 foot platform tent. The tent was located about 150 yards from where four of the camp counselors were sleeping.

Investigators said the only clue so far is a large six-volt flashlight found near the girls' bodies. Tape matching that used to gag the victims was on the flashlight battery, officials said.

I can't imagine anything like that going on out there."

"I went to camp when I was 8 or 9 years old — the same age as those girls," said Miss Stafford, who works in a day care center in Pryor.

"It's such a nice camp, out in the woods. And now, this. . ."

"My parents," Miss Stafford said, "won't let me go out because of this. Parents at the nursery haven't said much — but that's because most of them have been at work all day and haven't even heard about this yet," she said late Monday afternoon.

Rhonda Rial, manning the fountain at a normally busy Locust Grove dairy inn, said her neighbors seemed "scared to leave their houses today."

"I'm sick about it. I went to that camp when I was in scouts," Miss Rial said.

"Once, a man came into our tent with a club in his hand and scared us to death," Miss Rial said.

Her brush with terror turned out to be an apparent prank, she recalled.

Locust Grove "tensed up," she said, after hearing of the killings. "Who did this, and why? We're all scared."

Herman Hitchcock, handling light traffic at his service station, said Locust Grove seemed "sick" about the girls' deaths.

"Everyone shakes their heads when something is said about it," he said, while keeping an eye on a highway patrol car filling up at his pump.

Residents seemed to be keeping their fears to themselves, though, the Pryor sheriff's office indicated.

"We haven't had many calls from people wanting us to check up on them," one dispatcher there said. "But look at it this way. With all the lawmen around, I'd say they're all well protected."

there said. "But look at it this way. With all the lawmen around, I'd say they're all well protected."

19 Years After Scout Deaths, Investigator Seeks Answers

By Mark A. Hutchison
Staff Writer

PRYOR — Little has changed in the 19 years since three murders near here sent Oklahomans into frenzied fear and anger.

Garvin Isaacs still says his client and the accused, Gene Leroy Hart, was innocent of what was dubbed as the "Girl Scout murders."

A throng of state and federal investigators maintain Hart was the lone killer.

Now Ted LaTurner has succeeded in getting a petition approved calling for a Mayes County grand jury to examine what he says are monumental leads in the case, including two living suspects. The Pryor resident, who says he started investigating the killings in 1981, has 45 days to obtain enough valid signatures to get a panel called.

LaTurner says in the grand jury petition there was a witness to the killings. He says the witness has named three suspects, none of whom are Hart.

But the first lawman on the scene of the June 13, 1977, murder of the three young



Garvin Isaacs

girls says the only witness can't talk.

"Gene Hart is dead, and all the physical evidence pointed to him," Mayes County Sheriff Harold Berry says.

Berry says LaTurner is a back investigator seeking the grand jury for notoriety and gain.

"According to him, all the law officers, evidence and lab work was wrong and he was right," Berry says. "He went to the families and gained their confidence, and they helped him financially to look into this."

LaTurner denies being paid by the families.

Killed were Lori Lee Farmer, 8; Michele Guse, 9; and Doris Denise Milner, 10. They were attending Girl Scout camp near Locust Grove when they were bludgeoned, strangled and sexually assaulted.

Hart, who four years earlier had escaped for the second time from the Mayes County Jail and Sheriff Pete Weaver, was an immediate suspect. Isaacs says Weaver named Hart immediately because "he was a guy with the worst case of tunnel vision I'd ever seen. Gene had escaped from his jail twice. ... He didn't like Gene."

A convicted rapist, Hart was charged in the slayings but eluded lawmen for 10 months before being captured.

Acquitted of the murders in 1979, Hart,

then 35, returned to prison on earlier rape convictions. He died of a heart attack on June 4, 1979.

Berry, who was an Oklahoma Highway Patrol trooper at the time, says he was first on the scene and preserved it as best he could. He assisted in the investigation



Gene Leroy Hart

and thinks Hart acted alone because, among other things, there was only one set of footprints at the scene, hair found at the site matched Hart's, and Hart had knowledge of a nearby cellar where the killer was before and after the crimes.

In his petition, LaTurner says he's interviewed law enforcement witnesses who say evidence was fabricated to link Hart to the crime. Isaacs, who was retained for Hart, said "I believe that."

For 359 days, Isaacs, then 33, worked on Hart's defense. He says Hart maintained his innocence throughout, saying he was in Tulsa at his uncle's house at the time of the killings. The uncle died during the manhunt and didn't get to testify at trial.

LaTurner says he was asked in 1981 by

then-Sheriff Paul Smith to investigate the murders. In 1989, he says, he was approached by the witness.

The witness says he was at the tent where the victims slept on the night of the killings. LaTurner says the witness told him he saw one man hitting a sleeping bag with a hammer and another man carrying two sleeping bags out of the tent.

One of the named assailants in the petition died in a Kansas prison. Another was recently released from Oklahoma's prison system after serving a sentence for second-degree murder. The other man lives in eastern Oklahoma, LaTurner says.

Isaacs says the man who died in the Kansas prison, Bill Stevens, was discussed as a possible suspect. However, Berry says he met LaTurner and the so-called witness at a restaurant in 1990 and Berry asked the witness to draw a diagram of the camp layout and the victim's tent.

"He didn't know the camp. He couldn't draw it," Berry recalls. "That's when I leaned across the table and asked him, 'What will you do if I arrest you right here for being an accessory to the homicides of the Girl Scouts?'"

Berry said the man replied: "Well, maybe I just dreamed I was there." LaTurner denied Berry made the remark to the wit-

ness.

Kym Koch, spokeswoman for the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, says the bureau's agents have investigated LaTurner's claims, "and we couldn't find anything to substantiate them."

Among the items LaTurner wants a grand jury to look at is whether sperm or blood samples found at the scene match genetically with the two living men he names in the petition.

The scientific testing of DNA has improved over the last few years and has helped link suspects to crimes. In fact, the FBI performed DNA tests in 1989 on body fluids found at the murder scene. Those were compared to Hart's, and three of the five tests were positive.

Two other tests were inconclusive.

Sheri Farmer, Lori's mother, doesn't criticize investigators for not finding another killer, but she says "I know the OSBI isn't pursuing this anymore."

Thursday was the anniversary of her daughter's death, and Farmer says she still feels the pain as vividly as 19 years ago. "I know they (investigators) felt they had the right person, because there just wasn't any evidence of anyone else," Farmer says. "But as a mother, I always felt like there was more than one person (assailant)."

Teen Reports Threat in Hart Link Try

By Judy Fossett

Staff Writer

LOCUST GROVE —

A teen-age Locust Grove man who once gave a ride to Gene Leroy Hart said Thursday he was threatened with felony charges unless he helped prosecu-

tors put Hart at the scene where three Girl Scouts were slain last summer.

Johnny Fleming, 18, also said he was singled out for "harassment" because his best friend is Hart's half-brother, Thurman

Johnson.

Fleming said Mayes County Sheriff Pete Weaver had him picked up in April after Hart's arrest and showed him the flashlight found near the bodies of the three dead girls. He said Weaver asked him

if he'd repaired such a flashlight for Gene Hart.

"I told him, 'No, I hadn't.'"

He said the sheriff then asked him if he had ever repaired that particular flashlight.

"I looked at it and

couldn't find anything wrong with it to show I'd ever worked on it," Fleming said.

Fleming said he and Johnson used flashlights frequently for coonhunting and fishing, and that they have repaired flashlights at Hart's mother's home.

He said that after he had handled the flashlight for several minutes, the sheriff told him a personal print had been found on it, and asked Fleming to give his fingerprints.

Fleming said he refused.

He said Weaver showed him photographs of the dead girls' bodies and asked him if he had ever owned a hatchet.

He said Weaver also attempted to get him to say that an elastic bandage found around the neck of one of the victims was one that Thurman Johnson had been wearing as a head band.

A few days after that interview, Deputy A.D. David stopped him in Pryor and again asked for the fingerprints, Fleming said.

He said Weaver also attempted to get him to say that an elastic bandage found around the neck of one of the victims was one that Thurman Johnson had been wearing as a head band.

A few days after that interview, Deputy A.D. David stopped him in Pryor and again asked for the fingerprints, Fleming said.

When Fleming again refused, "He showed me a piece of paper that said aiding and abetting and perjury on it, and said he'd give it to the district attorney

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From Page 1

if I wasn't back by 6."

Fleming said he hired a lawyer and continued to refuse to give his fingerprints.

The basis for the aiding and abetting charge, Fleming said, was that he had given a ride to Tahlequah in 1976 to a man he didn't know then as Hart.

He said he hadn't met Hart and knew the man he offered the ride to only as "Sonny."

"Sonny" is the name the family uses for Hart.

Fleming said he didn't know the basis for the perjury charge because he had never given a sworn statement in the case.

Fleming said he thinks Weaver planned to use the threat of prosecution and the fingerprints to force him to link Hart to the flashlight and bandage.

Weaver was reported out of the office and could not be reached for comment.

Fleming, who is to testify for the defense in Hart's preliminary hearing Friday, said he was scheduled to be a prosecution witness until this week when his subpoena was dismissed by District Attorney Sid Wise.

He said Wise dismissed him after he told the prosecutor what his testimony would be.

Although the alleged attempt to link Hart to the flashlight and Fleming wasn't made until April, Fleming said his friendship with Johnson had made him

a frequent target of questioning since the slayings a year ago.

"They've been hassling me ever since the Girl Scouts were killed," he said.

Perry Mason Scene

By Judy Fossett
Staff Writer

PRYOR — "It was just like a scene out of Perry Mason," one flabbergasted spectator said when it was over. "I've never seen anything like it."

Convict Jimmy Don Bunch had just shocked the packed courtroom Friday with the statement that Gene Leroy Hart had confessed to the slaying of three Girl Scouts.

Bunch had been called to the witness stand by defense attorney Garvin Isaacs who stood angry and bewildered by the staggering testimony of his lead-off witness.

Isaacs called Bunch with the belief that the Oklahoma State Penitentiary inmate would stand by a tape-recorded interview and sworn statement to Isaacs in which Bunch said he'd been promised a parole if he testified against Hart.

But on the stand, Bunch stunned Isaacs by saying Hart had indeed implicated himself, that his own sworn statement to Isaacs was a lie and that Isaacs knew it was a lie.

Bunch testified Isaacs promised him a parole if he would testi-
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Perry Mason Scene

From Page 1

fy as a witness for Hart, and that their negotiations were conducted while the tape recorder was turned off.

Isaacs had interviewed Bunch alone on June 5 in Bunch's death row cell at the prison after learning from Hart that Bunch had allegedly been approached by prison guards about his testimony.

According to the transcript of the taped interview, Isaacs is quoted as asking Bunch, "Have I promised you anything for saying this?"

"No sir," Bunch replied. "Garvin, there is nothing you could promise me. I don't think you could get me out of here. I am doing this because I feel they are bum rapping the man. When I am saying bum rapping, I believe they are trying to frame him."

Bunch is also quoted on the tape as saying, "I want to go home as bad as anybody, but I

have got to live with myself and if it means getting up there and lying on Gene Leroy Hart for something that man didn't do I would serve everyday of my time down on death row, and I am sure that I will receive some kind of retaliation from this, for coming up here and telling the truth."

Earlier in the taped transcript, Bunch recounts a conversation with prison guard Mike Pulschney in which Bunch says Pulschney promised him "a one-way ticket home."

"And I said, you mean you are trying to say that if I get up on the stand and say that Gene Leroy Hart admitted the murder that you will guarantee my parole. He said I am saying that the OSBI will get you out of there on parole."

"He (Pulschney) said you have got some of the biggest people in Oklahoma dealing with this. He said Gov. Boren, and he made the statement, do you real-

ize how bad Gov. Boren and Sid Wise and people like that want to make, Sid Wise is running for attorney general, he said them people are wanting to make the case."

During his Friday testimony, Bunch said he discussed the case with Hart several times and that on one occasion, when he asked Hart if he were guilty, he dropped his head and said, "I don't really know."

"I said to explain, be open with me," and he said Hart replied, "Jimmy, I'd been smoking reefer and drinking wine for three days. I woke up in a cave and had blood all over me."

"That's when I really know he'd committed the murders," Bunch said.

Hart, who displayed no emotion, at the surprise testimony, was said later to be "really depressed and mad."

Hart's two sisters, seated on the front row of courtroom, said later they were "stunned."

Hart's Defense Team Maps Strategy Following Setback



Gene Leroy Hart

By Robert B. Allen
Staff Writer

PRYOR — When a hearing comes back to a courtroom here in 10 days, the defense plans to call more than 100 witnesses in its move to prove Gene Leroy Hart innocent of killing three Girl Scouts a year ago.

Defense lawyer Garvin Isaacs of Oklahoma City conceded the defense must come from behind after suffering a sensational setback before the preliminary hearing recessed Friday.

"I've had it done to me before," Isaacs said, "but never like this."

The chief defense lawyer was referring to a 30-year-old state prison convict who shocked a courtroom when he told about Hart admitting to him that he had awakened in a cave and found himself covered with blood.

Jimmy Don Bunch was in a death row cell at the state penitentiary at McAlester when Hart was arrested and placed on death row for security reasons.

He testified Friday that Hart told him in April that he had smoked a marijuana cigarette and had been drinking wine for three days when he

finally came to in a cave shortly after the June 13, 1977, slayings of three Girl Scouts whose bodies were found outside of their encampment tents.

Bunch admitted from the witness stand as he was called as the first defense witness that he signed a false statement earlier contending that he was "pressured" by state investigators to testify against Hart. It all raised a heated verbal exchange between the witness and the defense attorney, who accused Bunch of lying on the stand.

If the witness's testimony hurt the defense's case, it elated the prosecution, which in the first six days has paraded 23 witnesses and 86 exhibits into evidence to prove that Hart was the nighttime prowler who crept into a tent and killed the three small Girl Scouts.

Hart, a former Locust Grove High School star athlete, is charged with three first-degree murder counts in the deaths of Lori Lee Farmer, 8; Michele Guse, 9, and Doris Denise Milner, 10, all from the Tulsa area.

So far, in the first six days, the prosecution has based its case on this primary evidence:

— Hair found on the body of the oldest victim

and also on the tent floor bore exactly the same microscopic characteristics of samples taken from the defendant following his arrest. However, a witness said it could not be a positive identification.

— Tape used to place a piece of plastic over a flashlight found at the murder scene came from a roll of tape found near a cave and cellar which once were described as Hart's boyhood playgrounds.

— Hart, who has been a felony fugitive since 1973, was seen in the home of his mother 15 days before the killings. Her home is only about five miles from the murder scene.

In a sensational development before Special Judge Jess B. Clanton Jr. recessed the hearing until June 26, convict Bunch said that he lied in signing an earlier statement for Isaacs insisting that he was pressured into taking the stand against Hart.

He said that his only threat came from Isaacs himself, who he claimed told him he would be shot if he didn't tell the court that Hart was innocent and he wanted to help him.

