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# The Story Behind The News Story

*By Bob Denham*



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by

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THE STORY BEHIND THE NEWS STORY

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## Prefatory Note

Eric Sevareid once wrote, "a journalist is a jack-of-all trades and master of none--except his own, which is being a jack-of-all," a fitting description of those who have pursued a career in journalism, and a key thought by which the primary aim of this study is based.

As a full-time student at Pembroke State University who had just landed a job with Lumberton's daily newspaper, The Robesonian, my foremost concern as a young and aspiring reporter was to extend my knowledge of the daily operation of a newspaper and to record those findings in a project such as this.

In addition, I wanted to work side by side with professionals who had made journalism a way of life, with the hope of gaining greater insight into the real world of reporting, much different I might add from the reporting of campus activities. I also wanted to vary my experience, to report in as many different areas as feasible, in effect, "to become a jack-of-all trades."

A senior in pursuit of a bachelor's degree in communicative arts, I saw an opportunity to put my classroom instruction into everyday practice. I felt The Robesonian would benefit from my training.

Five months of daily reporting for The Robesonian--from December of 1978 to April of 1979--was set aside as the necessary amount of time needed in grasping a legitimate sample of journalistic procedure. Also, I chose to research the autobiographies of five leading journalist, comparing their humble beginnings in journalism with my own experiences at The Robesonian.

I found it necessary to record my early journalistic experiences, realizing that a portfolio containing detailed accounts of my first published stories would become invaluable in time, possibly enhancing my future in the print medium. Just as importantly, I sought to identify the basic skills and abilities necessary for beginning reporters.

In spite of its academic setting, this material was presented in first person. Any other approach than the journal-style used would have been awkward and uninteresting, since the meat of this project is directly related to "my experiences in journalism."

Finally, only a small percentage of my news stories published in The Robesonian appear on pages 36 through 47. The stories were selected according to their value to this study.

## I. GREEN REPORTERS

It was about 9:15 when the phone rang that cold, February night. I lay outstretched with my feet dangling over the arm of a tiny love seat watching, "ABC's Wednesday Night At The Movies." Jimmy Autry, roommate and sports editor of the daily newspaper, The Robesonian, leaned back in his chair chomping on a bowl of popcorn.

I had no idea that Paul O'Connor, news editor of The Robesonian, was on the other end of the line.

"Bob, have you been listening to your scanner?" Before I could say anything, he blurted out bits and pieces of information about a chain of fires sweeping Robeson County. "There's been a rash of fires set around the county and police think it may have something to do with the Indian beatings."

"You've got to be kidding," I said, dreading the inevitable assignment. It was warm in the three-bedroom apartment where I lived, and besides, I was enjoying the movie.

"There's a fire somewhere between Maxton and Rowland. Get your camera, get a good picture and a story. Call the dispatcher and he'll give you directions. You'd better hurry."

I contacted the sheriff's office and got directions. Yet I was still confused about the whereabouts of the blaze. At least I knew it was at some crossroads, and I should turn left somewhere in Maxton.

Nearly an hour later I found the fire or what was left of it.

It was the last of 19 blazes believed to have been deliberately set during the early evening. There had been no injuries and only abandoned buildings had been burned to the ground. I took the picture on the site of the Sinclair Farm, a Route 1, Rowland address. I still didn't know where I was and, to this day, couldn't find the place again even on a \$100 wager.

I pieced together the information I had gathered at the fire site, talked with the dispatcher from the Pembroke Police Department, called surrounding fire departments the next morning and picked up some additional facts off the wire service before banging out the top front-page story of the February 7 edition of The Robesonian. (See page 36, story A)

This was not your everyday, typical story, yet in the five months I reported for The Robesonian, the fire episode was one of several encounters I had with the unusual, thanks to O'Connor who had talked Jack Sharpe, editor and publisher, into hiring me just after Christmas, 1978.

I met O'Connor the fall semester of my senior year at Pembroke State University. He had a master's degree in journalism from the University of Minnesota and, on the side, taught a news editing and typography course at PSU. I signed up for his course a few months prior to my reporting for work at The Robesonian.

I was new in the field of journalism, my only experience coming the year before when I had served as editor of the university newspaper, The Pine Needle. So I was somewhat startled when O'Connor approached me one afternoon in early December of my senior year, and asked me what I thought about working for the

Lumberton newspaper. He must have liked my classwork; in fact, only one other student, Tom Harding, received an "A" for the course.

My exciting and instructive beginning in news reporting, as I have discovered, corresponded to the early experiences of five men who made a name for themselves in the field of journalism--Eric Sevareid, Henry L. Mencken, Lincoln Steffens, Dan Rather and Tom Wicker--whose early beginnings in newspaper, or in radio, as Rather's case, provided the framework for their careers.

Just as I found, each of the five noted in his autobiography, that it was a time when they realized the importance of objective and fair reporting, and that it was just as essential to find the correct spelling of a last<sup>cc</sup>name as it was to report the findings of the city's most controversial subject.

All five wrote of similar problems and successes, especially in police, sports, and investigative reporting, much of which paralleled my own experiences at The Robesonian.

Certainly, for me, my stay at The Robesonian was unforgettable.

I was first assigned to the police beat where I was primarily responsible for checking sheriff and police reports each morning. My findings, which normally included reports of larceny, breaking and entering, arson, charges of careless and reckless driving, driving under the influence and safe movement violations, usually appeared on page 2 in a section entitled, "Off the Blotter." The beat also included writing stories on armed robberies, fatal automobile wrecks, suicides, shootouts, kidnappings, etc....

Covering the police beat, I thought, would have been enough to do. But as I gradually improved my speed for reporting, new



assignments began making their way to my desk. I was assigned to cover nearby St. Pauls and Rowland town meetings during the second week of each month. I was also required to hand in a feature story each week. And I eventually inherited the laborious and tedious task of reporting district court news, a chore which no one wanted and which, unfortunately, fell to the newest member of the news staff.

O'Connor, my intermediate supervisor, was always handing out other assignments too, once throwing me into the midst of a cocaine conspiracy trial already two days in session, and even worse, sending me out to cover a meeting sponsored by the state highway department that not even the most concerned citizen would find interesting. But it was all a part of the job.

It seemed to me that O'Connor took a special interest in my work. He always edited my copy, and when he had time, explained how I should have handled a particular story differently or how it could have been written better. O'Connor was gungho, a journalist through and through. And he often commented that journalism is a profession like that of medicine and law. He considered himself a professional and rightly so. He recently landed a job as city government reporter for the prestigious Raleigh Times.

When I had time, which wasn't often, I helped Jimmy cover sports, mostly basketball and, to a lesser degree, baseball. In the spring I found myself covering the state 1A baseball championship game.

The paper, under 15,000 circulation, did not hire photographers as such. All reporters learned how to handle a camera, and in essence, all were the paper's photographers. Not only were beginning reporters taught how to take pictures, but they learned the

developing and printing process as well.

O'Connor and City Editor Bill Norment, a professional photographer in his own right, taught me the basics of the trade, and I was soon taking respectable shots. I had never used a 35 millimeter before, so the whole process was new to me, except of course, pushing the button which takes the photograph. That was all a Kodak ever required.

It wasn't long before I began receiving assignments from Bill to take pictures of local high school activities and groups, social happenings, the full range of small-time stuff. I was called on so often that I was the only reporter on the staff required to carry a camera with me. The rest of the crew had to check out one before using it, including my boss, O'Connor.

I soon acquired a reputation for being at the right place at the right time. And unfortunately for a couple of armed robbers who had knocked off a convenience store in Fairmont early one Saturday night, my exploits with a camera eventually led to their arrest.

The news staff alternated working the Saturday night shift and, on this particular evening, when the armed robbery occurred, I was busily writing obits and rewriting a number of other stories from area newspapers that held local interest.

It was about 7:30 when Bill, working the city desk, suddenly motioned to me. He was listening to the paper's scanner located on a wall cabinet just above his head.

