

From the Princeton Daily Democrat dated Tuesday, October 27, 1953.

Jane White Is Victim

A 15-year-old Princeton high school sophomore was fatally injured Monday night when the automobile in which she was riding overturned about two miles east of the city on the Tafttown road.

Miss Judith Jane White, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Kermit White, Petersburg road, died at the Gibson General hospital about 10:30 o'clock, two hours after she was admitted after being thrown from a car which overturned on the curve near the Ival Dyson residence. She suffered a fractured neck and internal injuries Coroner Robert Kendall reported.

Driver of the car was Aubrey Howard, Princeton high school junior. Also in the car were Jerry Whitehead, Lucy Puckett, Bob McCormick and his small brother, Fred.

Sheriff Maurice Wood, Deputy Earl Hollen and state trooper Carlton Nichols, investigated the accident and stated that the car load of young people had left the city only a few moments before after they were informed that a group of pranksters had dragged two gates across the roadway on the Tafttown road. The group loaded in Howard's car and went out to see what had been done.

The car had arrived at the gate blockade only minutes before another car was seen approaching from the east. The youths quickly loaded in the car to start back to town, fearing that the passerby would think they were responsible for the prank.

It is believed by investigating officers, that Howard, in turning the car around backed into a ditch enough to get mud on the car's tires. Then the car, on rounding the curve which is on a blacktop road, skidded off the road and into a ditch and flipped over on its right side. It was believed that Miss White was thrown against the door which came open, throwing her onto the ground.

Ed Beloat, who was driving the car which the youths saw approaching, was the first to reach the overturned car. One report stated that Mr. Beloat, single-handedly lifted the car enough to free two of the boys from the wreckage. No other member of the party was injured seriously.

Judith Jane and her mother had been visiting in the city with friends and the girl had left her mother only a short while before the accident occurred.

Surviving besides the parents are a brother, Joe Brian White at home; grandparents Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Whitsitt of this city, and Mrs. Ida White, Princeton rural route.

Funeral services will be held at the Colvin and Son chapel on Thursday afternoon at 2 p.m. with the Rev. Charles M. Johnson officiating. Burial will be in the I.O.O.F. cemetery.

Miss White was born in Princeton on April 9, 1938. She was a member of the First Methodist church where she sang in choir. She was a member of the Princeton high school band, 4-H Club and Girl Scouts.

Miss White is at the Colvin and Son mortuary where friends may call after 1 p.m. Wednesday.

Sheriff Maurice Wood was much alarmed today of the incident Monday night in which two large wooden gates were dragged across the Tafttown road east of the city.

Sheriff Wood stated that had any motorists been travelling the road and failed to see the gates, at tragic accident could have occurred.

One of the gates was only a quarter-mile from the spot where Miss Jane White, high school sophomore, was killed last night. The other was only a couple of blocks away. Only enough room was allowed for a car to pass by on one end of the gates.

"With weather conditions being poor for driving last night, a Hallowe'en prank such as this could have proved more-tragic than it was. In one way of looking at it, indirectly the prank caused the fatal accident," he said.

Sheriff Wood stated that his office will continue an investigation in an attempt to find the persons responsible for the gate-moving prank.

"My department does not mean to interfere with fun-making of youths during the Hallowe'en season but we are making an appeal to make it good, clean fun and not pranks endangering lives and property.

Sheriff Wood stated. "We need the public's cooperation in the matter if it is to be a safe and sane Hallowe'en season," he added.