Bunch said he was contacted by two prison

guards at the state prison in McAlester, where he was serving a sentence for kidnapping and escape, who told him they were go-betweens with the OSBI. He said in the statement, which he admitted he signed, that efforts would be made to secure him a parole, if he testified for the prosecution.

But in his Friday testimony, he denied any promises and said that he had been assured that the only help would come from Isaacs himself.

Lead Fizzles; Probe Shifts

By Robert B. Allen
Staff Writer

LOCUST GROVE — Investigators appeared to have suffered a setback Sunday when what was called a strong lead to the possible killer of three Girl Scouts suddenly fizzled out.

Dist. Atty. Sidney Wise said the probe, which has been concentrated in the Camp Scott area for nearly a week, will shift to other sectors beginning early

Monday morning.

At a late Sunday afternoon news briefing outside the camp gates, Wise dis-

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closed that the decision to shift activities was made in a four-hour strategy conference.

He said at the same time most of the 30 state and local officers who have been working here on the case will be reas-

signed to other areas of the investigation.

Meanwhile, most of the churches in Locust Grove and nearby Pryor had prayer at Sunday services for the families of the young murder victims, Lori Lee Farmer, 8, and Doris Denise Milner, 10, both of Tulsa, and Michele Gese, 9, Broken Arrow.

Both Wise and Dick Wilkerson, coordinator for investigative operations for the
Cont. on Page 2, Col. 1

Lead Fizzles; Probe Shifts

Cont. From Page One

Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, strongly indicated that officers have exhausted all possibilities in the local search.

Wise said the command post would continue at the 410-acre scout site, where the triple sex murder occurred last Monday, but that most of the officers would be working elsewhere.

Wilkerson left the camp early Sunday to return to Oklahoma City, and declined to say whether or not he would return here.

He said that a suspect who looked "good" 24 hours ago suddenly "looks less than half good now."

Wilkerson would not elaborate, but said that he doesn't think an early break in the case is near.

"While I am confident that we are getting closer every day," Wise told reporters, "I must say that we have no possible suspect in mind at the present time."

The Mayes County prosecutor also repeat-

ed an earlier statement made Saturday, insisting that the death weapon had not been found, despite a search of the campgrounds and a shallow pond on a nearby farm.

Jack Shroff, the man who owns that land, was hospitalized Sunday morning with chest pains.

Shroff submitted to a lie detector test late last week, which he passed, officers said.

Search dogs led officers to the pond, and a burned out campfire was found on the banks.

One of the three dogs flown here from Pennsylvania, a Rottweiler, died Saturday night after suffering heatstroke, but the dog trainer, Don Laken, said a replacement would be brought in early Monday.

Both Laken and Wise said the dogs will continue to work the Camp Scott area, even as officers take their investigation outside the camp.

Wise said crime laboratories in Oklahoma City and nearby Tahlequah were continuing to analyze evidence recovered so far, but no substantial report has been received by him.

Wise emphasized to reporters that there had been no dissension among the various investigative agents, contrary to some reports. He said all were working hand in hand and felt that progress was being made.

Wise said he planned no more news conferences until he has something worthwhile to report. He said officials were "not trying to cloak the investigation in a degree of any secrecy," but they could not make public all facets of what he called an around-the-clock investigation.

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Hart's a Little Girl's Bogeyman

By Judy Fossett
Staff Writer

LOCUST GROVE — The little girls were squealing and giggling as little girls do at a slumber party recently when they heard a strange noise outside.

The giggling turned to high-pitched shrieks and one 10-year-old screamed, "Gene Leroy Hart, Gene Leroy Hart!"

It wasn't Gene Leroy Hart outside the window. Hart, accused of the slaying of three Girl Scouts last summer, is in jail under heavy guard.

And the little girls knew it. But for them and many other children in north-

east Oklahoma, Gene Hart's name has become synonymous with "bogeyman."

It's reminiscent of a time 25 years ago when children in these parts squealed and taunted their friends with cries of "Billy Cook will get you, Billy Cook will get you."

It was the name of Cook, the state's most notorious mass-murderer who dumped the bodies of an Illinois family in a Joplin mine shaft, that children used to frighten each other when they told ghost stories around the campfire.

Parents in this area say their children still feel the effects of the terror that

spread when word of the Girl Scout murders rippled through this community of 1,500.

Children who slept alone before are still demanding to sleep with their parents. Some refuse to go outside alone after dark.

One Locust Grove mother who believes in Hart's innocence said her own children were reluctant to play outside because "Gene Hart might be out there. Our kids pile in with us to sleep, and my 6-year-old said she was more scared than her brother."

See Page 2, Column 5

Hart's a Little Girl's Bogeyman

From Page 1

ers because "they want little girls."

Linnea Brickey, the 10-year-old hostess at the recent slumber party, remains a victim of the horror that shocked the town, still refusing to go outdoors alone at night.

"Somebody might chop me," the youngster said.

Priscilla Brickey said her daughter insisted until recently on sleeping in her parents' room. "She kept saying that Gene Leroy Hart might get her. Two or three weeks ago she went back to her own

room, but before that, she wouldn't sleep there for love nor money."

Linnea and her mother, like virtually everyone else in Locust Grove, is fascinated with the Hart case.

Everywhere — the restaurant, the beauty shop, a front porch gathering of neighbors — the the topic of conversation is always the same — Gene Leroy Hart.

Parents say their children are just as interested in the case as they are. Toys are dropped when television accounts of the preliminary hearing are played and children scurry to catch the latest news.

Linnea and a girlfriend play "court" with Mrs. Brickey cast in the role of Hart, the friend as defense attorney Garvin Isaacs and Linnea playing both judge and prosecutor.

"I think he's guilty," Linnea says, tossing her long, brown ponytail. But all concede there are very many people in this area who think otherwise.

But convicted or acquitted, it's Hart's name — once associated only with his prowess on the football field — that will long be connected with the tragic killings.

DNA tests bring more questions

Was a female involved in 1977 Girl Scout slayings?

By Ron Jackson
Staff Writer

LOCUST GROVE — The unsolved 1977 Girl Scouts murder mystery just grew murkier.

Recent DNA tests failed to identify the killer or killers who raped and murdered three Oklahoma girls June 13, 1977, at Camp Scott in Locust Grove. However, the tests revealed a partial female DNA profile, Mayes County District Attorney Gene Haynes announced Tuesday in a news release.

Testing from a semen-stained pillowcase found at the crime scene failed to exclude all three of the victims or the possibility of a female attacker, adding to the stockpile of questions that already surround this enduring mystery.

No answers for families

The biggest question remains, 31 years later: Who killed Lori Lee Farmer, 8, of Tulsa; Michelle Guse, 9, of Broken Arrow; and Doris Denise Milner, 10, of Tulsa?

"I've always felt in my gut that there was a girl present," Sheri Farmer, Lori's mother, told *The Oklahoman*. "So when I saw the DNA results, that was a concern with me. ... Lori was eventually excluded from the DNA match and so was one of the other girls, I was told, but they couldn't exclude all three girls."

"Given the DNA results, you have to wonder if there wasn't also a female who took part in the murders."

Haynes' statement didn't expound on the results.

"It is unfortunate the testing did not produce a DNA profile," Haynes said. "We had hoped the testing would bring an end to the debate over who committed these terrible crimes. The families of the victims certainly deserve an ending to the case."

To date, the late Gene Leroy Hart is the only person to ever be charged with the murder of the three Girl Scouts. Hart, then 34 and a fugitive, had been spotted living in the Cookson

See DNA, back page



Lori Lee Farmer



Michelle Guse



Doris Denise Milner

Okfuskee County hunt for girls' killer continues

News that DNA tests were unsuccessful in solving the 1977 Girl Scouts murder was not welcome news Tuesday in Okfuskee County, as investigators here ended their 17th day of trying to find out who killed Taylor Paschal-Placker, 13, and Skyla Whitaker, 11.

Both girls were shot multiple times in the head and chest June 8, and were found lying in a roadside ditch, less than 300 yards from Taylor's house.

Investigators have released a sketch of a suspicious person who may have seen the girls on the afternoon of their deaths, but attempts to locate the mystery man in the white pickup have proven unsuccessful, as have attempts to determine any real suspects or motives in the killing.

With apparently not much else to go on, authorities have returned to the crime scene area multiple times in the past two weeks, but they are hoping that when they go back today, it will be different.

Dog to search for clues

Joining the search this morning is a gunpowder detecting dog trained by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

The dog and his handler are planning to search the area looking for any clues that may have been left behind by the killer or killers, OSBI spokeswoman Jessica Brown said.

On Tuesday, Brown said authorities fielded multiple phone calls regarding a burglary that occurred a few miles from where the girls were shot.

"We're working the crime scene," Brown said, "but there is no relation to the shootings."

Staff Writer Johnny Johnson

■ Online at NewsOK.com; Continuing coverage of the slayings. Keyword: Girl Scout murders

DNA TESTING HISTORY

■ FBI conducts DNA tests from a pillowcase belonging to one of the victims. Tests are inconclusive.

■ OSBI sends semen-stained pillowcases into lab for two DNA tests. Both tests prove inconclusive, prompting Bettye Milner — mother of murder victim Doris Milner — to conclude, "There's nothing else to hope for, is there? This puts away any hope we might have for any solution. I was really counting on that."

■ Two private laboratories are contracted to conduct additional DNA tests on semen-stained pillowcases and evidence from a swab from one of the victims. Evidence proves too deteriorated to obtain a DNA profile.

DNA

Continued from Page 13A

Hills near Camp Scott at the time of the murders.

Hart, however, was acquitted by a Mayes County jury in March 1979. Two months after his acquittal, Hart collapsed at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester from a heart attack while serving 308 years for unrelated rape, burglary, and kidnapping convictions.

"I feel badly for the families of those little girls who were murdered," said Garvin Isaacs, Hart's defense attorney. "But Gene Leroy Hart was an innocent man who was falsely accused."

Haynes had hoped new DNA testing would solve the mystery once and for all.

Assembling the pieces

A venture into the latest DNA technology became possible last year when the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation received a federal grant that permitted private laboratories to examine DNA evidence in cold cases. In April, the agency received permission from Haynes to conduct specific DNA tests on semen stains from pillowcases and a swab taken from one of the victims.

Haynes signed off on the tests even though they would exhaust the evidence from the swab.

The DNA test conducted is capable of separating female and male DNA. But results from tests conducted by Houston-based Identigene returned inconclusive.

Two months later, OSBI sent the remaining evidence from the pillowcases to Sorenson Forensics in Salt Lake City for further testing. This time a DNA profile that genetically types as female was obtained from one of the pillowcase stains.

Samples of the surviving parents were then submitted for testing in October.

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"Any time you play with evidence long enough, you run the risk of things becoming cloudier," said Tulsa attorney S.M. "Buddy" Fallis, who prosecuted Hart. "It would be nice if we had pristine DNA samples from all parties involved, but we don't. Now the case becomes murkier, and that's real sad. The more this is played out, the more the lore of public speculation grows. ... Of course, this doesn't change my belief. I've always believed we charged the right guy in Gene Leroy Hart."

Farmer is also convinced Hart murdered her daughter.

"To me, this would be the final piece to the puzzle," Farmer said. "I would know this is what happened to my daughter in her final hours, but that would still only be a test result. It wouldn't bring back my daughter."

Scout Counselor Testifies Strangers Seen Before Killings

By Robert B. Allen
Staff Writer

PRYOR — Defense lawyers for Gene Leroy Hart Monday sought to show that strangers were in the Camp Scott area less than 24 hours before three Girl Scouts were found slain outside their tent last June.

Former camp counselor Cella Elaine Stall, Tulsa, testified how two Girl Scouts became frightened when two mysterious men came near their tent shortly before the June 1977 murders, a band of the camp director told of coming face to face with a tall stranger near a creek the day before the killings.

Miss Stall, an Oklahoma State University student, said strange things started occurring a week earlier when camp staffers met in the Locust Grove site in an orientation session.

She told a crowded courtroom how two camp counselors were followed along a camp trail by someone who kept in the glare of a flashlight beam.

The former counselor and Richard H. Day, husband of camp director Barbara Day, were among two of eight witnesses called by attorneys Garvin Isaacs and Gary Pitchlynn, both of

Oklahoma City, as the preliminary hearing for Hart reconvened after a weeklong recess. The hearing is now in its third week.

Monday's testimony recalled a night scream in the woods, possible tampering with the death tent and testimony from a West Memphis, Ark., truck driver who admitted he has been questioned five times in eight months about his whereabouts at the time of the slayings.

Hart, 34, a member of a well-known Locust Grove Cherokee Indian family, is charged with the sex murders of three Tulsa area Girl Scouts.

Miss Stall said several of the camp's counselors were awakened sometime shortly after midnight on the day of the slayings by what sounded like the screams of a child.

"We investigated and we found a small girl walking in the densely wooded underbrush," she said. "We believe that the child had been sleep walking. She couldn't remember screaming at all."

Day, a pharmaceutical company employee, said he was visiting his wife on June 12, the day the Girl Scout troops from the Magic Empire Council arrived.

He said while checking the camp's property lines, he "ran into" a tall white man walking along a creek trail two miles from the camp site.

"He was dressed in jeans and a workshirt and was carrying a jug, apparently for water," said Day. "I encountered him about 2 p.m. or 3 p.m. on June 12. He was a complete stranger."

On direct examination by Isaacs, Day also told of seeing a strange car parked outside of the camp gate late that same evening that was apparently occupied by three or more people.

Day also acknowledged that his wife had told him later of a note that had been found in the area warning that four Girl Scouts would be slain.

Another defense witness, former counselor Nan Cook, said she saw nothing unusual at the

camp site but testified that an Oklahoma State Bureau Investigation agent had indicated to her that someone had tampered with the death tent after the murders, but before it could be checked for evidence.

She said that she had seen blood in the tent and told of being fingerprinted and sub-

mitting hair samples during the investigation by the OSBI. She said that one state agent told her that a fingerprint had been recovered from the body of one of the victims.

In earlier testimony during the prosecution case, testimony indicated no fingerprints had been found.

During Monday's lengthy hearing, Dickey Joe Cooper told how he had been repeatedly questioned by both the FBI and the OSBI on his whereabouts on June 6 and June 13 of last year.

The Arkansas truck driver said that he had been quizzed five times and his parents, who re-

side eight miles south of Locust Grove, one since last October.

The last witness called Monday before the hearing was recessed by Special Judge Jess B. Clanton Jr. was highway patrol trooper Charles B. Newton, who told of picking up photographs near a cave southwest of the Locust Grove site.

Crime: DNA results offer no clues in investigation spanning three decades

Memories of a manhunt

■ OSBI agent recalls searching for Girl Scouts' suspected killer.

By Ron Jackson
Staff Writer

LOCUST GROVE — Sometimes on dark and still nights, Harvey Pratt's mind drifts back to a haunting time when he worked as an undercover agent in the hills of eastern Oklahoma, hoping to catch a killer.

The assignment remains the most challenging he has faced in his 36-year career with Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation. His mission then was simple, yet dangerous: Catch the person or people responsible for the sexual assaults and murders of three Girl Scouts on June 13, 1977, near Locust Grove.