The police station had just dispatched a call to patrolling cars that the Kay-Ron convenience store in Fairmont had been held up by three black males, one carrying a gun.

I grabbed my pad and was out the door in an instant, heading

for that sparsely populated town located some 12 miles south of Lumberton. About three miles down the road, county deputies had already set up a road block, directing vehicles to the side of the road that fit the description of the getaway car. Intrigued by this sort of action which reminded me of old cops' and robbers' movies, I pulled off the side of the highway, unpacked my trusty camera and proceeded, at random, to snap shots of anything that moved.

As I wandered aimlessly about taking shots of the two law officials working the center of the road checking licenses and matching license plate numbers with vehicle registration, I noticed a car carrying four black males forced to pull off the main highway. Deputies began an intense search of the car and the occupants inside. There seemed nothing unusual about the investigation since several other automobiles had been handled in much the same way. So it wasn't instinct or a suspicious hunch which prompted me to take a number of photographs of the car.

I left, and proceeded to Fairmont, took a few pictures of the front of the store and interviewed the store manager. I returned to the office with the film and the story.

Within the hour the sheriff's office had called Bill and told him that a "picture-taker" from the newspaper might have gotten a photograph of the car used in the robbery.

I had been home for about 30 minutes when Bill called and told me to hurry back to the office with the negatives.

When I returned, three deputy cars, two highway patrol vehicles and two unmarked cars, all with their blue lights flashing, sat parked in front of the building.

Local law officials had allowed the suspects to slip out

from under their noses. And now there was only the hope that a picture of the car and the suspects was there among my negatives.

As I walked through the double doors of the building and over to Bill's desk, I could feel a hundred eyes following my every step. I promptly handed the negative over to Bill who quickly held it up to the light. "That's the car," said a lawman. "Is there a license plate number?"

I had taken two shots of the car, one from the side and the other from the rear. Although the license plate number had been washed out by the flash on the 5 X 7 print, Bill could still make out the number on the negative with the help of a magnifying glass. (See photos on page 49.)

The car was found the next day, abandoned.

Sevareid, Mencken, Steffens, Rather and Wicker each write of a varied experience in their early reporting days. None found it an easy task. Journalism demands diligence and discipline, acquired only in doing.

The first few months were especially trying for me. Sometimes it would take hours to write what I now consider a simple story. Information was often times hard to acquire unless sources had been developed, and my unfamiliarity with the town and the surroundings many times slowed the gathering of facts. But eventually the work became less difficult to reckon with, despite the daily deadlines which all reporters must push to meet.

Sevareid wrote in his autobiography, "Not So Wild A Dream," that "a journalist is a jack-of-all-trades and master of none--except his own, which is being a jack-of-all."

Like him, I knew I was learning a little bit about everything, but, I thought, not enough about anything. I bounced

around in my assignments writing on a wide variety of topics. Sevareid, by comparison, had a much narrower experience.

Sevareid was 18 and, like me, in college when he began his journalism career working as a copy boy for the Minneapolis Journal. Six weeks later the Journal hired him as a reporter at \$15 a week. Sevareid was ecstatic over the promotion. "To me at eighteen it was the most remarkable, most fascinating of all human institutions, a daily newspaper, peopled with those glamorous, incomparable men known as reporters and editors, actually there, alive, touchable, knowable."

It was in the field of religion that Sevareid made his debut, putting together each Friday a page of copy with story briefs of Sunday's events and church notices. On occasion, he would interview clergymen, among them, evangelist Billy Sunday. "Men of the church were most demanding and insatiable in seeking publicity. It wasn't long before I was involved in a controversy with pastors who demanded running photographs of themselves which they had sent in. It was good training in basic diplomacy," wrote Sevareid.

In his autobiography, Newspaper Days, H. L. Mencken says "it was sort of a celestial call" which prompted his involvement in newspapers.

Like Sevareid, Mencken was 18 when he joined the print corps. Following the death of his father in 1899, Mencken began reporting for the Morning Herald, one of two Baltimore dailies at that time.

For several weeks Mencken received no compensation for his work, that is, until he was assigned to the Southern police district in South Baltimore where he replaced an older man with "small ability and no diligence."

My opportunity at The Robesonian had come in a similar way.

My fortune at landing a job at the Lumberton daily had been the result of a complacent police beat reporter who had become relaxed in his duties. He was told to either get his "act together" or leave. He left.

Before his South Baltimore appointment, Mencken had received a number of small assignments such as the installation of new evangelical pastors, meetings of wheelmen, minor political rallies, concerts and funerals.

However, it was a horse stealing which became the subject for Mencken's first story. The paper's city editor, Max Ways, had instructed Mencken to go to Gavanstown to see if anything was happening. The result was a 45-word paragraph which Mencken says, took him ten minutes to write. "A horse, a buggy, and several sorts of harness, valued in all about \$250, were stolen last night from the stable of Howard Quinlan, near Kinsville. The county police are at work on the case, but so far no trace of either thieves or booty has been found," wrote Mencken, whose story appeared the next morning.

Often, a young and aspiring journalist is inspired and influenced by someone like O'Connor who takes a special interest in him. Ways was that person to Mencken. It wasn't long after Mencken began working for the Herald that Ways prepared a list of do's and don't's for his trainee:

"Never trust a cop, verify his report; always try to get in early copy; be careful about dates, names, ages, addresses and figures of every sort; keep in mind the danger of libel; don't be surprised if asked to get information from The Sun (Baltimore's other newspaper); you can get it if you dig hard enough; any

Herald reporter who is worth a damn can write rings around a Sun reporter."

The best educated of the five journalists was Lincoln Steffens who graduated from Berkeley, and then travelled to Europe where he studied at Berlin, Heidelberg and Leipzig universities. In The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens, he tells of the discipline all beginning reporters face, the drudgery of learning to conform to news style, a brief and concise way of writing, while maintaining speed and accuracy.

Until the last five years all news stories were composed on a typewriter. And conforming to news style also meant editing those typed stories using copy-editing symbols. However, like most dailies, The Robesonian began replacing the typewriter with Visual Display Terminals, small-screen contraptions with a connecting keyboard that eliminate the need for using copy-editing symbols and also, unfortunately, jeopardize the employment of those who work as typesetters. The VDT is able to switch paragraphs, correct misspellings and reconstruct sentences all inside its computer mind. The result is displayed as corrected and automatically transferred to a disc where the copy is prepared for layout.

After applying as an editorial writer for Century Magazine, Steffens was eventually hired as a reporter for New York's Evening Post. It was there that Steffens was "tried out on space. I didn't know what that meant and I didn't care," said Steffens. "I had a job."

Steffen's first assignment happened by accident. He was sitting in the news room, anticipating that big moment when he would be called on to report, when Henry Wright, city editor,

walked in looking for one of his veteran reporters. Each was gone on assignment and only Steffens remained. Reluctantly, Wright sent Steffens on his first reporting detail instructing him to gather all the facts he could about a stockbroker who had been missing for some time. "An assignment! I was to report. I darted out the office and into the elevator," said Steffens.

After a lengthy interrogation with the missing broker's partner, Steffens returned to the office and began banging out his first news story. "I labored till the city editor darted out to see what I was doing," said Steffens. "He picked up one of the rewrites and said, 'enough.' I waited for the paper to come off the press but my paragraph wasn't in it. I searched again and again. I didn't care about the money; I felt my standing as a reporter was at stake."

However, Steffen's article did appear in the morning edition, but more neatly and briefly stated than had been originally written, said Steffens. "My reporting was all right; my writing was not."

In 1949, a young reporter by the name of Tom Wicker, who is now a nationally-known syndicated columnist, and an editor of The New York Times, landed his first job in nearby Aberdeen, N.C. writing for The Sandhill Citizen, a weekly established in 1932 by H. Clifton Blue.

Wicker, a graduate of the University of North Carolina with an AB in journalism, not only wrote for the Citizen but sold and designed the layout of advertisement. "Actually my lowest priority was to collect and 'write up' such news as there was," said Wicker.

