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National

**Ladybird: LBJ
afraid of bomb**

NEW YORK (UPI) — President Lyndon Johnson was more afraid of right-wing pressure to use nuclear weapons in the Vietnam War than left-wing politicians demanding an end to the fighting, Lady Bird Johnson says.

"Lyndon's real fear was not from the left but from the right — people demanding that we get this thing over with by dropping the deadliest of bombs," the former first lady said in the December issue of American Heritage magazine.

"Forced to that test, what do we do," she said, "He didn't want to do it. I just don't think we ever would have gotten over that nightmare. What would we have loosed?"

"The one time we did it, when nobody really knew the extent of it, left a scar. Once we've seen the bomb and know what it can do, how can any succeeding president ever give in to that last horrible thing?"

She said another problem during her husband's presidency was the Vietnam War's overshadowing of his administration's domestic programs.

"What was red meat to Lyndon's abilities and his agenda and desires were in the fields of health and education and equal rights," she said.

"He'd repeat over and over the phrase about the only war this nation wants to wage is the war against poverty, ignorance and disease and he really took overwhelming pleasure in prosecuting that war," she said.

Barges, rig 'just look like toys'

Oil drilling rig drains lake

United Press International
JEFFERSON ISLAND, La. — It looked like somebody had pulled the plug in a giant bathtub — except it was drilling rigs, boats, barges and trees that were swirling down the drain.

The surrealistic scene was created Thursday when an oil drilling rig under contract to Texaco Inc. punched through the top of a salt mine 1,200 feet below the surface of Lake Peigneur, a 1½-square-mile brackish lake that is a spawning ground for shrimp and other forms of marine life.

The 3-foot-deep coastal lake quickly drained and turned into a giant mud flat, while a growing whirlpool sucked water through canals from nearby bayous and Vermilion Bay.

No one was injured, but seven workers on the rig and 50 miners had to flee as water rushed in. Some 15 families and about 300 to 500 mine employees were evacuated from the island later as the land cracked and crumbled.

Two fishermen, Leonce Viator and his nephew, Timmy Dore, were nearly sucked into the pit.

"I thought it was the world coming to an end," Viator said. "Before we got on the bank, we seen barges and boats rushing to that hole ... The water was all in a circle and it was like a whirlpool and everything was going in there — trees, dirt, everything just rushing out there."

Viator said he and Dore tied their boat to a tree and ran ashore.

"We looked back at us and there goes that tree into that swirling water," he said.

Greenhouses and a visitors' center collapsed at Rip Van Winkle's Live Oak Gardens, a scenic garden tourist attraction that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Susan White, news director at KANE radio, flew over the lake late Thursday and said she was astonished.

"It was awesome," Mrs. White said. "It looks like a great big hole in the ground. There are 10 barges, at least one drilling rig and a tugboat in the bottom of it. They just look like toys. There's a waterfall effect coming over one end where the water is being drawn in."

Texaco said the rig had reached a depth of

1,228 feet when it apparently punched through the roof of a cavern in a salt mine operated by Diamond Crystal Salt Co. of St. Charles, Mich.

"Texaco had not been advised of the existence of the (mine) shaft and was not aware of it," said Texaco spokeswoman Brenda Burns. "However, Texaco representatives met with Diamond Crystal representatives before drilling began and discussed proposed location of the well site."

Asked if that meant Texaco blamed Diamond Crystal for the accident, Burns declined further comment.

Dr. Darryl Felder, an aquatic biologist at the University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, said the accident could have a major impact on both the ecology and geology of the seafood-rich area.

Even if the water were pumped out of the salt mine and back into the lake, Felder said it would be very briny and would not support some kinds of marine life as before.