So Pratt disappeared into the dense woods and expansive hills of eastern Oklahoma, spanning several counties, in search of the girls' killer.

"Those hills were so dark," recalled Pratt, now 66 and still an OSBI agent. "The canopy of trees was so thick, and at night, you couldn't tell where the trees ended and the sky began."

See **SEARCH**, Page 20A

Continued from Page 19A

DNA test results released earlier this week failed to identify a killer. Evidence found at the crime scene in 1977, and later tied to a remote "cellar cave" in the nearby woods, pointed investigators to one main suspect — Gene Leroy Hart.

Hart, then 34, was a strong full-blood Cherokee who had been sighted roaming the Cookson Hills as a fugitive in the four years prior to the Girl Scout slayings. Acquaintances described him as an expert woodsman, who despite being a convicted rapist, kidnapper and burglar, remained in the local consciousness as a popular former Locust Grove High School football hero.

Hart possessed an amiable smile, an extensive network of friends and relatives in the region, and according to some, the mystical powers of a medicine man.

"People would tell me, 'You can't see him because he's under you and above you,'" Pratt remembered. "What did they mean? Was he below our feet? Or was he above us in the trees? Suddenly, we're looking everywhere."

'We were always guarded'

With his life on the line, Pratt sought the services of the one man he wanted by his side most — his brother, Tony.

Tony Pratt, who died from cancer 10 years ago, was then a Midwest City police officer. Officials specifically assigned him to the OSBI to assist his brother in the manhunt for Hart.

Together, the Pratt brothers ventured into the Cookson Hills, unaware of what or who they might encounter.

"You never knew who you might encounter out there," said Pratt, then in charge of the agency's criminal intelligence unit. "Hart had so many friends and relatives in the area, people who supported and probably harbored him, you just couldn't take any chances. You never knew when you might come across someone, either Hart or someone else, who would want to end it right then and there."

"So we were always guarded." The Pratts sat sometimes silently in complete darkness without a campfire, listening to the strange and eerie sounds emanating from the surrounding woods. Other nights they would build a fire in hopes of drawing someone into their camp, maybe an acquaintance of the fugitive or even Hart himself.

"You never knew what to expect," Pratt said. "If there was more than one, they might just boldly walk into camp. Or maybe one would come into camp and another would remain hidden in the woods. You just had to be ready for anything."

Occasionally, they conducted nighttime surveillance at Camp Scott near the spot where the bodies of Lori Lee Farmer, 8, of Tulsa; Michelle Guse, 9, of Broken Arrow; and Doris Milner, 10, of Tulsa were discovered. They hoped the killer or killers might return to relive a twisted fantasy.

The whole time, Hart stayed at the forefront of Pratt's thoughts.

"To me, he (Hart) was a very formidable person physically," Pratt said. "He was a former football player, still pretty young, and obviously, capable of being very, very violent."

Finally, nearly 10 months after the slayings, a contingent of state agents apprehended Hart at a shack in a heavily wooded area near Tahlequah in southern Cherokee County. Harvey Pratt remembers the day vividly.

"We had the place surrounded," Pratt said. "I came in from the back, and as we approached, I saw him open the back door. He stuck his head out, saw us, shut the door and went back inside. By then, we had agents enter from the front who took him down. They cuffed him and carried him out around the side of the house."

"At first, he was real defiant. Then, once we brought him down to the (police) station, he became indifferent, saying he had nothing to do with the murders."

Despite months of searching and the confidence of law enforcement, Hart would eventually be acquitted. But because he was a fugitive, Hart was sent back to prison where he died just a few months after his trial.

Today, Pratt concludes without hesitation, "I'm convinced he killed those girls."

Timeline

June 13, 1977: Lori Farmer, 8, Michelle Guse, 9, and Denise Milner, 10, are found dead at the Camp Scott Girl Scout camp. Investigators later determine that each girl was sexually molested. The camp closes the next day and never reopens.

The evidence

■ **Flashlight:** A flashlight and roll of duct tape are found beside the bodies of Lori Lee Farmer, 8, of Tulsa; Michelle Guse, 9, of Broken Arrow; and Doris Milner, 10, of Tulsa on June 13, 1977. The flashlight is covered with a piece of plastic garbage bag to dim the light. Inside the flashlight is a piece of newspaper — a Tulsa World dated April 17, 1977. A cave is discovered in the Cookson Hills near Camp Scott. Investigators find a roll of masking tape with a small piece of plastic garbage bag stuck to the end, similar to that found on the flashlight at the murder scene. They also find a Tulsa World dated April 17, 1977, and two pictures that are later traced back to Hart and his time at the Oklahoma State Reformatory in Granite.

■ **The bodies of the victims:** Farmer is found bludgeoned to death. Guse is also discovered bludgeoned to death, and bound in a fetal position. Milner, meanwhile, is found with her hands bound behind her with duct tape and sash cord. Wrapped around Milner's neck are two ligatures: one a sash cord; the other a plastic bandage.

■ **Gene Leroy Hart's criminal record:** Hart was sentenced Oct. 14, 1966, to three, 10-year terms concurrently after pleading guilty in Mayes County to two charges of kidnapping and one charge of first-degree rape. During that crime, Hart bound the women in a fetal position with tape and sash cord.

■ **Crime scene evidence:** Hair samples, fingerprints, an anal swab from one of the victims, and semen-stained pillowcases are collected at the crime scene. DNA testing is conducted in 1989, 2002, and 2007. Only a 2007 test reveals a partial DNA profile of a female, but investigators are unable to exclude all three victims from the profile.

■ **Mirror:** A small, blue mirror is found at the cabin where Hart is apprehended. The mirror is later identified by Stillwater's Karen Mitchell, who thought she had lost the mirror while at Camp Scott the week Farmer, Guse, and Milner were killed.

Sources: The Oklahoman, March 21, 1985, and June 27, 1978; and "Someone Cry For The Children."

June 23, 1977: Gene Leroy "Sonny" Hart is charged with three counts of first-degree murder. One of the largest manhunts in state history follows.
April 6, 1978: After nearly a year-long manhunt, Hart is arrested 50 miles from the camp.

March 5, 1979: Jury selection in Hart's trial begins in Mayes County. It takes 10 days to seat a jury.
March 19, 1979: Opening statements begin, 20 months and 19 days after the crime is committed.

March 29, 1979: The jury takes six hours to acquit Hart. Hart returns to jail to finish 305 years left on his previous convictions.
June 4, 1979: Hart dies of an apparent heart attack while jogging in the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester.

Judge Refuses to Postpone Hart Trial

Defense Attorney Files \$1.1 Million Lawsuit Against Former DA

TULSA (AP) — A federal judge refused Friday to postpone the first-degree murder trial of Gene Leroy Hart, scheduled to start Monday in Mayes County District Court.

Garvin Isaacs, Hart's chief defense attorney, filed a \$1.1 million civil lawsuit late Friday naming a former prosecutor, the Mayes County sheriff and a former Pryor newspaperman.

As part of that lawsuit filed in federal court, Isaacs asked for between 1,100 and 1,300 pages of investigative reports compiled in the Hart case and for a temporary injunction delaying the start of the trial to give him time to study those reports.

Following the two-page decision issued by U.S. District Judge H. Dale Cook at 6:30 p.m., Isaacs indicated he would conduct further research today and might appeal Cook's ruling to the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver.

Hart, 34, is charged with three counts of first-degree murder in the June 13, 1977, slayings of three Girl Scouts at Camp Scott near Locust Grove.

Some 900 prospective jurors are scheduled to appear for jury selection beginning Monday before District Judge William Whistler of Vinita.

Isaacs had been unsuccessful in obtaining the reports from the trial court. And a Thursday ruling by the state Criminal Court of Appeals in Oklahoma City leaving the issue in the trial court was "tantamount to no ruling at all," Isaacs said Friday.

Isaacs, of Oklahoma City, filed the federal action saying he had "exhausted all remedies at the state level."

The federal civil suit asks for \$100,000 actual damages and \$1 million punitive damages from Mayes County Sheriff Pete Weaver, former District Attorney Sid Wise and former Pryor newspaperman Ron Grimsley.

The suit claims the three men conspired to violate Hart's right to due process of law "for the purpose of harassment." Therefore, Hart suffered a threat of "irreparable injury to his civil rights

that couldn't be eliminated by trial," the suit maintains.

After considering the request for a temporary injunction portion of the 50-page lawsuit, Cook turned down the request, stating "It is well settled that a federal court should not enjoin a state prosecution . . ."

Grimsley, a former newsman who became Wise's campaign manager in an unsuccessful race for state attorney general, admitted in a December hearing that he had seen several pages of Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation reports while helping Wise make copies of them.

Isaacs maintains he is entitled to all OSBI reports because they were made available to Grimsley.

Newly elected District Attorney T. Jack Graves said "the appeal is just another delaying tactic."

Wise said Isaacs was failing to face the issues "that the state and the citizens of this state are entitled to, and that is the guilt or innocence of his client."



Mass slaying suspect Roger Dale Stafford, left, is led from an Oklahoma County courtroom Friday by Deputy Sheriff Dave Gilpin, after his initial appearance before District Judge Raymond Naffeh.

Photo of Roger Dale Stafford
on the same page and same
date.

March 17 1979 - The Daily Oklahoman

Hart Trial to Begin Monday

By Robert B. Allen
Staff Writer

PRYOR — Two alternate jurors were selected late Friday, clearing the way for the start of testimony Monday in the long-awaited murder trial of Gene Leroy Hart.

A chemical plant worker who lives near Chelsea and a former teacher were seated as alternates after 21 prospects were examined during another long day. Since questioning of prospective jurors and alternates began, 134 have been examined.

The initial jury of six men and six women that is expected to decide the fate of the Locust Grove defendant, accused of the 1977 slayings of three Girl Scouts, was seated Thursday, and will be sworn in along with the alternates Monday morning.

Courthouse sources in this Mayes County town estimated the 10-day jury selection process, including expenditures for meals, transportation and other essentials will probably top \$20,000. Even those on standby, drawn from a list of 900

prospective jurors, received pay.

Court Clerk Eloise Gist asked the news media late Friday to help notify a large group of potential jurors that had been called for 9 a.m. Monday that they need not report. She said only the 14 members of the seated panel will be required to appear at the courthouse early Monday.

Both the prosecution and defense used each of its two remaining challenges before the alternates were named. Defense lawyer Garvin Isaacs again appealed to the judge for a mistrial, objecting to the fact the prosecution had requested one juror tentatively named as an alternate be stricken.

Isaacs said there was no basis for the exclusion other than race. Both the potential juror and the defendant are members of the Cherokee Indian tribe.

The motion by the defense was overruled.

Opening statements are scheduled to begin early Monday after District Judge William J. Whistler officially swears in the 14-member panel. The judge said the jurors at that time will be sequestered

until the trial, expected to be lengthy, is concluded.

Later in the day, Isaacs said a tentatively scheduled interview probably would be delayed beyond Monday, but could take place sometime Tuesday.

A series of questions already has been submitted to Hart, 35, a former high school athlete, who was arrested 10 months after the bodies of three Tulsa area girls were found at Camp Scott near Locust Grove.

One prospective alternate was excused Friday afternoon after she tripped on a door casing during a court recess and severely sprained an ankle. Dr. Charles Farmer, the father of one of the murder victims, went to the woman's aid, but was prohibited from treating her after he learned she was a possible juror in the case.

It was speculated opening statements in the widely publicized case may take up most of Monday morning, with testimony probably being delayed until sometime in the afternoon.



Gene Leroy Hart

Trial of Suit Involving 1977 Scout Slayings Starts

By Griff Palmer
Tulsa Bureau

TULSA — June 12, 1977, was the first night of Girl Scout camp for Lori Lee Farmer, 8; Doris Denise Milner, 10; and Michele Guse, 9.

It also was their last night alive.

Sometime that night or early the next morning, the girls were sexually molested and bludgeoned to death at Camp Scott near Locust Grove. The killer dragged the girls' bodies and sleeping bags about 100 yards from their tent and left them. Camp workers made the gruesome discovery shortly after daybreak June 13.

No one has ever been brought to justice for the brutal slayings.

Monday, a jury trial began in Tulsa County District Court in which parents of two of the slain girls seek dam-

ages from the Magic Empire Council of Girl Scouts, and Hartford Insurance Co., which insured Camp Scott.

The parents, Dr. Charles A. and Sherri Farmer and Walter and Bettye Milner, say it was the negligence of the scout council and insurance company which allowed their daughters' deaths. Each family is seeking \$2.5 million in actual and punitive damages.

Attorneys for the families argue that the Magic Empire Council operated the camp without providing the security necessary to prevent the killings. The attorneys also contend that the Hartford Company opened itself up to liability when it inspected the camp before signing a liability policy with the Magic Empire Council.

Attorneys for both sides spent much of the day Monday arguing fi-

nal briefs in Associate District Judge Bill Beasley's chambers. Monday afternoon, Beasley and the attorneys selected a six-man, six-woman jury to hear the case.

Members of the Magic Empire Council's board of directors sat in the courtroom Monday and watched the jury selection.

The trial begins six years to the month after a Mayes County jury acquitted Gene Leroy Hart, 33, of the murders. Hart, who had grown up in Locust Grove, was charged with first-degree murder shortly after the killings.

At the time Hart was charged with the murders, he was wanted for escaping from the Mayes County Jail. He had been held in Mayes County for burglary and rape charges. For the next 10 months, Hart eluded one of

the largest manhunts in Oklahoma history.

In April 1978, state investigators found Hart living in a remote cabin with a Cherokee medicine man. After being acquitted of the Camp Scott murders, Hart was sent to the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester to serve 300 years worth of sentences for previous burglary, rape and escape convictions.

Hart died June 4, 1979, as he was jogging on the OSP exercise grounds. The Chief State Medical Examiner ruled that Hart had died of acute coronary disease.

The Farmers and Milners filed suit against the Magic Empire Council and Hartford Company shortly after their daughters' deaths. In the eight years since, attorneys have wrangled the case through the legal system.

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Parents of Slain Scouts Claim Camp Poorly Operated

By Griff Palmer
Tulsa Bureau

TULSA — Was the Magic Empire Girl Scout Council's Camp Scott an understaffed, unguarded, overgrown spread in which thieves, burglars, and, ultimately, a killer roamed at will?

Or was the camp a well-run, ideally situated wilderness retreat which tragically became the site of a horrible, but unavoidable murder spree?

Those were the choices offered jurors Monday as attorneys opened the first day of testimony in a lawsuit brought by the parents of two of three girls who were raped and murdered at the camp in June, 1977.

Lori Lee Farmer, 8; Doris Denise Milner, 10; and Michele Guse, 9, were murdered at the campground sometime late in the night of June 12, 1977, or early the following morning.

Attorneys for Charles and Sherri Farmer, and Walter and Bettye Milner, claim it was the poor operation and layout of the camp near Locust Grove that made their daughters' murders possible. The two families have sued the Tulsa-based Magic Empire Council and the Hartford Insurance Co., which insured the camp, for their daughters' deaths. The families are seeking \$2.5 million apiece in damages in return for the alleged negligence.

ligence.