In his short stint with the Aberdeen paper, however, Wicker



witnessed court action involving "murders, manslaughters, vagrancies, seductions, desertions, auto offense, assaults, rapes, batteries, break-ins, reckless endangerments, etc." Arising out of that courtroom medley of sorts was a divorce case which Wicker had written with a humorous slant.

The following day, the woman in the case, approached him with this question, "why do you think you had the right to make fun of me in your paper?"

"I have never forgotten that question--and I still can't answer it," said Wicker in his autobiography, On Press. "Accurate as it was, it had nevertheless exploited human unhappiness for the amusement or titillation of others...I missed the story I should have written. This is one of the besetting sins of journalism--sensationalism at the expense of the dignity and truth of the common human experience."

It was only a few months later that Wicker moved to Lumberton and The Robesonian where he was hired, 30 years before my time, as a general reporter and telegraph editor eventually working his way to the sports editor position.

In many respects, the rules and principles governing journalism in the print media hold true for television and radio. So it isn't surprising to learn that much of Dan Rather's journalistic success in television can be attributed to the many hours he toiled in learning newspaper fundamentals while in college and under the close scrutiny of Professor High Cunningham.

Mrs. Grace Gibson, an assistant professor in the Communicative Arts department, was my journalistic inspiration, the stimulating tug that urged me along the way. She held and still holds an undying interest and concern for her students. Fortunately,

I was one of them. Her encouragement and invaluable assistance during the Needle days led to what I believe, of course, to be one of the finest student newspapers ever to circulate on the PSU campus. She wasn't an official staff advisor and didn't want to be, but she was always there answering questions concerning editorial judgment, typography, unethical and libelous practices, but mostly just assisting by checking for newspaper basics in style and content.

It was in 1950 at Sam Houston State Teachers College that Rather, an incoming freshman, met Cunningham, a graduate of the Missouri School of Journalism with a master's degree.

Rather attributes to Cunningham much of his early success in journalism. In his autobiography, The Camera Never Blinks, Rather recalls his former professor's hard-nosed teaching practices. "It was not uncommon to have to rewrite a story as many as a dozen times before it suited him," said Rather. "He would say, 'I want to know exactly what was said. Treat it fairly. Write it fast. Get it right and get it fast.'"

Rather's first jobs in the media were a result of Cunningham's nearby contacts. He worked as a correspondent for the local Huntsville Item and collected \$10 a month stringing for the wire services. But it was the vacant slot he filled at radio station KSAM, Huntsville, that boosted Rather on his way. "I was working at a station where nothing was closed to me. I could do anything I was big enough to try. This led to some comic crises, but it was the richest kind of training."

"It was the kind of place where you could make a lot of mistakes. At one point, in the same week, I was broadcasting the junior high, high school, college and black high school games.

I did not lack for air time," Rather said.

The station was owned by a Baptist minister, Pastor Ted Lott, who often ran religious programming. KSAM was a 250-watt station, the lowest allowed by the FCC. "It was a three-room shack with a tower in the back," said Rather. He was usually the only one there from sign-on to sign-off.

One evening, Rather decided to put on a long playing Gospel preaching record and head down to the Dairy Bar where he often went for refreshment and a break. "I knew I had to get back by 6:30 to make small talk."

However, an attractive lady who was working there, kept Rather a bit longer than he had intended to stay. Twenty minutes later the phone rang and on the other end was a screaming Pastor Lott.

"'Young man,' he roared. Have you heard my radio station any time lately?" "No sir," replied Rather. "I, well, got detained here."

"'Well, you get your butt where you can hear it. Then you get back to the station....fix it....and then you're fired.'"

Rather rushed out to the truck and turned on the radio. The voice of Lott's brother, also a preacher, thundered loud and clear. "Go to Hell," it roared. "Go to Hell." It had been playing for 20 minutes, said Rather. "The record was stuck. Anyone who has ever lived in a small town can appreciate the impact of twenty solid minutes of "Go to Hell" on the local radio station."

## II. POLICE BEAT

Nearly 1,800 serious offenses, including murder, aggravated assault, burglary, breaking and entering, larceny and auto theft were reported in Lumberton during 1978. That's a very high rate of serious crime for a small city with a population of less than 18,000.

Only four days remained in 1978 when I began work for The Robesonian. Like Mencken, Rather and Wicker, I was first assigned to the police beat. My primary responsibility each morning was to drive to the police station and sheriff's office, look over their records of the previous day's activities and report my findings in The Robesonian under the headline "Off the Blotter."

After only one week of writing for "Off the Blotter," it didn't take a brilliant mind to realize that Lumberton was indeed a crime-riddled small city, North Carolina's own "little Chicago," if you will. My first day on the job, it took the entire morning, from 8 a.m. to noon, to wade through the reports of larcenies, breakings and enterings, arson, traffic accidents, shootings, and rapes, all everyday occurrences.

It wasn't long afterward that I soon began gathering blotter material at 7 in the morning compensating for inexperience and a tendency to be slow. Deadline for the blotter was 9:30, and O'Connor didn't like its being turned in much later. Fortunately, over the next few weeks my speed increased along with a better understanding of police jargon and practices which, inevitably, made the job easier.

Learning to decipher the legal abbreviations which flooded the offence reports helped. For example, AOF meant assault on

females, BE-breaking and entering and AWDdWITK for assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill. DUI, driving under the influence of alcohol, was one of those terms used on reports and in everyday police jargon.

There was nothing really difficult in working up the blotter, although it wasn't long after taking over the assignment that I had a run-in with H. C. Britt, Lumberton's police chief. He pointed out that my findings were reported much too specifically and often caused problems for detectives and investigating officers, who said the detailed account of crime would only benefit the offender and anyone else contemplating committing these offenses. Too much information was detrimental he said, and O'Connor agreed.

Another problem arose and with it a realization that in order to survive in this business, a reporter must be willing to separate his emotions from his work. It's almost imperative that he construct a forcefield of some sort, one that guards against the appeal for sympathy. As cruel as it may sound, I found it necessary to harden those emotions, to appear arrogant if necessary, whatever it took to get the facts and report the truth.

I had just returned from making my regular morning rounds and was preparing to type the blotter section when I received a phone call from a middle-aged housewife.

"Are you the one who does the blotter?" she asked, her voice shaking.

"Yes, I am. Can I help you?" I replied, not realizing the importance of my offer.

"My name is Mary Jones-fictitious name-and, well, I was wondering if my name is in the blotter."

I walked over to my desk and began checking my notes. About

halfway down the first page under reported offenses her name appeared. She had been picked up by the police for shoplifting. Found on her person was a blouse, a pair of stockings and a set of earrings.

"Uh, yes mam, uh, your name was on an arrest sheet for shoplifting," I said.

"Sir, please don't put my name in the newspaper," she pleaded. "My husband and children don't know anything about this, and if they find out I don't know what I will do." Her voice was becoming very thin by now.

"Well, mam, I don't know if I can do that."

For the next five minutes, Mrs. Jones cried and begged me not to report her arrest in the blotter. I had just about conceded to her wish when O'Connor overheard my conversation and intuitively grasped what was happening. He motioned me over to his desk and asked me what the problem was. When I explained, he quickly rendered a verdict. "Print it," he said. "You've got to. If you do her a favor then you've got to do it for everyone else and we can't do that. I'm sorry. Even if she was my own mother, I'd report it."

Picking up that phone to tell that decision to an emotionally-drained and pathetic woman was one of the hardest things I have ever had to do. I simply didn't have the heart to tell her I couldn't help. But I stiffened my upper lip anyway and explained that if I left her name out I would have to do the same for the others. Somehow I don't think she ever quite understood my position. She was still pleading her case when I had to hang up.

