

This is a personal story as the man rescued was my father. I remember this terrible evening when we got word that Daddy was in the river and Red was trying to rescue him. My mother went to river, but I don't remember going. I do remember Daddy's scraped legs. His legs were stiff from the cold water and got badly scraped when Red somehow got him into the boat.

Meredith Payne was known as Red Payne, due to his red hair. As a child, I thought his name was "Red Paint." Red built a home next door to Sam Payne's Store, his father next door to the Post Office. Both his home and the store, which was originally the headquarters for the Lane Brothers Company, burned.

**The Daily Progress (circa 1952) – Published with permission**

### **Meredith Payne Steers Boat Six Miles in Darkness to Save Life of Friend**

Pete Purvis, Esmont trucker and son of Jack Purvis, Esmont Merchant, was pulled from the icy waters of the James River near Warren Sunday night about 8 o'clock by Meredith Payne (photo, right), a close friend and neighbor, who was summoned after residents of Warren heard his cries for help. The rescue was made before a crowd of nearly 100 persons who lined the riverbank but were unable to help because no boat was available. Payne rushed to Howardsville where he obtained a boat, put a motor on it, and made his way through the dark six miles downstream until he found Purvis' unconscious body caught in a tangle of bushes midstream. His head was near the water, but Payne said his clothing having caught saved him from drowning in the swift flowing water.

Mr. Payne said his friend went fishing alone Sunday morning in his boat. They often fished together. The boat capsized about 5:30 and Purvis was in the water about three hours.

When Mr. Payne reached his friend, he got into the water himself to disentangle him from the bushes and lift him into the boat. As soon as he reached the shore, a waiting automobile rushed the unconscious man to a Scottsville doctor. He was later transferred to University Hospital, Charlottesville, where he was treated for shock, exposure and severe lacerations of his legs. Mr. Purvis is married and the father of a teenage son. He is now recovering at his home in Esmont.