Camp Scott's staff remained unconcerned about security on the heavily wooded, 410-acre campground despite a number of intrusions and thefts over the years, Jack Gaither, attorney for the murdered girls' families, said in opening statements Tuesday.

A number of incidents on the campground in the years preceding the murders should have warned of the need for tighter security, Gaither said. Camp officials never reported any of the incident to Mayes County authorities, he said.

Once, he said, a man was found standing inside campers' tents. On another occasion, he said, someone tried repeatedly to break into a cabin as the girls inside screamed frantically for help.

Shortly before the fateful June

See SCOUTS, Page 2

Scouts

From Page 1
1977 session began, Gaither said, campers discovered a note threatening the deaths of three girls.

Dan Rogers, attorney for the Magic Empire Council, told jurors the council's case will show that many of the intrusions to which Gaither referred were simply sightings of local sportsmen or camp staff members. Rogers said camp officials had received a "bushel basket full" of threatening notes, obviously girlish pranks, in the camp's 49 years of existence.

But camp officials' lack of contact with Mayes County lawmen was particularly ominous in light of what was going on in the county when the girls arrived at Camp Scott on June 12, 1977, Gaither said.

Glenn H. "Pete" Weaver, who was Mayes County sheriff at the time of the murders, testified Tuesday that on that date, lawmen had stepped up the search for Gene Leroy Hart, a convicted burglar and rapist who had escaped from Weaver's jail four years earlier.

Weaver said Hart had recently been sighted at

the escapee's mother's house, just a mile from the camp. On other occasions shortly before June 12, Hart had been sighted within 2½ miles of the camp, Weaver testified.

On the day the girls arrived at the camp, Weaver said, he was investigating the second burglary of a farmhouse a half-mile from camp. Hart was suspected in the break-ins, Weaver said.

Shortly after the killings, Hart was charged with murdering the three girls. For 10 months after the killings, Hart eluding federal, state and local lawmen. He was finally captured deep in rural Adair County at a Cherokee medicine man's home.

In March 1979, a Mayes County jury acquitted Hart of the murders. Hart died in the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in June 1979, where he was serving sentences for the rape, burglary and escape convictions.

Weaver testified Tuesday that he realized after the killings that "there was no security" at Camp Scott. The former sheriff said the area in which the girls slept was unlighted,

heavily wooded and covered with undergrowth. He said the tent in which the girls were murdered was not visible from camp counselors' tent.

The former sheriff said said the killer, shielded by foliage, cut his way into the girls' tent and assaulted and murdered them without ever being detected.

Rogers contended in his opening statement that no amount of security would have deterred whoever killed the girls. He said lighting and fencing, two measures which the dead girls' families claim the camp operators negligently failed to provide, would have been of no use.

"There's not anything you're going to do that would discourage somebody like that," he said. "He had to be crazy."

Weaver said he did not know the session at

Camp Scott was under way on June 12. He said he would have warned camp officials that Hart was believed to be in the area, had he known the session was under way.

"I don't know if I could have prevented them from coming in, but certainly I would have warned them," Weaver said.

Rogers questioned Weaver about his lack of knowledge of operations at the Girl Scout camp. The defense attorney said the camp was operated year-around, and that during the summer it was almost constantly occupied.

Weaver testified he had only visited the 49-year-old camp once. That visit, he said, took place before he became sheriff.

"That's the only time you were ever out there and you were sheriff for

10 years?" Rogers said.

"I had no occasion to," Weaver said. "...We had never had any occasion to visit the camp, in an official capacity or otherwise."

Rogers asked Weaver whether the murders had been particularly embarrassing to the sheriff, since they had taken place in his county and since the suspect was an escapee from the Mayes County Jail.

"I can't honestly say it was embarrassing, any more than any crime," Weaver said. "It was the most vicious, savage crime in my 10 years in office... I can't honestly say it was embarrassing, other than the fact it happened in Mayes County."

I Am Not a Hero,' Hart Asserts in First Interview

By Jim Bradshaw
Staff Writer

PRYOR — Gene Leroy Hart, in his first interview since he was charged almost two years ago, asserted Tuesday, "I am not a hero," and said he yearns for the freedom to pursue an education and spend more time with his family.

Hart conceded at a news conference attended by more than 50 reporters, cameramen and spectators that some people apparently perceive him as a heroic figure and some as a villain.

"I am not a hero," said the 35-year-old Cherokee Indian. "I have no desire to be a hero."

"Maybe I represent the fears and doubts that many people have about a case like this in the system that we have," he said.

Hart refused to answer any questions about his current trial on three first-degree murder charges in connection with the 1977 slayings of three Girl Scouts at nearby Camp Scott.

"I would enjoy my freedom so I could

spend more time with my family and probably get some type of formal education," said Hart, who spoke softly throughout the session.

"I only have a high school education at this time," he said.

Hart said he would like to study law, but admitted, "It's not likely I would be allowed to practice law. But the desire is there. I would like to."

He has previously been convicted of rape and burglary and is still facing 305 years in prison regardless of the outcome of the current trial, said his attorney, Garvin Isaacs.

Hart criticized the fact that he has been housed on Death Row at Oklahoma State Penitentiary at McAlester since his capture 11 months ago.

"I don't think that's necessary," Hart said. "I think I could just as easily be put in the general population without any problem at all." Prison officials have explained Hart's incarceration on Death Row as a security measure to ensure his safety.

He said he spends about an hour each day

discussing his case with his lawyers, as well as reading and writing replies to the numerous letters he gets.

Hart refused to answer a question about whether he has a "personal relationship" with a Corpus Christi, Texas, nurse who reportedly moved to Pryor recently after communicating regularly with him in jail.

The woman reportedly has mailed letters to Hart often and knitted him an afghan which was later sold for \$40 to raise money for his defense fund.

Hart said he understands he has received some threats, but nothing serious.

Hart said he has not been aware of how widely publicized his case is because he has been unable to have regular access to newspapers and television.

"It's like living in a fish bowl," Hart said. "I don't read newspapers and I don't watch TV."

Hart said it was his own idea to present an opening statement Monday during his

trial. However, District Judge William J. Whistler overruled the motion and also refused to allow Hart to act as co-counsel in the case.

"That was my idea," Hart said. "I had studied it and had it prepared. I was ready to give it. I think I had a right to give it."

But Whistler ruled there was too much chance of Hart making argumentative statements in his speech to the jury instead of simply setting out what his case would feature.

Asked by a reporter about how well he has been dressed during his trial, Hart replied:

"It's like I said about the fish bowl — I would rather be a goldfish than a catfish," he said, evoking loud laughter.

The news conference was held during the lunchtime recess of Tuesday's trial in a law library adjacent to a courtroom in the Mayes County Courthouse.



— AP Laserphoto

Gene Leroy Hart meets the press.

Fertility Expert Testifies

By Robert B. Allen
Staff Writer

PRYOR — A New York fertility consultant testified Friday sperm found in three murdered Girl Scouts was "quite similar" to that taken from the underwear of Gene Leroy Hart.

Dr. John MacLeod was the 31st witness called by the prosecution, which had been expected to rest its case during the day against the man accused of the June 13, 1977, slayings.

But long direct examination and questioning by the defense hogged down any hopes for such a move. After a Friday night session, District Judge William J. Whistler ordered state testimony to resume this morning.

In nearly five hours on the witness stand, MacLeod told of conducting microscopic tests on evidence in the widely publicized case.

"No sperm was found to exclude the defend-

dence to his New York office last July and he conducted a detailed examination after first making a mock-up for such a test.

He said he found it was possible to draw semen containing sperm from undergarments.

The evidence, provided by investigators, was taken to New York by Janice Davis, a member of the laboratory staff of the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation.

Mrs. Davis was the first witness called Friday, laying the groundwork for testimony by MacLeod, which the state has described as a key witness in the case.

The state chemist said in her lengthy testimony she detected what appeared to be sperm from swabs taken from the victims, but admitted two previous tests proved negative.

She later said the



Dr. John MacLeod

blood groups of semen found on the bodies were similar to Hart's.

Frequently, however, she declined to answer defense questions, saying they could be better answered by the New York semen authority.

MacLeod, touted for 40 years of experience in studying sperm characteristics, said he used powerful microscopes for his testing.

He also related how he has studied sperm characteristics of 15,000 men in the past 10 years alone.

During the long examination by Special Prosecutor S.M. "Buddy" Fallis Jr. of Tulsa, the witness, qualified as an expert by the state, traced his examination and used a chart to refer to the statistical type of evidence in such a case.

Under long questioning by Defense Lawyer Garvin Isaacs, Oklahoma City, MacLeod said he came to Oklahoma to testify after being employed for his study by the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation. He did not disclose how much he was being paid, but said so far he has received a total of \$6,000.

Pressed by the defense to say if other suspects in the Scout slayings had sperm tests, the New York witness declared he had examined other undergarments. MacLeod

said he examined undershorts of two other suspects but the test findings were "incompatible."

The witness told a six-man, six-woman jury although there are a number of different types of sperm, he found only elongated and tapered cells in his study of samples from Hart's underclothing and samples taken from the victim's bodies.

Hart, a former Locust Grove High School star athlete, is accused of the sex slayings of Doris Denise Milner, 10, Michele Guse, 9, and Lori Lee Farmer, 8, all of the Tulsa area. Their battered and strangled bodies were found 150 steps from their Camp Scott tent, only a few hours after they arrived with other Girl Scouts for a summer encampment.

The prosecution indicated late Friday two other witnesses probably will be called today before the state rests.

Hart Declared Armed By Sheriff, Witness Says

By Robert B. Allen
Staff Writer

PRYOR — An Oklahoma National Guardsman testified Monday he is almost sure it was Mayes County Sheriff Pete Weaver who told him during a search for Gene Leroy Hart that Hart was armed with a 12-gauge, sawed-off shotgun.

Such a report was never confirmed, and when Hart, accused of the June 13, 1977, sex murders of three Girl Scouts was captured 10 months later, he was unarmed.

Sheriff Weaver last week said from the witness stand he didn't recall ever saying he thought the 35-year-old defendant in the murder trial was carrying weapons while a massive manhunt was under way for him.

Tom Kite, an Oklahoma City attorney and veteran military man, said he and four other jungle war-trained veterans volunteered to help flush Hart from the rugged, rattlesnake infested hill country south of Locust Grove near Camp Scott where the slayings occurred.

Kite, who was a Green Beret in Vietnam, said he and his military colleagues entered the search in late July or early August 1977, and Weaver, he believes, was the one who made the remark to him about Hart being armed.

While the sheriff was on the witness stand last week, defense lawyer Garvin Isaacs, Oklahoma City, asked Weaver if he had said Hart was armed and dangerous, and told searchers to "shoot to kill."

jail here while being held on other charges.

Kite also said Weaver had told him, while the search was on, that fingerprints believed to be Hart's were found in a farm home burglarized just southwest of Camp Scott shortly after the slayings.

Prosecution testimony, however, has established that Hart's fingerprints have not been found on anything that would link him to the killings.

The defense called two forensic chemists, including a Missouri expert, in efforts to impeach earlier testimony by the state about sperm sample tests.

John T. Wilson, chief chemist of the Independence, Mo., Regional Crime Laboratory for the Kansas City Police Department, said he had studied reports made by state witnesses and reached a firm conclusion.

He said a test made by a New York fertility consultant showed the presence of sperm but "beyond that I couldn't place any importance

on it."

Dr. John MacLeod told the District Court jury last week sperm found in the murdered victims was "quite similar" to that taken from the underwear of the defendant.

The Missouri witness, who is being paid \$250 for his testimony,



Pete Weaver

agreed with the findings of a state chemist that hair found on the body of one of the girls had the same microscopic characteristics as Hart's, but, he said it was impossible to identify a person by hair standards alone.

Ann Reed, a staff member for the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, said virtually the same thing when she was called to the witness stand last Wednesday by the state.

Another defense witness, Hubert L. Maxey, a former member of the State Health Department, agreed hair and sperm, even though characteristically matching, were not enough to accurately identify an individual. Maxey, now a private Oklahoma City chemical consultant, said more accurate hair testing could have been accomplished with use of a neutron activation oven but said such equipment costs about \$400,000 and is used primarily by the FBI.

Maxey said hair may

look similar and give a race clue but insisted, "That is as far as it goes." He said adequate testing cannot be accomplished through microscopic examination.

Under cross-examination by special Prosecutor S.M. "Buddy" Falls Jr., Tulsa, Maxey said he had examined both the hair and sperm of Hart, but admitted he had spent only 30 minutes in his examination.

"You can't identify anybody by sperm, or even by hair," the witness said.

He said he was not familiar with the work of MacLeod, who is a biochemist and served at Cornell University's Medical Center, but indicated the New York analyst used a statistical method of examination, which he said "really doesn't tell us anything."

With 15 defense witnesses already called, Isaacs indicated late Monday he may call that many more before the defense rests its case.

Hart Defense Rests With Dramatic Volley

Ex-Jailer Testifies Sheriff Had Crucial Evidence in Desk Years Before Killings

By Robert B. Allen
Staff Writer

PRYOR — Gene Leroy Hart's defense rested its case Tuesday after a former jailer testified pictures the prosecution is using to link Hart to the slayings of three Girl Scouts were in the desk of Mayes County Sheriff Pete Weaver more than three years before the slayings occurred.

Testimony from Allen H. Little, the defense's 26th witness, climaxed a dramatic day in which Hart's lawyers strived to divert blame from the defendant and focus it instead on a Kansas convict.

Little, now a relief dispatcher for the Jay Police Department, said the photos were among a batch of pictures in Weaver's desk shortly after Hart escaped from the Mayes County jail in 1973. Hart was being held there at the time for a hearing on a rape conviction.

The Girl Scouts were slain June 13, 1977.

According to the prosecution's case, two crumpled photographs of a wedding party, which were developed by Hart while he was an inmate at the state reformatory in Granite, were found by searchers at the defendant's boyhood home near Camp Scott three days after the sex slayings.

The pictures were found at the mouth of a cave three miles southwest of the death scene.

The former jailer's testimony was among the most damaging leveled against the prosecution's case by defense lawyer Garvin Isaacs, who is attempting to convince the jury Weaver nursed a bitter grudge against Hart because of his escapes, and that it may have prompted Mayes County lawmen to "plant" evidence — the photos — at the site to incriminate him.

The state is scheduled to begin calling rebuttal witnesses early today.

After 35 minutes on the witness stand, Little told reporters, "I'm shaking in my clothes," and said he asked for police protection with a law enforcement escort from the courthouse. He said later he feared retribution from Weaver.

But District Judge William J. Whistler denied the request from the witness, who worked as a Mayes County jailer for three months in 1973. The judge told him, "Get Mr. Isaacs to escort you."

From the witness stand, Little said he had heard from a dis-



Allen Little

patcher following Hart's 1973 escape that Weaver had told searchers to "shoot to kill." Little said he understood the reference was being made to Hart and to other prisoners who fled with the convicted rapist.