With each passing morning, the blotter required less and less time eventually becoming only a minor chore. Every now and

then a hot news item would head the blotter material, for example, the story of an 18-year-old Fairmont girl who committed suicide by holding a .38 caliber pistol to her heart and pulling the trigger and a 7-year-old Maxton boy who was shot in the face with a .410 shotgun by his 9-year-old brother after the two were reportedly playing cowboys and Indians.

The blotter, for the most part, contained very short, concise pieces of information with no item containing more than four or five paragraphs. Yet it was often through my plundering of police records that I found more important news items that merited much more space and time. My study of the records led to the following headlined stories: Child Dies In Accident, High Speed Chase Ends In Wreck and Arrest, Two Escapees Captured, Stake-Out Brings Surprise Pick-Up, Iowa Man Faces Charges In Shooting Incident, Kidnapping Laid to Shoot-Out Suspects and Trooper Finds Own Wife Dead In I-95 Accident. (See page 47)

My first news story appeared in the Dec. 27, 1978 edition, the day after beginning at The Robesonian. It actually fell in my lap. O'Connor and I were returning from lunch and had almost reached the newspaper office when a late-model Maverick shot past us followed by the flashing blue light of a highway patrol car. O'Connor whipped his Honda around, and we pursued the action. But it ended only a block away, in front of the county jailhouse, where the driver had rammed his vehicle into the county jail building. It made for an interesting picture which O'Connor took and which appeared with the story. The article ran on page 2 under the headline, "Driver Arrested After Ramming Vehicle Into County Jail Building." (See page 37, story B)

I worked only five minutes on this lead: "A high-speed

chase through West Lumberton ended Tuesday afternoon when a Morganton man rammed his '72 Ford Maverick into the cement wall facing the Robeson County Jail."

The beat also included the reporting of fires. And whenever it was possible, I would race to the scene and get a picture of the blaze usually having been alerted by the office scanner which ran continuously. The largest fire I ever saw was the one which engulfed the former Philadelphus school early New Year's day. The 50-year-old two-story brick building, which was eventually destroyed, had been closed since 1970. The article appeared as the top story of the January 1 edition and, much to my dissatisfaction, ran without my by-line. (See page 38, C)

Mencken, Rather and Wicker each describes his brief encounters with police reporting. Baltimore's Morning Herald first assigned Mencken to the southern police district where he spent only a few weeks reporting assaults, fires and drownings. He was then promoted to the central district, the premier area, journalistically speaking. According to Mencken, the new assignment included harder material like the reporting of murders, assaults and batteries, street accidents, robberies and suicides. The first suicide Mencken covered included a young girl who, says Mencken, had trusted a preacher's son too far and then swallowed poison. "She looked almost angelic lying on her parlor floor. It was my first ride with the cops in a patrol-wagon," he wrote.

At the local hospital, Mencken writes that he saw legs amputated, arms torn off, throats cut and eyes gouged out. "It was shocking for a while, but no more."

And on July 28, 1899, Mencken was only 18 when he saw his first hanging in the yard of the city jail. A large gathering



of journalists attended the event that featured four hangings.

"The quadruple hangings were the fancy goods," he wrote.

Rather's internship was much shorter covering only executions at the state prison in Huntsville, Texas for radio station KJAM.

It was in 1949 that Wicker, reporting for The Sandhills Citizen, witnessed court actions involving crimes as brutal as murders and manslaughters as well as the lesser offenses of batteries and break-ins.

The five months I worked the police beat enabled me to see close-up the violence which saturates the coverage area of The Robesonian. The constant reporting of murders, traffic fatalities and suicides, all those stories relating to death begin, in time, to deaden the senses. As a matter of necessity, I learned not to let it bother me to write such stories. In order to cope with such a constant stream of disaster, victims and criminals began to lose their identity; they became just names with ages and addresses.

### III. WHISTLEBLOWER

A Lumberton radio station described it as "the hoopla surrounding the case of the city and the church parking<sup>6</sup> lot." A local businessman was outraged over the incident, and members of the legal community questioned its legality. The city council refused to take the blame while the city's public work director sat in the hot seat squirming for a way out. And the city's mayor wavered back and forth in his interpretation of the incidents. (See pages 39 & 40, stories D & E)

It was my first and only chance at investigative reporting while at The Robesonian. And like Wicker in his early days, I was fortunate to be exposed to this rarest of training.

Members of The Robesonian news staff said it was the biggest story of the year, maybe of several years. And somehow in the midst of all the confusion, I, the inexperienced reporter still a student at FSU, suddenly became as much the center of attention as the story itself.

Public Works Director W. C. "Red" Baxley had authorized the use of the city employees and equipment during regular hours one morning in March to paint division lines and clean up at The Christian Missionary Alliance Church parking lot.

I had taken a photograph of Earl Williams, city sign technician, operating a parking lot striper at the church, Wednesday, March 7. The picture along with article I had written about the city's work ran in Thursday's edition as the lead story.

The article prompted city-wide controversy and inevitably raised this question: Could the city, without charge, perform such services on private property and thus take business away

from local contractors? "The city is taking our tax money and hiring people to give me competition in my business," Horace Britt, owner of Britt's Lakewood Enterprises, was quoted as saying. O'Connor, like Britt, obviously didn't think it was right. I can still remember his initial reaction over what one city councilman described as "Lumberton's own little Watergate." "We got the city now," he said laughing at the prospects of a big story. He was the happiest that day I had ever seen him.

Why was The Robesonian's newest and greenest reporter assigned to a story of this magnitude? First of all, O'Connor worked very closely with me offering countless and invaluable suggestions which strengthened the story. Secondly, it was my story; I had broken it, and I was entitled to report it. Actually, I didn't get it, it got me. In either case, it was mine. I happened to be in the right place at the right time.

To this day, no one, except, of course, O'Connor and a few other staff members, ever knew how I had happened onto the story and the picture.

Councilman Dr. E.S. Turner said during a city council meeting the Monday after the story appeared: "I can't see how that picture taker got there on the scene." And at WAGR, editorial commentator Al Kahn told his listening audience a week later, "We do wonder one thing, though. How did it happen that the paper's photographer came upon the scene to take a picture? There was no parade...no trumpets blaring...Just a man operating a small machine in a noncongested area. An ideal subject for an innocent picture? Maybe." (See page 43)

It all started with a phone call to The Robesonian Tuesday afternoon, March 6.

I was at my desk working on a feature story that Jerry Spivey, another PSU student working part-time at the paper, and I had been assigned to do. Jerry was at the front of the office reading the sports page, however.

The phone rang. The receptionist walked over to my desk and said that there was a man on the other end who wanted to talk to a male reporter, that it didn't matter who he was. I was busy typing, so I hollered to Jerry to take the line. He didn't hear me. I hollered again, still no answer. So out of frustration, I picked up the phone. "Bob Denham. May I help you?"

Awaiting for what probably seemed an eternity to him was the man most responsible for what was about to take place. Tom Wicker, in his autobiography, On Press, would have referred to him as a "whistleblower," an informer who spills the goods on someone or something. The man on the phone would tell me not only what the city was planning to do but when and where it would happen. I told only O'Connor the name of my inside source. Because my source prefers to retain his anonymity, I shall call him "Striper," a city employee.

"There's a lot of dirty work going on," said Striper. "... The city is going to be striping the Missionary Alliance Church parking lot tomorrow morning. It's not fair to Lumberton or the taxpayers. City parking lots need painting. The last time they were painted were five years ago."

"Well, what time will all this happen?" I asked.

"If you go by about 9 o'clock, you'll be able to take a picture. Listen, I got to go."

"Can I call you back another time somewhere at home maybe?" Striper quickly gave me his home number and then hung up.

I knew I had something big; I just didn't know quite where to start.

Striper had spoken in a very nervous way, and somehow I knew that when I began asking questions I would get some very apprehensive answers.

I did the only thing I knew to do. I told O'Connor everything. He was still at the office when I finished talking with Striper. "Take the picture tomorrow morning and then let's wait and see what happens," O'Connor said.