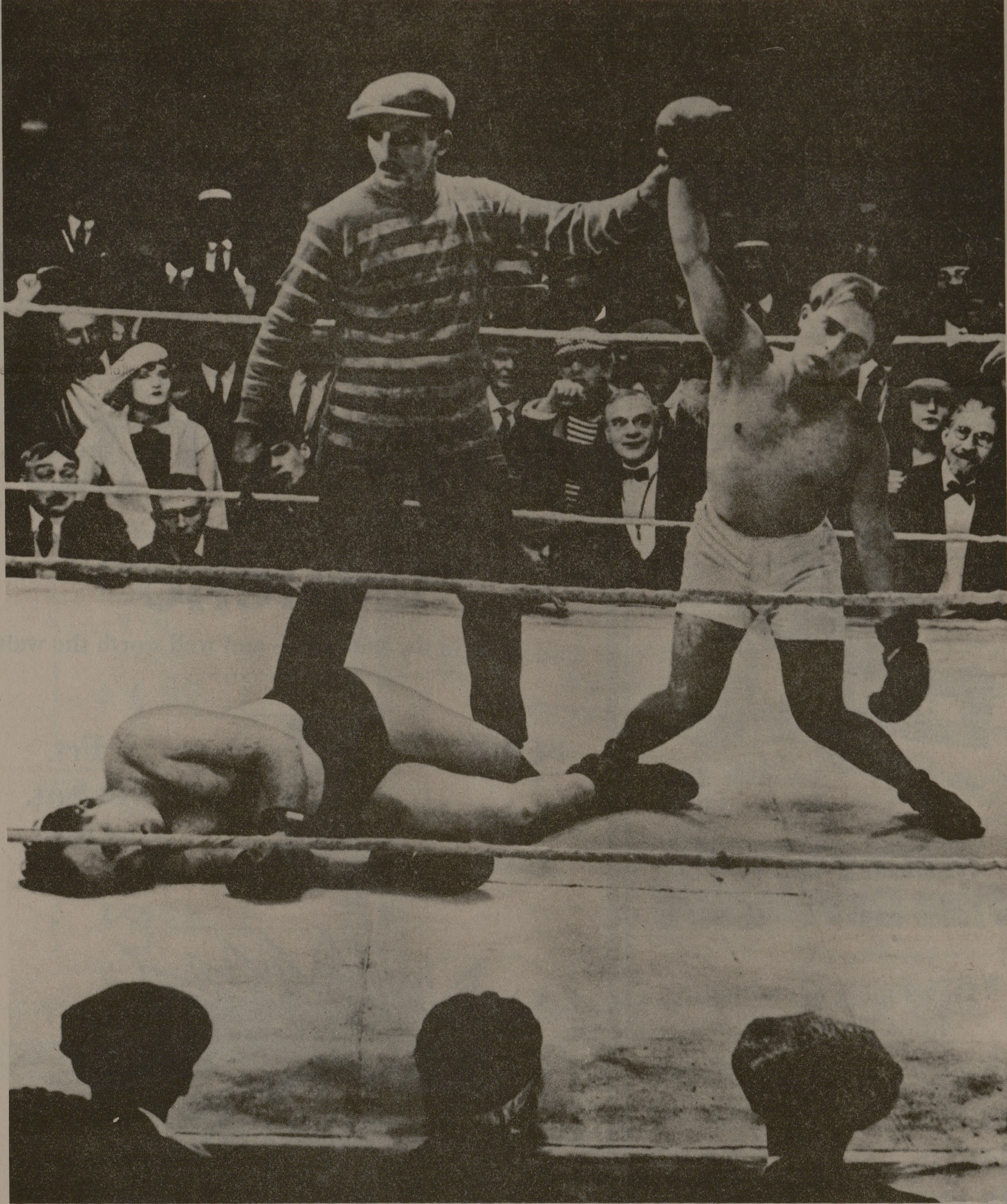
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**Runaway gets
life in cop killing**

United Press International
LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

Edward Eugene Little, a 16-year-old runaway from a shattered Springfield, Ill., home who was convicted of gunning down a police detective, was sentenced to spend the rest of his life in prison with no chance for parole.

A six-man, six-woman jury found Little guilty of capital murder, aggravated robbery and first-degree battery deliberated for five hours Wednesday before returning the verdict.

Little, who showed virtually no emotion during his three-day trial in Pulaski County Circuit Court, showed none when Judge Lower Hendricks read the sentence. He also was given 50 years on the robbery conviction and 20 years for battery.

The youth, who was labeled by psychiatrists as brain damaged during the trial and whose mother testified she had been married six times by his 13th birthday, was convicted of robbing the Little Rock convenience store on May 14, wounding its

clerk and then killing N. McGuire, 23, with four shots from a .357 Magnum.

Police said McGuire stopped Little and David Russell Butler, 17, a Bloomington, Ill., teenager, who were runaways. Butler is to be tried later on similar charges.

Janet Arnold, a Missoula, Mont., store clerk, testified as the prosecution's star witness during the penalty phase of the trial Wednesday. She identified Little as the youth who had charged into the store just 10 hours before McGuire was killed, robbed the cash register and shot her in the stomach.

Defense attorneys Charles and Richard O'Brien committed a state corrections official to describe what happens to a body during electrocution.

Willis McAlister Little's father also testified that the youth was not a trouble maker at home but had run away earlier this year. "I don't know how to cope with a child who care about me," he said.

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