The former jailer, who said he quit his job in October 1973, said he helped search for Hart and the others one day, but quit after that because authorities refused to let him take a prisoner bitten by a spider to a doctor.

Besides that, Little said, the word was out "the man who brings him (Hart) in alive

won't have a job."

Shown the evidence photos by Isaacs and asked if he had seen them before, Little said he saw them in October 1973.

"A deputy, Don Ross, showed me 15 to 20 photographs in a desk," Little said.

"Whose desk," Isaacs asked.

"Ross took them out of Pete Weaver's desk," Little replied.

The 42-year-old witness testified he later sketched one of the photos in pencil for the defense lawyers after they told him it could be an important key in the case. He said he also had seen a reproduction of the photograph in state newspapers while a search was on for Hart in connection with the Scout murders.

The photographs identified by Little led to the filing of murder charges against Hart. One showed two women, one sitting at a piano and the other standing. That, according to investigators, was one of two photos Hart had developed at the reformatory after being assigned as a photographer's helper. Shortly after court

See Page 2, Column 1



— Staff Photo by Paul Southerland

Kim Lewis and her mother leave the courtroom with defense lawyer Garvin Isaacs after the girl testified she saw a strange man at Camp Scott who did not resemble Gene Leroy Hart. More Photos, Page 13.

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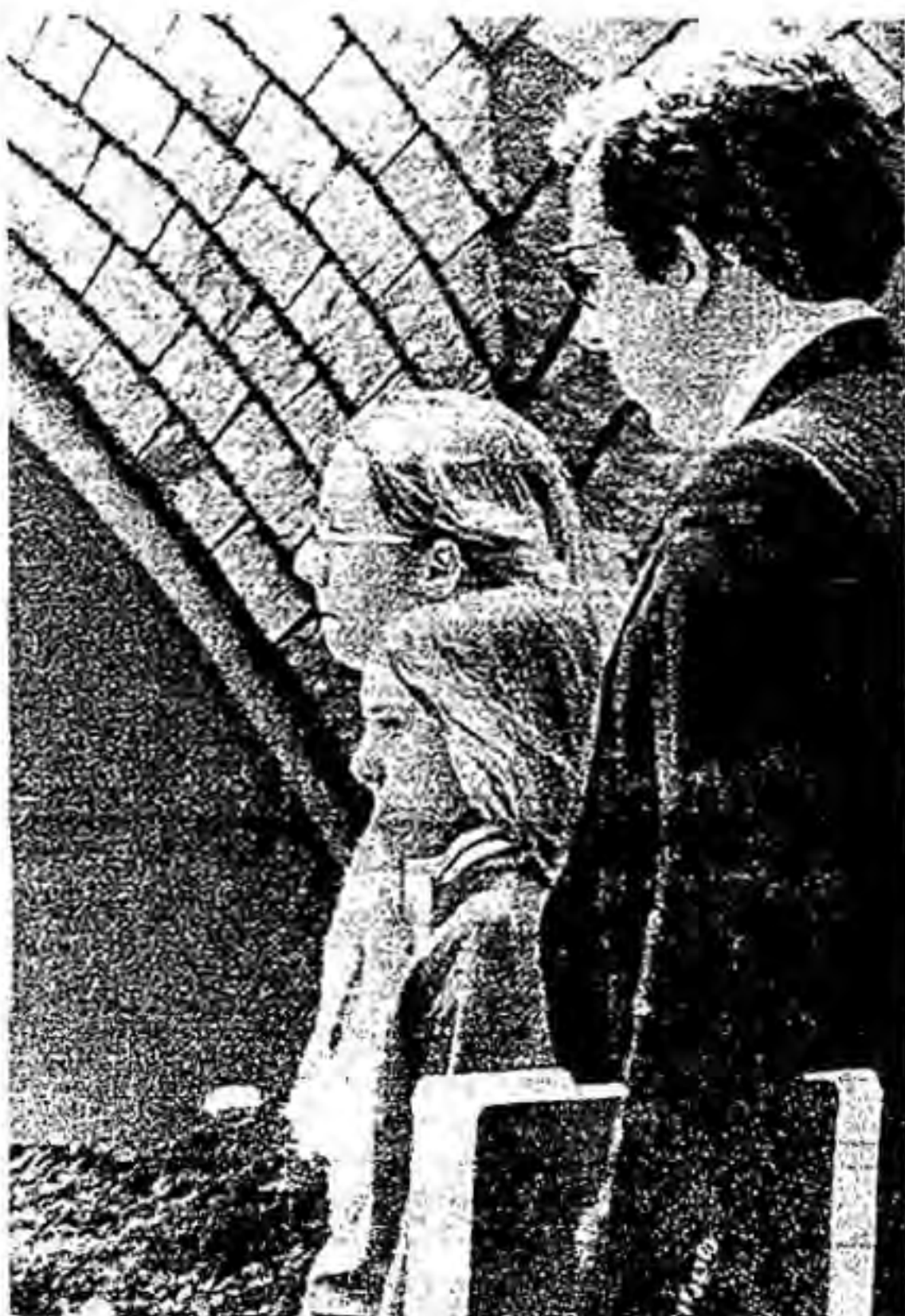
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Shortly after court See Page 2, Column 1



— Staff Photo by Paul Southerland

Kim Lewis and her mother leave the courtroom with defense lawyer Garvin Isaacs after the girl testified she saw a strange man at Camp Scott who did not resemble Gene Leroy Hart. More Photos, Page 13.

Jury Finds in Favor Of Scout Council

Slain Girls' Parents 'Shocked'

Griff Palmer
Tulsa Bureau

TULSA — The murders of three Girl Scouts at Camp Scott near Locust Grove in June 1977 was not the result of negligence on the part of the Magic Empire Girl Scout Council or its insurance company, a jury ruled here Wednesday.

By a 9-3 vote, jurors found in favor of the Magic Empire Council and the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Co. in the \$5 million lawsuit. The parents of Lori Lee Farmer and Doris Denise Milner filed the lawsuit shortly after the murders, accusing the

Tulsa-based council of failing to provide sufficient security measures at the camp to have prevented the murders.

Jurors deliberated nearly five hours before arriving at a verdict. Members of the panel left the courthouse without comment after announcing their decision.

Dan Rogers, attorney for the Magic Empire Council, said he and his clients were confident from the outset that the jury would find in their favor.

"They jury had to hear it, and I think they (the slain girls' families) had to tell their story, and we under-

stand that, and we feel for them," Rogers said.

Gary Gaither, an attorney with the firm of Jack Gaither, which represented the families, said Jack Gaither and Ben Faulkner, his co-counsel, must review the case record before deciding whether to appeal.

"Everyone was shocked, of course," Gary Gaither said. "They still believe they were right, and that the Magic Empire Council of Girl Scouts was negligent."

"If nine out of 12 people disagreed with us, all I can say is the Girl Scouts were lucky to

have those nine on the jury."

It was a case which pitted two, powerful emotional appeals against each other.

Jack Gaither evoked the grief and anguish of the murdered girls' parents during closing arguments. Gaither also emphasized the girls' pain and horror in their final moments of life.

Rogers emphasized the value of Girl Scouting and Girl Scout Camping.

With Wednesday's verdict, Rogers told jurors in closing arguments, "You can destroy camping. You can

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From Page 1
just absolutely destroy camping."

"This is a case that the Girl Scouts have got to win," Rogers told the jury. "You're the only ones that can preserve what we've got, what we've had for so long."

Gaither argued that the Magic Empire Council should have taken such precautions at Camp Scott as installing secure fences and outdoor lighting, and providing better communication between counselors and the director's quarters.

He said the camp should have had armed security patrols at night, and night watches in each, seven-tent camp unit.

The parents' attorney argued that the unit where the girls were

killed was poorly laid out. The tent in which the murdered girls slept was 86 yards from the counselors' tent, and obscured by timber and a cook shack.

"Had the slightest measures of common sense been taken, these little girls would be alive today," Gaither argued.

But Rogers said no reasonable security could have deterred the killer, who struck on late in the night of June 12, 1977, or early the next morning. The assailant slipped into the camp under the cover of darkness, cut his way into the back of the tent and bludgeoned Michelle Guse and Lori Farmer to death. He bound and gagged Denise Milner, walked her from the tent, raped her and strangled her.

Counselors found all three girls' bodies 150 yards from their tent the next morning.

Gene Leroy Hart, a Cherokee Indian who grew up a mile from the camp, was charged with the murders. A Mayes County jury acquitted Hart in 1979. He died shortly afterward of an apparent heart attack at Oklahoma State Penitentiary, where he was serving sentences for previous rape and burglary convictions.

Rogers told jurors both sides in the civil case agree that Hart was the killer. Normal security measures could not have deterred Hart, who eluded one of the most intensive man-hunts in state history for 10 months. Rogers argued.

"I think his spirit is here today," Rogers

said, "wanting somebody, wanting you, the jury, to assume responsibility for the deaths of these girls."

"I don't want to give that man the satisfaction of knowing that he's destroyed the Girl Scout movement with what he did one night."

Rogers said the Magic Empire Council has never tried to deny the tragedy of the murders. But the lawsuit, itself is also a tragedy, he said.

"His words," he said, nodding to Jack Gaither, " 'Callous,' 'uncaring,' 'indifferent.' That's one of the tragedies of the lawsuit. All these people are going to have to live with that accusation. It's been said only to turn you against the Girl Scouts."

Gaither countered that he was not dealing

in accusations, but in hard evidence. He said the evidence shows that Magic Empire officials engaged in a "cover-up" before the murders. He said Magic Empire officials deliberately suppressed reports of repeated intrusions, thefts and burglaries in the camp during the years preceding the murder.

If the public had known about the string of incidents, Gaither said, "Camp Scott would have been out of business years ago." The camp never reopened after the murders.

Gaither claimed the incidents were evidence that the man who killed the girls played a "game of death" for years inside the camp.

"As that diabolical criminal went about his business, leisurely shopping for his victim, he wandered the length and breadth of that camp at will, stealing whatever he wanted along the way," Gaither said.

Testimony by Magic Empire officials disputed claims of a "cover-up." The council was never informed of any repeated incidents at the camp, officials testified.

PROCESS EXPECTED TO TAKE WEEK

5 Take Seat for Hart Jury

From Page 1

Milner, 10, Michele Guse, 9, and Laura Lee Farmer, 8, at a Girl Scout camp near Locust Grove.

Defense attorney Garvin Isaacs complained that the defense has not received technical reports on the investigation even though they had been prepared on Nov. 28. He contended that failure to review such documents left the defense unprepared to proceed.

Pressed by Special Prosecutor S.M. Buddy Fallis Jr., Tulsa, Isaacs declined to say whether the defense has an alibi witness for Hart. At one time during the late afternoon, the defense attorney hinted to a prospective juror that

his side may not even call a witness to testify.

Isaacs said because of the turn of events, the defense has not determined what exact strategy it will employ in Hart's defense.

Approximately 170 potential jurors were called Monday and temporarily quartered a block from the courthouse. The list was cut to 128 as jurors were excused for hardships, illnesses and for other pressing reasons.

In charging the prospective jurors with their responsibility in deciding Hart's fate, Judge Whistler delivered what he termed his "patriotic speech."

"If war is too important to leave to the generals," the judge

said, "justice is too important to leave to the lawyers."

In his extensive examination in the courtroom, Judge Whistler repeatedly asked prospective jurors if the fact that the defendant is an Indian would influence their decision in deciding his innocence or guilt.

He also quizzed them about their sentiment on the death penalty, which the state has demanded, and whether they had already formed an opinion on the case.

One woman was excused because she said she could not vote for the death penalty, while two other persons said they had already made up their minds

about the case and did not believe they could change their impressions, regardless of the evidence.

Hart, dressed in a sports jacket and slacks with a knitted shirt, didn't look like a man who spent months behind bars awaiting trial. His clothes were brought to him prior to the trial by his family, according to Mayes County Sheriff Pete Weaver. Wearing glasses and his hair neatly trimmed, he appeared calm as he watched each prospective juror be brought in for examination.

Hart listened intently and frequently scribbled notes to Isaacs and co-defense lawyer Gary Pitchlynn and conferred with Santa Barbara, Calif., psychologist Cathy Bennett, a specialist who was retained by the defense to help screen the prospective jurors.

New Trial Plea Rejected in Lawsuit Against Girl Scout Council

TULSA — A request for a new trial was rejected Monday in a \$5-million lawsuit against the Magic Empire Girl Scouts Council for the deaths of two girls at Camp Scott in Mayes County in June, 1977.

Tulsa County Special District Judge William R. Beasley ruled against the request.

Attorneys for Charles and Sherri Farmer and Walter and Bettye Milner had sought a new trial after jurors decided the council was not

liable.

The request contended defense attorney Dan A. Rogers had made improper remarks during his closing arguments at the March trial.

Rogers, in urging the jurors not to find the scout council negligent, had invoked the name of Gene Leroy Hart, a Locust Grove Cherokee Indian who was tried and acquitted of murdering Lori Lee Farmer, 8, Doris Denise Milner, 10, and Michele Guse, 9. The Guse girl's parents

did not join the lawsuit.

Hart died shortly after his acquittal of an apparent heart attack in the Oklahoma State Penitentiary, where he was serving a prison sentence for an unrelated case.

In closing arguments in March, Rogers told jurors Hart's spirit was watching the trial, hoping the jury would "assume responsibility for the deaths of these girls."

"I don't want to ... give that man

the satisfaction of knowing he has destroyed the Girl Scout movement with what he did in one night," Rogers told jurors.

The parents' attorneys, Jack Gaither and Benjamin Faulkner, argued that Rogers' closing arguments went beyond the scope of the issues and evidence on trial.

"It submerged the issues, and tried to divert them to prejudicial elements that were outside the evidence," Gaither said Monday. He

contended Rogers was improperly trying to convince jurors that they would be "aligning themselves with Gene Leroy Hart" by finding in favor of the families.

Attorneys have 30 days to appeal Beasley's order. Gaither said the families have not yet decided whether to appeal.

"An appeal would be very expensive," Gaither said. "That's a big trial transcript that we'd have to buy."

Flap Erupts Over Pair's Call on Hart in Prison

By Judy Fosselt

The sister of Gene Leroy Hart said Saturday two men tricked their way into visiting her brother at the state penitentiary a week ago and she fears a possible attempt to set up a phony confession in the slaying of three Girl Scouts.

Mrs. Nancy Baker, Locust Grove, said in a telephone interview Warden Norman Hess told her the two were admitted to the prison after state Sen. Gene Stipe called and identi-

fied the pair as the coordinators of a Hart defense fund.

She identified the two as Pryor bondsman Bud Welch and Quinton Smith of Tahlequah. Smith, president of Cherokee Indian Development Corp., was named a week ago in a federal indictment charging him with defrauding the government out of \$285,000 through an Air Force repair subcontract.

Mrs. Baker said neither man is connected with any defense fund and said family mem-

bers have told Welch specifically they don't want his help.