The next morning I was at the Alliance church at 9 o'clock sharp, with a camera. Parked just a few hundred feet behind the church was a yellow city pickup truck. Two men worked the parking lot, one, a middle-aged white man operating a parking lot striper, and the other, a young black man, picking up debris.

I walked over to the man operating the striper and asked him his name and what he and his partner were doing. He said his name was Earl Williams and that Mr. Baxley, public works director, had assigned him and Herman Thompson to clean up and stripe the church parking lot. He didn't seem to mind the questions, and when I asked him if he cared if I took a picture he said, "No, go ahead." It soon became apparent that the city certainly wasn't trying to hide anything.

Baxley told me later that day that Elmer Williams, a deacon of the church, had asked to borrow the city's striper. Baxley said he told Williams he would rather send city men along with the equipment to operate it. What Baxley did not know, or so he says, was that a local businessman had quoted the church a price for the parking lot work nearly three months earlier. If Baxley did not know, as he contended, then Williams certainly

wasn't about to volunteer the information. Baxley would say later that he had known of the quotes he would have referred the request to the council.

I immediately returned to the office and developed the pictures. I had taken about 35 different shots from all angles, two rolls in all, to make sure I had a good picture. I didn't want to blow the assignment and have our readers wonder if the whole incident had been falsely precipitated.

O'Connor then told me a number of places to call and that I should see Baxley right after lunch and get his reaction. Interview Baxley? I hadn't really thought about it before. A lump formed in my throat while sickly anticipation grabbed my stomach.

"Can't I just call him up?" I pleaded. "Maybe you would like to interview him. You would do a better job," I insisted. Nothing doing. It wouldn't work. I would have to go.

Between the time of that conversation with O'Connor and my anticipated interview with Baxley, the public works director himself called after getting wind of what was going on. And he didn't like it in the least.

"Denham, you got a call on line two," said O'Connor with a devilish smile. "It's Baxley."

I could have croaked. I felt my blood rush to my head. There was no denying it, I was scared to death.

Baxley said he wanted to see me immediately. Again I pleaded with O'Connor. "Aw, come on, Paul, don't you want to go with me? It'll be interesting," I said trying to disguise my fear. But O'Connor knew that, and he also realized the importance of my making the trip on my own. He was right. I'll never

forget it.

The public works building was only about five minutes away by car, hardly enough time to muster any courage. The moment I walked into the building, the secretary asked for my name and then promptly told me Mr. Baxley was waiting for me in his office. It was at that moment that I decided I wouldn't let this scare me. I pulled out my pen and writing pad and walked into his office prepared to write down every word he had to say, good or bad.

Needless to say, Baxley didn't look the least bit happy over the present circumstances. Earl Williams, the man I had seen earlier that morning, was also there, obviously also unhappy. Williams, who had worked 15 years for the city, was eventually relieved of his normal duties and assigned to driving a truck picking up treelimits. I felt somehow responsible for that demotion.

Baxley was boiling mad, perspiration dripping off his forehead. "It's real good public relations. We would do anything to help the church," Baxley said. "It's helping to promote Christianity, and if we all did this the whole world would be better off."

When I returned to the office, O'Connor had already spoken with Mayor Clifford Bullard. "The City of Lumberton does cooperate with churches, civic and service organizations in helping to secure equipment not available through private enterprise," he said, but he also admitted that the city should not compete with private businesses.

A week later we reported that Lumberton Attorney Mitchell Baker III had been asked by the mayor to study the legality of

the public works department's spending public money on private property.

"If our policies are outside of state law, we want to bring them within state law," said Bullard.

Almost three months later when I decided to leave The Robesonian to attend summer school at FSU, neither the mayor nor the city council had done anything to correct the parking lot issue. We had reported Bullard as saying that he didn't expect the council to come to a quick decision on the equipment use policy. And he was right.

I suppose a third article was in order, but I lacked the time and experience to continue any follow-up action. I had my regular assignments to contend with plus attending FSU as a full-time student.

In the eight days that it took to gather the facts and investigate the truths, I learned the importance of taking careful notes, of not taking what anyone said at face value. It wasn't unusual for the mayor to tell me one thing and then contradict himself and tell O'Connor something else. And Baxley I especially mistrusted. His own employees I learned, suspected him of stealing pipe lines from the city.

I did attempt to gather information for a third story but quickly ran into a dead end. Since the likely people to interview were city employees, it was to that group I directed my questions. But the day after the second story appeared, no one would talk to me. They were all afraid and offered the same explanation. "If I ever talk to you again I could be fired."

I doubt Baxley ever worried over the parking lot issue itself. I believe what Baxley feared most was an investigation



of his department resulting from the negative publicity he had received in the media. The mayor's appointment of an attorney to the case indicated the seriousness of the issue and that a revision of a policy governing the lending of city equipment and men was in order, that is, if the city ever had such a policy, which no one was ever quite sure of, and which had not been decided at the time of my departure from The Robesonian.

The Robesonian was firm in its stand despite pressure from the city to have the stories canned. I believe The Robesonian acted in the highest professional manner; after all the role of the newspaper is to serve as a watchdog of governmental activities, an idea of freedom conceived by our founding fathers.

As a journalist it was my responsibility to report, whether good or bad, the facts about the controversy. The reader has a right to know. It's my job to keep them informed of those governmental activities he has no other way of knowing about.

Tom Wicker had a similar experience in his early days with the Sandhills Citizen. Robert S. Mobbs, an Aberdeen doctor, had informed Wicker that a small nearby chemical plant was producing a fallout of dust hazardous to the health of the workers and their families. "I had no real sense, in 1949, of the volatility and importance of the environmental and industrial safety issues, and I incautiously reported Dr. Mobb's charges, along with the avuncular denials of the plant management," said Wicker.

Mobbs had acquired enough substantiated evidence to indicate that DDT and other insecticides might be harmful to human beings. Mobbs believed that the death of a local three-year-old girl had been caused by fallout dust blown out of the plant into the town by a large fan.

In December of 1948, Mobbs had published in the Journal of the American Medical Association an experiment which subjected rabbits to lindane dust. The rabbits died revealing evidence of "tissue change similar to that found in the dead child."

Mobbs soon became known around Aberdeen as a zealot, a man who made trouble. Townspeople said he had given their town and one of its industries a bad name.

"Dr. Mobbs' charges against Taylor Chemical was my first encounter with a so-called 'whistle-blower'...His treatment in Aberdeen illustrates as well as anything the frequent necessity for whistle-blowers to hide their identities-to become 'anonymous sources' protected by a reporter from the vengeance of their superiors or neighbors or competitors or peers," Wicker wrote in On Press.

## IV. EXTRA, EXTRA

I've always been a sports fan. In high school I lettered in four sports-baseball, football, basketball and track, having inherited my athletic abilities and interests, I suppose, from my father, a sports enthusiast.

So it was natural that sports writing would interest me. I hadn't been at The Robesonian a week when I asked Autry, sports editor, for an assignment. He gladly gave me one looking for almost anyone who would help him cover the 13 high schools in the county. Covering sports events was only done in my leisure. O'Connor reminded me not to let sports interfere with my normal duties.

In all, I wrote up only a handful of basketball and baseball stories, but the work was delightful and refreshing, unlike the police beat which carried with it the dirt and pain of the community.

My first game was in Magnolia where the Trojans were hosting the Hornets of Littlefield, both small Indian schools with enrollments of less than 400. The gym was small, old and cold, filled with Indians, some who looked ready to tussle. Many of the Indian communities in Robeson county literally hate one another. Pembroke and Prospect is probably the most heated of rivalries.

I found a nice spot to watch the game from, about mid-court on the visitors' side, on about the third row. It took awhile to warm up the ice-cold bench, and I feared the bleacher might cave in any moment. It was one of those gyms where the crowd is seated close to the playing floor, a coach's delight. The hollering and enthusiastic support of the crowd often decides the

outcome, giving the home team that added incentive or what coaches refer to as the home-court advantage.