Welch denied Mrs. Baker's allegation that he and Smith were setting up Hart and said he and Smith "never discussed the case" during the visit.

He said his purpose in visiting Hart was "to help the boy . . . to see if he was satisfied with his representation" and to tell him that Stipe, who Welch called "the greatest lawyer in the whole country," was willing to

take over the case.

Welch said he didn't know Stipe called Hess to get permission for the two to visit Hart, and he said he never told Hess he and Smith were there about a defense fund.

Neither Stipe nor Hess could be reached for comment.

Family members haven't been allowed to visit Hart since he was transferred to the McAlester prison weeks ago pending the filing of affidavits and approval of the Oklaho-

ma State Bureau of Investigation, Mrs. Baker said.

Welch said he and Smith had neither the affidavits nor the OSBI approval required of Hart's family.

"I've got ways of getting in," he said. "I'm an oldtimer, I'm 66, and I know everybody. I'm a bondsman, and I've got the same right to see a prisoner as a lawyer does."

Hart is being held without bond on the
See Page 2, Column 1

Flap Erupts Over Pair

From Page 1

three murder charges.

Mrs. Baker said Hart's attorney Garvin Isaacs talked to Hart last week about the men's visit. She said Isaacs quoted Hart as saying he was told only that two men were at the prison to visit him, and that he went with a guard to the visiting area because he was under the impression the

visitors were attorneys Isaacs and Gary Pitchlynn.

Mrs. Baker and other family members were told by Isaacs that Welch and Smith talked to Hart about a defense fund and that the two encouraged Hart to change lawyers.

Welch described himself as a close friend of Tulsa attorney Larry Oliver who said shortly

after Hart's arrest in early April that he had been hired by Hart's family to represent him. Oliver and Stipe both represent Sen. Bob Shatwell, Tulsa, on a perjury charge.

Mrs. Baker said she is afraid Welch and Smith actually went to the prison to visit Hart so that they can claim later that Hart confessed to them the slayings of

the three Girl Scouts last summer.

"We went to talk to Bud Welch and it was like talking to stone. He said it (the visit) was about a defense fund, and he said he could make a lot of money," she said.

Mrs. Baker quoted Welch as telling her "it wasn't hard" cutting through prison red tape to be admitted to see

Benton Defends Prison's Visit Policies

In the wake of a flap over a visit by two men to Gene Leroy Hart at the state penitentiary, Corrections Director Ned Benton on Sunday defended visiting procedures at the McAlester prison.

Benton said the men, Bud Welch of Pryor and Quinton Smith of Tahlequah, visited Hart about a week ago under "special emergency visit" provisions allowed all inmates when considered appropriate

by the warden.

Benton said Warden Norman Hess made "a reasonable decision" in allowing the pair to visit Hart after a phone call from a state senator introduced them as coordinators of a Hart

defense fund.

He emphasized that though state Sen. Gene Stipe of McAlester was the caller, it was not Stipe's influence which got the two in to see Hart.

"It could have been any attorney," Benton said.

While defending Hess' decision to allow the visit after Stipe's call assuring that Hart's attorneys did not object, Benton said Hess discovered later the facts were not as presented and the pair did not represent an organized fund drive.

"Had he had the actual facts, he would not have authorized the visit," Benton said of Hess.

Hart's sister, Mrs. Nancy Baker, complained the men were not connected with a defense fund and said she feared a possible plot to set up a phony confession to the slaying of three Girl Scouts last summer.

Welch, a bondsman, denied Mrs. Baker's allegations and said his purpose in visiting Hart was "to help the boy . . . to see if he was satisfied with his representation." He said he went to tell Hart that Stipe, "the greatest lawyer in the whole country," was willing to take his case.

Mrs. Baker said family members have not been allowed to visit Hart pending entry of their names on an approved visiting list — one of three ways visits are allowed, Benton said.

In addition to regular visits, permitted when a person's name appears on the approved list after an inmate requests the person be al-

lowed to visit, attorney visits and special emergency visits are provided for, Benton said.

Attorney visits allow any attorney with good reason to see an inmate upon presenting proper identification, he said.

Benton said special
See Page 2, Column 5

Prison Visit Rules Backed

From Page 1

emergency visits are authorized by the warden based on what the director called "pressing circumstances" when a visitor has a legitimate interest in the inmate but has not followed other normal procedures. He said they are a rare occurrence.

Benton said Hart's mother has been approved as a regular visitor, but as of Saturday had not visited.

Mrs. Baker and another sister who tried to visit were not permitted to because they returned the regular visitor forms in person to Hess without the required investigation having been completed, Benton said.

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\$500,000 Added In Girl Scout Suit

TULSA (AP) — Attorneys filed a petition Wednesday seeking an additional \$500,000 in damages from the Magic Empire Council of Girl Scouts for survivors of two of the three girls slain at a summer camp June 13, 1977.

The original lawsuit, filed Sept. 22, 1977, asked for \$3 million in damages for the families of Doris Denise Milner, 10, and Lori Lee Farmer, 8, both of whom were slain on the first night of what was to have been a two-week encampment at Camp Scott near Locust Grove. The family of the third victim, Michelle Guse, has not joined in the lawsuit.

Gene Leroy Hart, 35, was acquitted in March by a Mayes County jury that heard two weeks of testimony in his trial on three counts of first-degree murder.

Attorney Jack L. Gaither filed an application in district court Wednesday seeking to amend the original petition on the basis of evidence disclosed during the preliminary hearing and trial for Hart.

He seeks to add \$500,000 in alleged damages for the "excruciating physical pain, mental shock, horror and anguish" suffered by the Milner girl.

Gaither is seeking about \$1.5 million for each of the two girls' families. He said the additional \$500,000

is being sought because evidence revealed the Milner girl apparently lived a short time after she was attacked and raped.

District Judge Bill Beasley will set a date for a hearing on Gaither's request.

The amended petition alleges that Walter and Bettye Milner were "misled" into delivering Doris "into the custody, care, protection and control of the defendant," and adds that "almost no precautions were taken for her physical safety."

It also alleges "intruders, trespassers, malefactors and unauthorized persons were known to have been on the premises of Camp Scott" before the Milner girl was attacked and killed.

The petition said "mysterious, unidentified persons had approached closely or entered tents and buildings occupied by female campers or personnel" at the summer camp.

The petition seeks to add the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Co., the Hartford Casualty Insurance Co. and the Hartford Fire Insurance Co. to the lawsuit.

A Camp Scott counselor discovered the bodies of the three victims with their sleeping bags on a camp trail about 100 yards from their bloody platform tent.

A massive search in the rugged area failed to turn up a killer.

Fall Trial Ordered In Gene Hart Harboring Case

By Robert B. Allen
Staff Writer

TAHLEQUAH — William Lee Smith, leader of an ancient Cherokee Indian society, was ordered Friday to stand trial in September on a charge of hiding murder suspect Gene Leroy Hart in a pickup truck shortly after the slayings of three Girl Scouts near Locust Grove.

Associate District Judge Lynn Burris ordered the 51-year-old railroad worker bound over for a jury trial after hearing testimony of one witness at a preliminary hearing here.

A state investigator said Smith, one of two men accused of feloniously harboring Hart, admitted he secretly drove the murder suspect to the home of Sam Pigeon Jr. in Chero-

kee County's rugged Cookson Hills.

Pigeon, also charged in the Hart case, has been accused of hiding the fugitive in his small frame house for months before Hart's arrest April 6.

Pigeon's preliminary hearing is set for June 6, a day before Hart faces a hearing on three murder counts.

Hart, a 34-year-old former Locust Grove High School athlete, was apprehended at Pigeon's home after a 10-month search.

Larry Boles, an Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation agent, testified Friday that Smith admitted to him Hart came to his Vian home shortly after midnight a week after the June 13 slayings of the three young girls at Camp Scott near Locust Grove.

Boles said Smith told him he believed Hart was brought to his home by relatives.

During direct examination by District Attorney John W. Russell Jr. of Wagoner, Boles said Smith told him he refused Hart's request to drive the fugitive to the Locust Grove area, but did hide him in the back of his pickup truck.

Smith, Boles continued, said he then drove Hart to just south of the Pigeon home and let him out near the tiny Cherokee settlement known as Taliholli.

Defense attorney Jack Bliss of Tahlequah argued against admitting Boles' testimony, complaining that Smith, a Cherokee Indian, had been questioned by authorities without the benefit of an interpreter.

Smith, described as a Cherokee medicine man, is the recognized chief of the Kewtoowah Society, a group of full-blood Cherokees who adhere to ancient tribal customs.

The group, also known as "Nighthawk," reportedly had its beginning before the Cherokees came to what is now Oklahoma. It is considered an elite and distinct group in Indian society.

Russell called two of 14 witnesses who had been subpoenaed for Friday's preliminary hearing.

Judge Burris, however, struck down the testimony of Tulsa news reporter Susan Witt after she made a brief appearance on the witness stand.

Mrs. Witt said she had interviewed by tele-

phone a man who identified himself as "Mr. Smith," but the judge upheld a defense objection and ruled it could not be established she had talked to the defendant in the harboring case.

Shortly after Friday's brief hearing, Smith was arraigned on the charge of harboring a fugitive and pleaded innocent.

Many of the witnesses on hand for the preliminary hearing, including Mayes County Sheriff Pete Weaver, are expected to testify when a preliminary hearing for Hart begins June 7 in nearby Mayes County.

Authorities said Hart, now being held in the Oklahoma State Penitentiary at McAlester, probably will be returned to Pryor the day before his hearing begins.

INDIAN LEADER CHARGED

Trial Set in Hart Aid Case

By Robert B. Allen
Staff Writer

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Hart Lawyer After Jail Records

PRYOR — Tattered wedding photographs that authorities say link murder suspect Gene Leroy Hart to the deaths of three Girl Scouts last summer may have been confiscated by Mayes County officials nearly five years ago but are now being held as evidence against him, one of Hart's attorneys hinted here Tuesday.

Oklahoma City attorney Garvin Isaacs accused Mayes County officials of "playing games" and "screwing up" their prosecution of the 34-year-old Hart, who was transferred Tuesday to Pryor from his cell at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary. Isaacs, during a 90-

minute motion hearing, tried repeatedly to see jail inventory records made in 1973, when Hart was returned to Mayes County on a post-conviction relief hearing. Hart escaped twice within a four-month period, the last time in September 1973.

While the jail records were not produced Tuesday, Mayes County Sheriff Pete Weaver later said he will turn over the inventory list made of Hart's personal belongings during his 1973 confinement here if Isaacs subpoenas him to testify.

"Don't quote me as to whether I have the photographs," Weaver told a newsman Tues-

day night. "I'm not going to discuss the photos.

"But I will honor his subpoena," the sheriff said.

Weaver said Isaacs, one of Hart's three attorneys, "may be operating on a rumor," but refused to elaborate.

Investigators say the wedding photographs — made while Hart was an inmate at the Oklahoma State Reformatory at Granite in 1968 — were found in a cave near the site where the three young Tulsa-area girls were found slain last June 13.

While officials have remained tight-lipped about what evidence, if

any, has been discovered to tie Hart to the slayings, the photos were found only two days before Hart was charged with the crime, officials have said.

In his attempts to see jail inventory lists, Isaacs hinted authorities may have had the photos several years before the girls were killed.

Jail inventory lists and a sack full of Hart's belongings were brought to the courtroom Tuesday by a deputy sheriff, but Isaacs' requests to examine them were overruled by Special Judge Jess Clanton.

Mayes County Depu-
Cont. on Page 2, Col. 7

Lawyer

Cont. From Page 1
ty A. D. David said the jail records and the grocery sack dated back only to 1973, when he was hired as a member of Weaver's staff.

Isaacs, who could not

May 30 1978 The Daily Oklahoman

Who Killed 3 Girl Scouts? Innocent Verdict Left Void

PRYOR (AP) — Grim jurors filed into a stifling courtroom here one year ago Sunday to announce the fate of a man charged in a grisly triple-murder that shocked the nation.

The largest manhunt in Oklahoma history, the most extensive criminal investigation, the longest preliminary hearing, the most highly publicized trial all ended with one word: Innocent.

Gene Leroy Hart, the jury said, was innocent on three first-degree murder charges filed against him 10 days after the June 13, 1977, sex slayings of three Girl Scouts.

The six-man, six-woman jury said Hart was innocent of ripping into a tent at a northeastern Oklahoma summer camp, bludgeoning three sleeping girls, repeatedly assaulting them and carrying them 100 yards to a camp road where the bodies were discovered at dawn.

The verdict vindicated Hart and his supporters, who claimed the former Locust Grove high school football star was a scapegoat. They said he was charged only because he had been a fugitive since a 1973 escape from a local jail.

It also vindicated state and local authorities, who were hammered by charges that Hart, a Cherokee Indian, could not receive a fair trial because of his race.

But the verdict left a major question unanswered: If Hart was innocent of the macabre slayings, who is guilty?

"The case wasn't over when we returned the 'not guilty' verdict," says juror Wanda Hale, a Pryor food store assistant manager. "It isn't over to me yet."

There have been developments during the past year related to the frustrated probe into the slayings of Lori Farmer, 8; Michele Guse, 9; and Doris Milner, 10.

— An athletic and apparently healthy Hart, 35, died of a heart attack while jogging at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary June 4, 1979. He was serving time on earlier convictions.

— A book about the slayings, written by former Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation agent Mike Wilkerson, has been accepted by a New York publisher and is due out soon.

— Sid Wise, former Mayes County prosecutor, is "seriously contemplating" a move to Colorado because his family enjoys the area, he said. Wise filed three first-degree murder charges against Hart, but his term expired before the trial.

— Parents of the victims are pursuing a \$3.5 million lawsuit against the Magic Empire Council of Girl Scouts, alleging negligence.

— Charges of harboring a fugitive filed against Tahlequah nursery worker Sam Pigeon, in whose shack Hart was captured April 6, 1978, remain on the books. Pigeon has not been tried.

— The rugged 410-acre camp near Locust Grove remains padlocked, silent since busloads of confused Girl Scouts were evacuated on the first day of what was to have been a two-week encampment.

— And in OSBI files, the triple-murder case remains open. It is officially unsolved. There appears to be little chance it will gain any other designation.

Some jurors still wonder, though not



Gene Leroy Hart ... died in prison

about the verdict. Panelists have never regretted the acquittal, a poll of jurors indicates.

Hart's untimely death shocked many of the jurors, who indicated they hoped questions about the case might have somehow been resolved if Hart had lived.

Virgil Shipp, a Pryor utility foreman, said he first assumed Hart had been killed by inmates who disagreed with the jury's verdict.

"I thought maybe divine justice — a higher court — got him," said Jack Mitchell Jr., an Adair High School teacher. "I don't know. I still don't know."

"Really, I kind of thought he did it," Mitchell said. "But there's no way I could feel right about convicting him not knowing, when there was a reasonable doubt."

"I've got a daughter the same age as those girls and I've wondered whether I've let a

guilty man go," said Marion Richard, an Adair electrician. "I don't know the truth."