The story appeared the next day in the sports section of The Robesonian under the headline, "Trojans Rally Over Littlefield, 63-65." It took me almost two hours to write my first sports account; it wasn't a simple task. And it took almost 25 minutes to muster up this lead: "Gary Locklear poured in 30 points and Thomas Canady added 22 as the Magnolia Trojans overcame a 11-point second quarter deficit to slip by the Littlefield Hornets, 63-65, Tuesday night." (See page 41, story #)

Similarly, Rather and Wicker each had their turns in reporting sports. Rather's experience was short and sweet, broadcasting football at KSAW at \$10 a game while acting as the school's sports information director for 7 a month.

After his internship with the Sandhills Citizen, Wicker moved to Lumberton where he became regular reporter and telegraph editor for The Robesonian eventually obtaining the title of sports editor.

Robeson County, as Wicker attests, is separated into three main groups of people--Negroes, Indians and whites. And back in the early 1950's, when racial conflicts were an everyday occurrence, everything was segregated three ways--theatres, buses, and yes, even the sports section of The Robesonian.

Wicker recalls the unforgivable mistake he made of placing the Indian baseball line score in the black section.

"The next day a war party marched in, and I was ready to crawl under my desk," Wicker said.

"'Mister,' one of them said. 'The best six star ain't niggers.' That kind of thing teaches a young reporter real

support for accuracy."

My short stint with sports ultimately led to my being named sports editor of The Laurinburg Exchange, a tri-weekly based in Laurinburg, about 40 miles southeast of Lumberton.

Each of the five journalists emphasized the variety of their early experience. However, none was so varied as my own. Certainly, I had my share of boring, besides exciting and refreshing assignments.

If there was one assignment I genuinely despised it was the reporting of town council meetings. The second Tuesday and Thursday of each month found me in Rowland and St. Pauls covering the local city affairs.

I especially hated going to St. Pauls. Their meetings would begin at 7:30 p.m. and, more often than not, last until midnight. They would sometimes discuss an issue for hours without ever making any kind of decision for or against.

Rowland wasn't quite as bad. They would normally conclude business around 9 or 9:30. But they, too, had a tendency to spend far too much time talking about tiny, insignificant issues.

The local dog pound had picked up a stray Irish Setter wandering the streets one afternoon. The dog happened to be owned by a prominent resident who would later contend his dog was worth \$75. Somewhere and somehow in transferring the dog from the pound to the owner's home, the dog escaped. The owner, then, in a letter to the council, demanded he be compensated for the town's blunder. The council wrestled with the issue for nearly three meetings before deciding not to pay the man for his dog, for fear of setting some sort of precedent. The whole incident was ridiculous. The council should have decided in its first

discussion to deny the request.

But those boring assignments were easily forgotten with more interesting and invigorating ones, like the armed robbery and cocaine conspiracy trials, both of which were two days in session before I ever began reporting them.

The paper was without a court reporter for nearly three weeks, so while O'Connor looked for someone to fill the spot, he assumed the responsibilities, at times, calling on me when it was impossible for him to cover a trial.

In the week that I reported the daily cocaine trial, I took a special liking to the man being prosecuted, James Robert Holland, a 25-year-old Hope Mills native. He was my age and from the general area where I went to high school.

We often talked outside the court room in between breaks. Two of the men he was involved with had plea bargained and received only two-year sentences. Bobby decided to go the trial route facing a possible 40-year sentence. His lawyer was from Miami, where Bobby supposedly dealt in the cocaine conspiracy. The Miamian was very articulate and convincing and had it not been for an inside informer, probably would have gotten Bobby off the hook. But the jury found him guilty, and there was no denying he was involved.

On the day of sentencing I lost my wallet and had no idea where it was. I was in a hurry to get back to court and hear the judgment. When I walked into the court room, one of Bobby's relatives approached me and handed me my wallet. She said Bobby had found it in the bench where I had been recording my notes of the trial. Not a single dollar of the \$40 was missing.

Maybe it's nothing but it touched me emotionally. No more

than 10 minutes later, Judge Anthony Brannon sentenced Bobby to 12 years in prison and fined him \$6,000. It was a crushing blow for Bobby, his family, and for me, despite my attempt not to get involved in this assignment. (See page 43, story G)

Writing features, like sports, was generally a welcomed reprieve from the reporting of local crime. My first feature assignment was a story about Robeson County's first female deputy, Mrs. Maria Lowery, wife and mother of a 17-year-old daughter.

She seemed to me very professional and no less a deputy just because she was a woman. She wore a .38 detective special strapped to her hip and dressed in the regulation two-tone brown uniform. I got the O.K. from Sheriff Hubert Stone one afternoon to ride in the patrol car with her. Nothing much happened on the Pembroke route except a couple of routine calls on worthless checks and petty larcenies. But it was still a first-hand glimpse in the daily routine of the life of a new kind of county law official. (See page 44, story H)

## Closing Remarks

My beginning experience as a news reporter closely paralleled that of five leading journalists--Henry Mencken, Lincoln Steffens, Eric Sevareid, Dan Rather and Tom Wicker-- in a variety of reporting and photographic assignments; sports, police news, feature writing and investigative reporting. The varied experience allowed me to work in nearly every department of the newsroom while under the watchful eye of Paul O'Connor, news editor of The Robesonian. His guidance, loyalty to the journalism profession, and personal interest in my journalistic well-being proved invaluable during my short stint at The Robesonian. Without him, the experience would have been substantially less rewarding.

Fortunately my journalistic training at Pembroke State University had prepared me for an undertaking of this magnitude. My pursuit of a bachelor's degree in communicative arts with a contract in journalism, no doubt, had prompted an invitation from O'Connor to work for The Robesonian.

After five months at The Robesonian and spending countless hours in preparing this project, I feel I have acquired first-hand knowledge of the work and experiences of a beginning journalist-- the dead lines, the gathering of information, the need for speed and accuracy, the discipline of writing briefly and concisely, the anxious moments, the loves, the hates, and so much more.

I'm indebted to so many people who have literally pushed me along the way, teachers like Grace Gibson and Paul O'Connor



who believe I have the potential to become a good, sound journalist.

The most important lesson I learned was not how to ask a pointed question or when to take a picture, but rather realizing the potential that these experiences collectively can have in pursuit of a journalistic career.

Without question, my experiences at The Robesonian are priceless. Only years from now will I be able to measure their true worth.

# Late Evening Fire In Rowland

## Fire-Setting Spree Sweeps Area

A

By BOB DENHAM  
AND  
LYNNETTE B. LYNN  
Robesonian Staff Writers

Nineteen fires which are said to "have been deliberately set in a systematic pattern" swept through Robeson County during a four hour period Sunday night and burned to the ground numerous abandoned buildings.

The fires were reported in the Midway, Maxton, and Evans Crossroads areas. Pembroke police dispatcher Harris Strickland said most of the fires were reported from 5:30 to 9:30 Sunday night.

Fire departments from Rowland, Prospect and Evansville answered the calls which Strickland said were believed to be due to Indian unrest over alleged beatings by the

Highway Patrol. No injuries were reported during the evening blazes.

County deputies are seeking the occupants of a white van at two of the fires. Evans Crossroads Fire Chief Robert Locklear, whose department responded to four of the fires, said the sheriff's department had found evidence at four of the fires where tire tracks and footprints matched.

"It's been quite a hectic night," dispatcher Strickland said. "There were so many, one right after another, I couldn't tell you where they all were. It looks like somebody just mapped it out before they started and knew just what they would hit."

The fires occurred less than 24 hours after a county-wide meeting Saturday night of over 600 citizens in Pembroke to discuss the con-

troversial treatment of Lumbee Indians by the N.C. Highway Patrol.

The meeting held at Pembroke Junior High School, urged a nonviolent approach to settle problems with the patrol.

Bruce Jones, director of the N.C. Commission of Indian Affairs, said today he had just heard of the fires through the Lumberton office, and said, "I thought the rally was successful and that the people of Robeson were willing to work with the Commission through the proper channels."