"You hate to see someone die when he fought so hard," said George Kelly, a Pryor plant manager who was jury foreman. He said serving on the panel was "just another job."

"If the evidence had been there, we would have found him guilty," said Sandra Garrett, a Spavinaw housewife. She said she has had "no second thoughts," but admits the case still troubles her.

"It's very seldom that any week goes by that I don't think about it some. It's part of my life now," Mrs. Garrett said.

"It bothered me for a long time. Things would remind me of it," said Joan Littlefield, an Adair loader operator. "It's the most serious thing I've ever had to deal with in my life."

Lela Ramsey, a

Pryor housewife, called the jurors' task "just a terrible, terrible responsibility."

"None of us knew whether he did it or whether he didn't," Mrs. Ramsey said. "We felt like the case would be kept open. We were so stunned that they didn't have any more than what they had."

Some of the jurors were critical of the slaying investigation.

Richard called it "one screwed-up deal" in which there was "a lot of jumping the gun."

"Several places it seemed their investigation was so slipshod. I mean, a layman could have done better," Mrs. Hale said.

"It tore a lot of confidence I had in the judicial system," Mrs. Ramsey said.

Others said they were unconvinced by the state's meticulous comparisons of hair and sperm from the victims' bodies to samples from Hart.

"I think we learned some things from that particular case," said Don Sharp, deputy director of the OSBI.

"Sometimes you just don't get all the evidence you would like. You just have to take those and go on. You win some and you lose some," Sharp said.

He said the investigation "really hasn't moved much" since Hart's acquittal.

"If someone would come up with some information, even if it was him — even if it was Gene Leroy Hart — we would still go out and investigate," Sharp said.

"Everybody worked on that case at one

time or another," Sharp said. "But when you get through with one homicide case there's another one waiting for you."

"There's a tendency to pour your heart and soul into a case," Sharp said. "But if you let yourself get involved too deeply, you find yourself on a terribly bad emotional roller-coaster."

The jurors have ridden that roller-coaster.

Apparently, there were no overt threats against them after the controversial trial. But there have been casual remarks by acquaintances that bothered some of the jurors.

Mrs. Garrett said "a couple of people" have questioned the jury's verdict in conversations with her.

"I'll never question another jury because you don't know what's going on unless you're there," she said.

"I didn't go around telling anybody I was on the jury," said Mrs. Melvin Young, an Adair housewife. "I'd rather just let it go. It's past and he's gone."

Shamblin said most of his friends "never knew I was on" the jury.

"I'd hate to be on another one. I don't like to be the one to be judge or jury for somebody's life," Shipp said.

But, considering the

134 county residents eliminated in 11 days of individual questioning of prospective jurors, Shipp said, "I'm glad to think they wanted me as one."

Richard said ac-

quaintances would "come up and shake my hand and tell me they're glad to see I let an innocent man go."

"I just naturally told them to go to hell," he said.

And Richard echoed the pain and frustration other jurors found in serving for the month-long trial.

"It'll be a cold day in hell before I'll do it again," he said.

Hart Legacy One of State's Nagging Murder Mysteries

By Griff Palmer
Tulsa Bureau

TULSA — Gene Leroy Hart's legacy is one of the most nagging murder mysteries in Oklahoma's 78-year history.

Hart may have taken to his grave the only certain knowledge whether he killed Denise Milner, Lori Farmer and Michele Guse in June 1977, at a Girl Scout camp near Locust Grove.

Two months before his June 1979 death, a Mayes County jury acquitted Hart of the slayings. Hart died of an apparent heart attack at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester, where he was serving a 308-year sentence on convictions unrelated to the Camp Scott killings.

There were those who said he was guilty, those who said he

wasn't and those who said his death was certainly convenient. The mystery continued but drew less and less attention.

But for the past week and a half, the mystery has hung over a Tulsa County courtroom where a jury heard evidence in a wrongful-death lawsuit filed by parents of two of the dead girls.

Charles and Sherri Farmer, and Walter and Bettye Milner claimed that the Magic Empire Girl Scout Council failed to provide security which would have prevented the deaths. The parents claimed that the council's insurance company, the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Co., failed to tell camp operators of the security needs after a 1976 inspection.

Wednesday, the six



Gene Leroy Hart

man, six-woman jury ruled in the defendants' favor.

Attorneys on both

sides of the lawsuit said the question of who killed the girls made no difference to the neg-

ligence issue raised in the suit.

But, before the trial, both sides agreed not to discuss Hart or the criminal proceedings against him. Still, Hart figured heavily in the civil suit.

The first, veiled reference to Hart cropped up before Jack Gaither, the plaintiffs' attorney, had finished his opening statement.

Gaither told jurors that when the Girl Scouts began their camp session on June 12, 1977, Mayes County Sheriff Pete Weaver was conducting an intensive hunt for a convicted rapist, who had been at large since escaping four years earlier from the Mayes County Jail.

The escaped rapist to whom Gaither referred was Hart.

Dan Rogers, attorney for the Magic Empire

Council, stayed away from Hart throughout his opening statement.

"Nobody will attempt to prove to you who committed this crime," Rogers told jurors. "I can't prove to you who did it, but I can prove to you that it wasn't a negligent act that caused it."

There was no skirting Hart's presence in the case, though, by the time Weaver testified for the plaintiffs on March 19. The former sheriff testified at length about the search for Hart, and his reasons for believing Hart was in the immediate area on June 12, 1977.

As he cross-examined Weaver, Rogers finally referred to Hart by name.

"Do you have reason to believe that that person was the one that committed this crime?"

Rogers asked Weaver.

"I'm sure of it," he replied.

The question of Hart's guilt or innocence may have made no difference to the liability case, but the assumption of Hart's guilt fit neatly into each side's arguments.

Gaither argued in his opening statement that had Camp Scott's operators contacted Weaver's office before beginning the summer camp session on June 12, 1977, they would have known that Hart was believed to be hiding in the wilderness near the camp.

During the trial, Gaither introduced testimony of a string of thefts, burglaries and intrusions at Camp Scott in the years preceding the murders. Gaither blamed the intrusions on Hart, who he said was "shopping for

his victims" in a "game of death" which culminated with the 1977 murders.

Rogers leaned on the assumption of Hart's guilt as he argued that the Girl Scout council should not be blamed for the murders.

No normal security system could have deterred the person who bludgeoned two of the girls to death and strangled the third after raping them, Rogers said. To reinforce his point, Rogers cited the fact that Hart evaded one of the most intensive man-hunts in state history for 10 months after he was charged with the killings.

While the attorneys ended up assuming Hart's guilt for purposes of the civil trial, the case remains officially unsolved.

The Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation

keeps the case open but inactive, occasionally receiving and running down new leads on the case.

Mayes County Sheriff H.W. "Chief" Jordan said Thursday he is following up information possibly linking others to the case.

Sherri Farmer, Lori Farmer's mother, said Wednesday that Hart participated in the murders. But she said she also suspects Hart had help.

"There's still strong opinion that Leroy Hart didn't do it," said Jordan, who was mayor of Pryor at the time of the murders.

"There's also strong opinion that if he did do it, that he didn't do it alone.

"Lawmen are not allowed opinions, but my unofficial opinion is that one man didn't do it."

Hart Defense Seeking Disqualification of DA

By Judy Fossett
Staff Writer

PRYOR — Citing an alleged "financial interest" by Mayes County District Attorney Sid Wise in the outcome of the Gene Leroy Hart case, defense attorneys for the murder suspect requested Mon-

day that the entire prosecution team be replaced.

The motion filed in Mayes County District Court by Hart chief counsel Garvin Isaacs came as part of a flurry of last-minute legal maneuvering that has brought court proceed-

ings in the case to a virtual standstill.

And it appeared more certain Monday the murder trial for Hart — scheduled to start Monday — will be postponed until after the first of the year.

The maneuvering began Friday when defense attorneys disclosed Wise signed a co-authorship agreement with a former newsman to write a book about the Camp Scott murders.

Isaacs alleged Wise turned over secret Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation reports to the newsman, Ron L. Grimsley, and Isaacs argued the defense is entitled to the same reports.

Monday, District Judge William Whistler delayed a hearing on that issue until either the state or defense can find Grimsley and bring him to court to testify under oath about whether Wise was actually the source of the reports.

Grimsley stated in an affidavit he and Wise made copies of the OSBI reports last spring in Vinita. Wise denies he gave the newsman the reports and has suggested they could have been pilfered.

Both defense and prosecution say they will appeal an adverse ruling in the matter to the state Court of Crim-

From Page 1

inal Appeals, which could hold up the trial for several days.

Even if Grimsley were to appear today and the matter resolved, the earliest the trial could start would be Dec. 1, a Friday, since the law requires that prospective jurors be given 10 days notice of jury duty.

Summonses ordering 900 jurors to appear in court next week were to be mailed out Friday.

But Court Clerk Eloise Gist said Judge Whistler told her Friday not to mail them. She said he told her he didn't yet know when he would want the summonses sent out.

In the most recent defense move, Isaacs's motion called for court-ordered disqualification of Wise and the en-

tire prosecution team, including Tulsa District Attorney S.M. "Buddy" Fallis, who is assisting Wise.

Noting the co-authorship contract, the motion states, "A financial interest in the outcome of litigation violates a prosecutor's duty to be fair and impartial."

"Because prosecutors are to protect the innocent as well as convict the guilty, the law requires that prosecutors be above reproach for any personal conduct and that they have no financial interest in the outcome of litigation."

Nothing in the motion connects Fallis to the book. Fallis said Monday he was "surprised" to learn of the co-authorship agreement signed by

Wise, but intends to remain in the case unless disqualified.

He said he considers the co-authorship agreement "a collateral issue to the central question of the innocence of Gene Leroy Hart."

"I can't see any reason for me to avoid a responsibility."

Jack Graves, district attorney-elect to succeed Wise, sat in the jury box during the brief Monday hearing and was closeted with prosecutors for about an hour during the afternoon.

He later said Wise had agreed to "cooperate with me" by making available all investigative documents so Graves can be prepared to prosecute the case if it is delayed until after he takes office Jan. 2.

Asked if he will use Fallis' assistance, Graves replied, "I'm taking that under advisement."

The new district attorney declined to estimate how much time it would take him to prepare for trial and indicated he would probably seek a continuance.

While prosecutors and representatives of the OSBI met during the afternoon in Wise's office, waiting in the hallway to talk to Wise were Dr. and Mrs. Charles Farmer of Tulsa.

Mrs. Farmer said she was "disappointed" and angry to learn of Wise's apparent plan to write a book about the death of her daughter, Lori, and two other Girl Scouts on June 13, 1977. She said she wanted to talk to Wise personally about the matter.

Mrs. Farmer said she was aware that two sisters are preparing a book on the "psychology" of the slayings, and that while she has talked to them, she has refused to give them any information.

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Heading the list is the No. 8 game of the week, Coweta at Locust Grove.

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Scoring Duel Due

Coweta is led by halfback David Aston and quarterback Dwight Claxton. Aston ranks fourth in state Class B scoring with 92 points and Claxton has scored 50 points. Elmer Willis fuels Locust Grove's offense. He has 64 points so far.

There are six district clashes in Class C Wednesday.

Buffalo, still in the running in District 2-C with Beaver, goes to Laverne; Crescent, front-runner in District 12-C, plays at Guthrie Faver; unbeaten Quapaw journeys to Jay in 13-C; and, in 14-C, Catoosa is at Kiefer, Berryhill at Morris and Sand Springs Washington at Dewar.

Comets Invite Teachers

In the city area, Luther hosts the Choctaw B team.

Classen, host team at Taft Stadium Thursday night against Del City, invites all teachers to attend the game free by showing their Oklahoma Educational Association cards at the gate.

Grid Results

HOOKER 32, MEAD, KAN. 8

Mead, Kan. 8 0 0 0—8
Hooker 18 0 12 12—32
Touchdowns — Mead: Mike Godfrey.
Hooker: Bobby Buchanan (14, run), Billy Vincent 2 (6, pass from Dan Hussey; 55, pass interception), Bennie Hussey (6, run), Jim Rudd (10, run).
Conversions — Mead: Richard Evans (run). Hooker: Jim Rudd (run).

MARLOW 51, SULPHUR 0

Sulphur 0 0 0 0—0
Marlow 22 20 6 3—51
Touchdowns — Marlow: Dent Gibson 3 (51, run; 35, pass from Bruce Scott; 2, run), Bruce Scott 2 (7, run; 1, run), Scott Pelton (1, run), Jim Boags (10, run).
Conversions — Marlow: Dent Gibson 3 (pass from Bruce Scott, run).
Field Goal — Dean Tom.
Highlights — Marlow has a 5-0-1 record. Dent Gibson scored 24 points and led all rushers. Dean Tom turned a fine game both offensively and defensively for the winners.

TEMPLE 36, COMANCHE 14

Comanche 8 6 0 0—14
Temple 6 22 8 0—36
Touchdowns — Campbell Long (end zone, recovered a fumble made a player on Comanche team, name unavailable), Jim Loffin (3, run), Jim White (21, run), Garry Felder (27, run), Billy Bob Carr (13, run), Wendell Tyler (7, run), Pat Satterfield (28, pass from Johnny Nichols).
Conversions — Loffin (run), Joe Eschler (pass from Loffin), Carr (run), Satterfield (run).

PANAMA 36, HAILEYVILLE 0

Haileyville 0 0 0 0—0
Panama 16 6 8 6—36
Touchdowns — Haileyville: James Kirk-

HOBART 51, HOLLIS 8

Hollis 8 0 0 0—8
Hobart 16 20 12 7—51
Touchdowns — Hollis: Troy Morrow (35, run), Hobart: Larry McElreath 3 (60, pass from Mike Smith; 1, run; 40, run), Lajoy Gaines (1, run), Roger Hollowell 3 (11, run; 12, run; 1, run).
Conversions — Hollis: Morrow (run), Hobart: John Adams 2 (passes from Smith), John Harris (run), Hollowell (run), Tommy Wilson (kick).

PERRY 26, DEL CITY 13

Perry 6 6 8 5—26
Del City 13 0 0 0—13
Touchdowns — Perry: Bill Parker (36, run), Bob Drebenstedt (14, run), Billy Adams (1, run), Clarence Vester (52, punt return), Del City: Bill Reese (7, run), Lee Davis (48, run).
Conversions — Perry: Billy Adams (run), Del City: Robert Katsu (kick).

LOCUST GROVE 28, COLCORD 8

Colcord 8 0 0 0—8
Locust Grove 0 18 8 2—28
Touchdowns — Colcord: Eddie Duncan (1, run), Locust Grove: Earl Baugan (55, punt return), Gen Hart (12, run), Tom Bay (4, pass from Sam Bendabought), Keith Martin (6, run), Safety, Tom Daves.
Conversions — Colcord: Dave Mackallie (pass from Duncan), Locust Grove: Dan Henson (pass from Bendabought).