Jones said he did not know enough about the fires to attribute them to the unrest here.

Bobby Chavis of the Lumberton office of Indian Affairs said he thinks "someone just wanted to give us some bad publicity."

"I don't believe that the fires had anything to

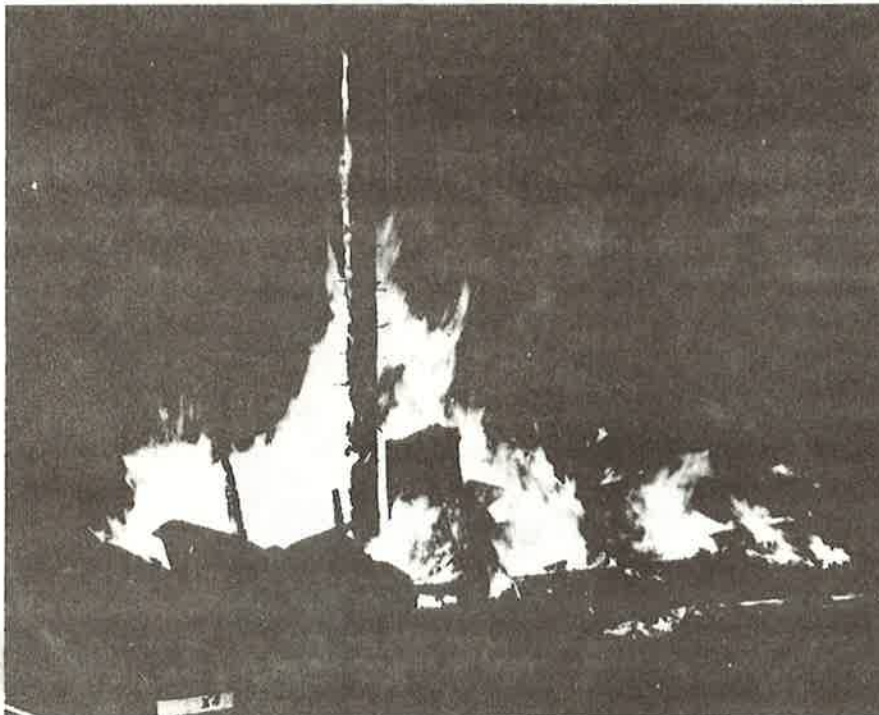
do with the unrest," Chavis said. "This same thing happened over the Christmas holidays. The meeting Saturday night was to curb such action, and I think it was successful."

The Saturday night meeting was called by concerned citizens and the Commission of Indian Affairs after the third alleged beating of an Indian by a state trooper here in Robeson County.

The rally was called to raise funds for the legal defense of Tony Blue and Terry Locklee — Lumbees who were allegedly "unnecessarily beaten" by state troopers.

Six guest speakers encouraged the people to handle the affair through proper channels. They said Herbert Hyde, director of the N.C. Dept. of Crime Control, "is willing to work with us."

(See 'G' on Page 2)



**FIRE SPREE AROUND COUNTY**

Police believe arsonists were responsible for a rash of 19 fires which swept the county Sunday night. This blaze occurred on the Sinclair Farm, Rt. 1, Rowland at about 9:30. (Denham Photo)

### Truck Damaged At Local Plant By Sudden Blaze

A 1976 blue-and-white Ford pickup truck caught fire early Wednesday morning outside Pembroke, damaging the entire interior, a security guard at "The Housing by Vogue Plant," said.

The truck's owner, Carlton Grayboy of State Road 1660, Pembroke, was reported warming his vehicle when he went inside for some packages he was to deliver. When he returned to his truck, he found it ablaze.

Night dispatcher Teddy Jacobs received the call and reported to the Pembroke Fire Department.

# The Ones That Didn't Get Away

## Stake-Out Brings Surprise Pick-Up

By **BOB DENHAM**  
Robesonian Staff Writer

Law officials who staked out a home in Union Chapel Monday afternoon never found the woman they were looking for. After searching the home, they found instead, an 18-year-old Lumberton youth who had escaped from a youth center in Nash County seven months ago.

Glenn Lowry of Rt. 3, Box 932, was arrested by State Trooper Hubert Covington and County Deputy Tommy Rogers

after being found hiding in a closet.

According to Covington, he and Rogers were staked outside the Union Chapel home looking for Kathy Sampson who had been charged with damage to personal property.

"We had no idea that Lowry was in there," Covington said shaking his head.

Covington had once before tried to apprehend him. "I had seen him driving on rural paved road 1531 in early February," he said. "I didn't

know who it was then but I was going to stop the vehicle for a possible driving under the influence charge."

Covington said he got close enough to recognize the driver as Lowry but then the vehicle took off across some cornfields and stopped just before running into a swamp. Covington said he caught the three passengers but Lowry got away.

Lowry, who was serving two 18-month sentences concurrently on two counts of

larceny, escaped from the Richard T. Fountain Youth Center in Rocky Mount on Aug. 15, according to Superintendent Little Baker.

Lowry escaped from a holding unit while awaiting trial. Lowry's initial larceny charge carried with it a probationary charge. The probation was revoked when he was charged with a second count of larceny.

Lowry now faces two separate charges of escape.

## Two Escapees Captured

By **BOB DENHAM**  
Robesonian Staff Writer

Two men who escaped a deputy's escort while being transferred from the courthouse to the county jail were apprehended Monday afternoon by deputies, city police and private citizens.

Ricky Cummings, 20, of Newton Grove and Charles Christian, 18, of the Bronx, New York, were arrested less than two hours after escaping out the back door of the courthouse.

Cummings and Christian, who were jailed earlier on charges of auto larceny and armed robbery, respectively, were returning from preliminary hearings when they made their getaway, a

spokesman for the sheriff's department said.

The two men and several other prison inmates were in custody of Deputy Jimmy Sessoms while returning from district court proceedings. According to one deputy, Sessoms and the inmates took the elevator down from the second floor of the courthouse to the basement where the sheriff's department is located. When the elevator door opened, the two men broke into a run and escaped out the back door, the spokesman said.

According to the report, Sessoms, who was unable to follow the two men because of the other inmates in his custody, immediately relayed the incident to the radio

dispatcher.

Less than 20 minutes later, deputies Elvin Freeman, Thurman Mitchell, Jimmy Sessoms and a Lumberton police officer captured Christian hiding behind a warehouse on Walnut Street, some four or five blocks from the courthouse where he escaped.

According to Freeman, he and the other deputies were alerted by citizens who said they had spotted a man fitting Christian's description in an area near Chestnut and Walnut streets.

The three deputies and the police officer arrived near the Lumberton Knit Warehouse simultaneously. Freeman said they spotted Christian running behind the warehouse and across some railroad tracks where they eventually surrounded Christian.

Sessoms returned Christian to the Magistrate's office while

Freeman and the other deputies continued their search for Cummings.

According to Freeman, local residents again helped when they told him that a man fitting the Cummings' description was seen running down Chippewa St. past the Popel Plant a mile away from where he made his escape.

Freeman said Cummings fled into an area flooded from the weekend's rains. Freeman said he borrowed a pair of hip boots from a nearby citizen and waded through the flooded area where Cummings was last seen.

Freeman said he walked up on a hill and then spotted Cummings approximately 10 feet away lying behind a pile of dirt.

According to Freeman, neither of the two escapees resisted arrest after being caught.



A LUMBERTON POLICEMAN peers in the window of the 1972 Maverick John Murphy Brown is charged with driving into the county jail. Brown, seated in the state patrol car with Trooper A. J. Beason, was charged Tuesday with reckless driving and falling to stop for a blue light and siren. (O'Connor Photo)

## Driver Arrested After Ramming Vehicle Into County Jail Building

A high-speed chase through West Lumberton ended Tuesday afternoon when a Morganton man rammed his '72 Ford Maverick into the cement wall facing the Robeson County Jail.

John Murphy Brown, 39, was apprehended on the spot and

later charged with reckless driving while under the influence of narcotic or other drugs and for failure to stop for a blue light and siren.