THOMAS 38, NORTHWEST "B" 8

Classen "B" 0 0 0 8—8
Thomas 16 0 6 16—38
Touchdowns — Thomas: Charles Comer 2 (15, pass from Larry Dobbins; 15, run), C. E. Christensen 2 (5, run; 4, run), David Self (25, run), Classen B; Gary Sharkey (12, run).

Ex-Agent Now Filmmaker Details State Girl Scout Murders of '77

TULSA (AP) — A Tulsa filmmaker whose televised documentary on the 1977 murders of three Girl Scouts aired Saturday night has good reason to feel close to the case.

Michael Wilkerson was the lead agent for the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation at the time of the deaths at a Girl Scout camp near Locust Grove.

It took Wilkerson three years to complete the documentary, "Someone Cry for the Children," which aired twice Saturday night on cable television's Discovery Channel.

"We don't take any side, but just try to tell the story as objectively as possible," Wilkerson said. "We also tried to tell it from as many perspectives as we could."

The film was produced by Wilkerson's Barrister Studios and combined interviews with eyewitnesses, law enforcement agents, and the families of Lori Lee Farmer, Michelle Guse and Doris Milner.

The man originally accused in the killing, Gene Leroy Hart, was later acquitted.

Hart had been serving a lengthy prison sentence for rape when he escaped just prior to the Camp Scott murders. He was returned to the Oklahoma State Penitentiary at McAlester, where he died after suffering an apparent heart attack.

But during the months that Hart eluded capture, he became a kind of folk hero. Some saw Hart, a Cherokee, as emblematic of the persecution American Indians suffered at

the hands of the white establishment.

But Sheri Farmer, the mother of Lori Lee Farmer, said the documentary goes beyond Hart's story.

"The first time I saw it — and it was very hard to watch — what overwhelmed me the most was the way (Wilkerson) had portrayed the children," Farmer said.

"That was very important to me, because so often people say this is the story of Gene Leroy Hart. It's not," she said. "It's the story of Lori Lee and Michelle and Doris, three young children who died needlessly."

Wilkerson also collaborated with his brother and fellow OSBI agent, Dick, on a book about the case titled "Someone Cry for the Children."

Hart's Fund Gets \$12,500

TAHLEQUAH (AP) — The Cherokee Nation Tribal Council has voted to donate \$12,500 to attorneys defending Gene Leroy Hart, who is facing trial next month in the slayings of three Girl Scouts.

"The decision was not easy," said Cherokee Chief Ross Swimmer. "But we recognize the need to have all evidence possible presented to determine Hart's guilt or innocence."

"If he is innocent, it means someone is still wandering around with a deranged mind."

Swimmer said the funds will be used to defer expenses for the development of trial transcripts and expert witness testimony in Hart's defense.

The money will come from tribal revenues unrelated to state or federal funds, Swimmer said.

Tribal spokesmen said the council is not taking a position on Hart's guilt or innocence, but is attempting to ensure that Hart receives a fair trial.

Following a marathon preliminary hearing this summer, Hart was bound over for trial in the deaths of the three young girls at Camp Scott near Locust Grove June 13, 1977.

In its weekend discussion, the council said all Cherokees were "being indicted" due to
See Page 2, Column 8

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23 STATE TEAMS REMAIN UNBEATEN

Five teams dropped from the undefeated list over the week-end, leaving 23 state high schools still nursing dreams of an undefeated football season.

Barring a tie, the list is sure to be narrowed again this week because Coweta (7-0) and Locust Grove (7-0) clash in a District 16-B fray.

Falling the past week were Newkirk, Northeast, Okmulgee Dunbar, Savanna and Seminole.

Newkirk was edged by Alva, 24-20. Northeast took a 56-0 licking from unbeaten Norman. Okmulgee Dunbar was swatted 24-12 by Lawton Douglass, a team which has lost only to an out-of-state foe, Wichita Falls Washington.

Savanna was tripped by McAlester B, 36-21. Seminole was tumbled by Ada, 34-13.

Team	W	L	T	Pts.	Opp.
Antlers	7	0	0	254	96
Beaver	7	0	0	222	32
Berryhill	7	0	0	206	76
Braman	7	0	0	188	22
Choctaw	7	0	0	153	27
Coweta	7	0	0	212	24
Elk City	7	0	0	241	72
Enid	7	0	0	245	88
Greenfield	7	0	0	280	32
Jones	7	0	0	204	34
Lindsay	7	0	0	198	38
Locust Grove	7	0	0	176	28
Norman	7	0	0	242	51
Quapaw	7	0	0	168	14
Rivalling	7	0	0	208	37
Stillwater	7	0	0	254	18
Wetzel	7	0	0	248	56
Wynnewood	7	0	0	284	60
Freedom	6	0	0	241	84
Heavener	6	0	0	254	44
Jenks	6	0	1	267	80
Thomas	6	0	1	306	40
Geary	5	0	2	149	46

Oct 25 1961

The Daily Oklahoman

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Enid	7	0	0	245	88
Greenfield	7	0	0	280	32
Jones	7	0	0	204	34
Lindsay	7	0	0	199	38
Locust Grove	7	0	0	174	28
Norman	7	0	0	242	11
Quapaw	7	0	0	168	14
Rising	7	0	0	208	27
Stillwater	7	0	0	254	18
Wadsworth	7	0	0	248	36
Wynnewood	7	0	0	284	50
Freedom	6	0	0	241	84
Heavener	6	0	0	254	46
Jenks	6	0	1	262	80
Thomas	6	0	1	304	49
Deary	5	0	2	149	46

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DNA Tests Link Gene Leroy Hart to Girl Scout Deaths

By Robby Trammell
Tulsa Bureau

Genetic testing conducted by the FBI has linked Gene Leroy Hart to the notorious 1977 slayings of three Girl Scouts near Locust Grove, but cannot determine conclusively whether he was the killer, *The Oklahoman* learned Tuesday.

Two separate sources, both with knowledge of the confidential tests, said Hart's body fluids matched three probes of DNA evidence obtained at the crime scene, and two other tests were inconclusive. The sources asked not to be identified.

One person in 7,700 American Indians would match the crime scene

sample as Hart did, *The Oklahoman* was told. Hart was a Cherokee Indian.

"If all five probes had matched it would have been one in 3 billion," one source said. "With three of five matching it is one in 7,700. That means if you got tests from 7,700 American Indians one of them should match, which is the reason why the test is not conclusive."

Hart died June 4, 1979, after suffering a heart attack while jogging at the state penitentiary in McAlester. Hart, 35, was serving sentences for earlier rape convictions.

In 1979, Hart was tried and ac-

quitted in the deaths of Michelle Guse, 9, of Broken Arrow, and Lorie Lee Farmer, 8, and Doris Denise Milner, 10, both of Tulsa. Their molested, beaten and strangled bodies were found June 13, 1977, stuffed inside sleeping bags outside their tent at Camp Scott, two miles south of Locust Grove.

Hart was a convicted rapist and escapee from the Mayes County jail when he was charged with the scout slayings on June 20, 1977.

Hart was arrested by the OSBI 10 months later in a backwoods shack in the Cookson Hills of Cherokee County. It was the largest manhunt in state history.

Oklahoma City attorney Garvin Isaacs, who represented Hart, said Tuesday he has no confidence in DNA fingerprinting.

The sophisticated method of identifying people through comparisons of blood, sperm or saliva samples was first developed in 1987 and the FBI began using it in December 1988.

"This DNA fingerprinting is nothing more than a subjective evaluation, X-ray type photographs ... and just like any other X-ray you get two or three people looking at them and they might have different opinions and interpretations," Isaacs said. "Gene Leroy Hart did not kill those Girl Scouts and that is the end of it."

OSBI spokesman Paul Renfrow and Mayes County District Attorney T. Jack Graves said they could not discuss the test results because of Oklahoma law that prohibits public disclosure of OSBI investigative reports.

Renfrow said the 12-year-old case is open but on inactive status. He said there is nothing in the FBI's findings to warrant placing the case on active status again.

The crime remains unresolved for the mother of one of the slain scouts, Lorie Lee Farmer.

"I don't know if it really changes my feelings a whole lot," Tulsan

See SCOUTS, Page 2

Scouts

From Page 1

Sheri Farmer said. "It still was my child who was murdered, and I wish someone would come forward and make it 100 percent positive (who killed her). It still remains open-ended for me."

Hart's sister, Tammy Foreman, said her brother was innocent. Beyond that

the family would have no comment, she said. Hart's mother, who lives in Locust Grove, could not be reached.

"This (DNA testing) came along since my time, and I'm sorry it was not available when that happened," retired Mayes County Sheriff Pete Weaver said. "Gene Leroy Hart wasn't the first guilty par-

ty to walk out of a courtroom after being charged with a crime, and he won't be the last.

"All evidence — every bit of the evidence — points directly to him. There's never been a more intensive investigation ... and there has never been one iota of evidence found to ever indicate a second party was present."

Prep Football

LOCUST GROVE 22, WESTVILLE 14

Westville 8 0 0 6—14

Locust Grove 14 8 0 0—22

Touchdowns—Westville: Danny Smith 2 (40, pass from Ron Lacle; 3, run). Locust Grove: Earl Vaughn 2 (3, run; 23, run), Danny Henson (10, pass from Gene Hart).

Conversions — Westville: Ron Lacle (run), Locust Grove: Hart 2 (runs).

DEWEY 43, HOMINY 8

Hominy 0 8 0 0—8

Dewey 7 6 8 22—43

Touchdowns—Hominy: Grant Cable (13, pass from Skip Wagnon), Dewey: Frank Vermier 2 (49, run; 32, run), Mike Tyner (1, run), George Ramsay (1, run), Mike Burgess 2 (20, run; 42, run).

Conversions — Dewey: Sam Nave 2 (runs), Vermier (kick), Mike Tyner (run), Hominy: Cable (run).

MANGUM 7, BURNS FLAT 0

Burns Flat 0 0 0 0—0

Mangum 7 0 0 0—7

Touchdowns — Mangum: Joe David Mitchell (2, run).

Conversions — Mangum: Joe Chapman (kick).

Highlights — The Mangum touchdown came after a 16-play, 58-yard drive, following the opening kickoff. It was Mangum's first victory.

October 27 1962
The Daily Oklahoman

New DNA test could identify killer in Girl Scout slayings

By Ron Jackson
Staff Writer



Online at NewsOK.com

Continuing coverage of
the 1977 Girl Scout
murders

Keyword: Girl Scouts

LOCUST GROVE — A 30-year murder mystery will remain so at least a little longer as Mayes County District Attorney Gene Haynes awaits the final results from a DNA test in the 1977 Girl Scouts slayings.

Haynes told *The Oklahoman* a second test was ordered at a private laboratory in Texas after the first test results proved "inconclusive" in June.

Until now, Haynes has remained mum about the results of the first test in hopes of deflecting attention from the victims' families, all of whom still live in the Tulsa area.

"I regret news of the DNA test ever got out," Haynes said. "I know the public has a right to know and all, but I didn't want the victims' families to be bothered by calls and so forth from the media ..."

"But right now we're just waiting. There's nothing else we can do."

A mystery, 30 years old

The murders of Lori Lee Farmer, 8, of Tulsa; Michelle Guse, 9, of Broken Arrow; and Doris Milner, 10, of Tulsa shocked Oklahomans on June 13, 1977, when their bodies were discovered at Camp Scott near Locust Grove.

Escaped convict Gene Leroy Hart became the prime sus-

See **SCOUTS** , back page

Court OKs TV Cameras In Hart Trial

By Mike Hammer

The state Supreme Court voted 7-0 Monday to allow television and still cameras and radio recording equipment into the trial of Gene Leroy Hart if all parties agree.

The surprise ruling coincided with the court's receipt of a favorable report from its special committee studying whether cameras and recording equipment should be allowed in Oklahoma courtrooms full time.

The nine-man committee voted 6-3 to recommend to the Supreme Court a restrictive proposal allowing cameras and recording equipment into courts.

Three Differ

The three dissenters differed with the ma-

jority on whether parties in a civil case could prevent use of cameras.

The majority recommended that a defendant in a criminal trial could object to cameras and recording equipment and thwart television and radio rebroadcast of the trial.

The recommendations would not affect the reporting of the trial by newspaper reporters.

Chief Justice Ralph Hodges, who also headed the special committee, announced the court's action and the committee's report.

Accord Needed

Hodges said the ruling allowing television and radio equipment to film and tape the trial for rebroadcast, and newspaper photographers to enter the courtroom, hinged on agreement by the principals.

He said District Judge William Whistler, the district attorney, defense attorneys and Hart must agree to such media coverage.

During Hart's preliminary hearing earlier this year at Pryor, the high court allowed

Whistler, the district attorney, defense attorneys and Hart must agree to such media coverage.

During Hart's preliminary hearing earlier this year at Pryor, the high court allowed a television camera to broadcast closed-circuit coverage to a building adjacent to the courthouse.

However, television and radio stations were prohibited from rebroadcasting.

Report Due

Hodges said he expects the court to consider the report in mid-October and rule before the Hart trial, scheduled to start in late November.

Hart is accused in the July 1977 slayings of three Girl Scouts at Camp Scott near Locust Grove.

Hodges, "encouraged by the majority report," said the court can accept the majority or minority report or "something in between" or reject the entire concept.

But if the court approves the report, he said, he expects the court will allow use of cameras on an experimental basis beginning Jan. 1.

Counties Grab for Funding

By United Press International

Some counties already are grabbing an opportunity for extra road funding by considering a countywide

gasoline tax.

Officials in Payne and Cleveland counties apparently are among the first to consider the tax, authorized by the

state legislature this session.

Payne County Commission Chairwoman Karen Mullendore said Monday the panel planned to hold public hearings by July to get citizen reaction to the additional tax.

Cleveland County Commissioner Les Chandler also has proposed a countywide tax election, but no formal action has been taken by the full commission on the suggestion.

The state legislature passed a bill this session allowing a county gasoline tax if a majority of county residents approve it.

Mrs. Mullendore says her office has made inquiries to the state tax commission asking for interpretation of the new law, but state tax officials said they have not yet received their copy of the guideline and hope to soon deliver an explanation of the law to county officials.

Mrs. Mullendore said there is confusion on whether the law allows a percentage tax or a flat 1 cent a gallon levy.

Isaacs To Defend Stafford

OKLAHOMA CITY (UPI) —

A judge Tuesday approved the appointment of Garvin Isaacs, who successfully defended Gene Leroy Hart on charges of killing three Girl Scouts, as attorney for mass murder suspect Roger Dale Stafford.

District Judge Jack R. Parr also accepted the withdrawal from the case of attorneys Gary J. Dean, Tony Jack Lyons and William T. Witt, who said Stafford's family

was not meeting financial commitments made when they were retained.

Stafford is charged with first-degree murder in the death of Terri Horst, 15, one of six Oklahoma City steakhouse employees who were slain last July.

Stafford also is a suspect in the other five steakhouse slayings, the deaths of a Texas family of three near Purcell, Okla., last June, and other slayings in various parts of the country.

District Attorney Andrew Coats said he does not believe the change in lawyers will delay Stafford's trial. He said a preliminary hearing probably will be held in July, and trial set for next fall.

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