State Trooper A. J. Beason chased Brown for nearly three miles. Beason said he first spotted Brown on the Maxton Road, near the prison camp. As

Brown traveled in the other direction.

Brown was clocked at 80 mph in a 55 miles an hour zone, Beason said.

Brown later crashed into the front of the jailhouse after being pursued by Beason down W. Fifth, Water and Sixth streets.

According to Beason, Brown meant to go into the jailhouse. "Brown said he was looking for his camera and that nobody would help him in Pembroke so he came to Lumberton."

Brown was later released and placed into the custody of his first cousin William R.

B

# HAPPY NEW YEAR THE ROBESONIAN

PUBLISHED WEEKDAYS AND  
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LUMBERTON, N. C., MONDAY, JANUARY 1, 1979

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## Former Philadelphus School Razed By Fire

The former Philadelphus School, closed since 1969, was destroyed by fire this morning.

Four Robeson County fire departments answered the call about 7:30 a.m. Prospect, Red Springs, Shannon and Pembroke fire departments rushed to the fire-angulfed building located at the intersection of rural road 1318 and NC 72, four miles southeast of Red Springs.

Prospect Fire Chief Carl Moore, whose

department was first on the scene, said firemen were unable to enter the building due to its age. "Because the building was old and had not been used in years, we did not enter for fear of falling through the floors. If the building had been in use we would have entered it."

Chief Moore believes the fire was set deliberately, because there had been no electrical storm before the fire and there was

no electrical power in the building. According to Chief Moore, the fire began on the second floor of the building before burning to the ground. John Pat Buite, of Philadelphus, also had an unoccupied tenant house burn at 10 p.m. Sunday, about three-fourths of a mile from the schools. This was on State Road 1318 and was of the Civil War period.

The cause of both fires is still under investigation. The two-story brick structure, built in 1918,

had been closed in the 1969-1970 school year. Miss Fodie Bule, a teacher of long standing in the county, who died recently, was the last principal.

Under the terms of the deed for the land, the property was to revert to the Philadelphus Church, if it were no longer used as a school. The reversion took place a year or so after the closing. It had not been used by the church and there was no insurance on the structure



THE OLD PHILADELPHUS SCHOOL was destroyed by fire this morning. Four fire departments answered the call. (Bill Norment Photo)

## First Fire Story

# THE ROBESONIAN

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COUNTRY, 000 AND TIRTH

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COUNTRY, 000 AND TIRTH

LUMBERTON, N.C., THURSDAY, MARCH 8, 1979

PUBLISHED WEEKDAYS AND  
SUNDAY IN ROBESON COUNTY

Vol. CIX—No. 331

Price 10 Cents

**Temperatures:**  
24-hour high, 63 (17.2c),  
Low, 36 (2.2c) degrees,  
Noon today, 51 (10.5c).

## City's Private Work Contested

located on U.S. 301 across from Lumberton High School, paid for the paint and thinner used.

"I feel that this incident needs to be brought before the city council," Britt said.

According to Baxley, the city has performed work without charge for non-profit organizations in the past. The city has worked with garden clubs, the Riverside Church of God, and the group restoring the Proctor Law Building, he said.

Horace Britt, owner of Britt's Lakewood Enterprises, which works on parking lots, was less than happy with the city for stripping the church's parking lot.

"The city is taking our tax money and turning people to give the competition in my business," Horace Britt said.

Britt said he quoted the Alliance church a price for stripping and cleaning the parking lot last December. He said church officials told him they would bring it up in their business meeting and that he would get the job after the first of the year.

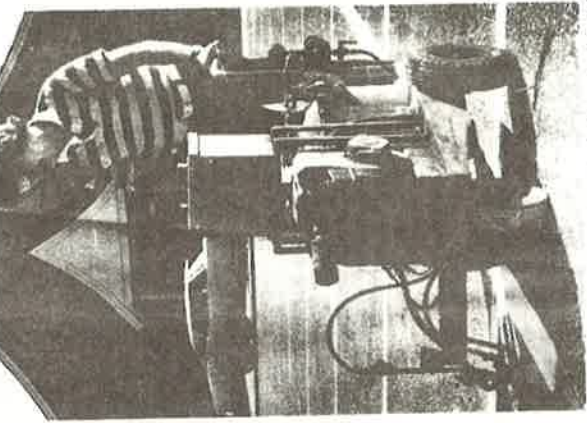
Until Wednesday, when The Robesonian informed him the lot had been painted, Britt was under the impression he had the

job. An employee of Britt's said, "it didn't seem right" that city equipment and employees were used to stripe private parking lots. "If they're going to stripe private lots then they can come over and do mine."

Bullard said he was not aware of any stripping for a church parking lot, but he said, "The City of Lumberton does cooperate with churches, civic and service organizations in helping to secure equipment not available through private enterprise."

The city should not compete with private businesses, the mayor said. Bullard said the council has an established policy for some services and that this is documented. If this type of service is not documented, "then my office will look into it," the mayor said.

See CITY Page Two



EARL WILLIAMS, city sign technician, operates a parking lot striping machine at the Christian Missionary Alliance Church, Wednesday. Williams performed the work at the direction of Red Baxley, city public works director, who said he donates city labor and equipment to non-profit organizations "to promote Christianity." (Denham Photo)

### City...

(Continued From Page 1)

A representative of Carolina executive committee, asked him if he could borrow the city's striping to paint the business which does parking lot work, said he has done striping for churches in the past without charging them.

Earl Williams, city sign technician, and Herman Thompson are the two city employees who performed the parking lot work.

According to a memo released from Baxley's office, Friday, Williams was instructed to paint the parking lot lines at the church. According to Williams, a 15-year veteran of city work, this was the first time he had ever been asked to work on property that did not belong to the city.

Several members of the legal community said they considered the striping to be an obvious violation of law. One prominent local attorney said he "has never seen any law that authorized the expending of public money on private property."

Baxley said Elmer Williams, Alliance Church deacon and a member of the church's board of directors, said he never gave any thought to the notion that the city's work might be unlawful. He said he was sure the church would pay for the work if it turns out that the work should not have been performed.

Horace Britt said he gave the church a price of \$175 for the parking lot work. Rev. Williams said the church was quoted two prices by Britt: \$175 and \$260. The paint cost the church approximately \$50, the minister said.

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# THE ROBESONIAN

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PUBLISHED WEEKDAYS AND  
SUNDAY IN ROBESON COUNTY

LUMBERTON, N.C., TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 1979

ESTABLISHED 1870  
COUNTY, GOD AND TRUTH

SIXTEEN PAGES — Price 10 Cents

VOL. CIX—No. 335

## City Attorney Eyes Private Work Deal

**By BOB DENHAM  
and PAUL O'CONNOR**  
Robesonian Staff Writers

Lumberton city attorney Mitchell Baker III has been asked to study the legality of the public works department's spending public money on private property, Mayor Clifford Bullard said Monday.

"I talked with the city manager, and he is consulting with the city attorney to see if possibly we are not following the law," Bullard said.

"If our policies are outside of state law, we want to bring them within state law," Bullard said.

The mayor's comments came after the Robesonian reported Thursday that Lumberton's Public Works Director W. C. "Red" Baxley authorized the use of city men and equipment to paint division lines and clean up the parking lot of the Christian Missionary Alliance Church.

The work angered one businessman who had reportedly quoted a price to church officials last December for the job which included striping and clearing up the parking lot. "The good working relation," as Baxley described it, also prompted several

members of the local legal community to question the legality of such work.

Baxley said Monday that the Robesonian would be "belittling the mayor" to say the mayor's office was "investigating the legality of the issue." Baxley said that as he understood the mayor's intentions, the mayor was simply seeking to establish a policy.

"I think you are sort of misleading the public," Baxley said. "I don't think you are on the right line. The press should give the mayor the benefit of the doubt. The Robesonian

would probably sell a lot more papers."

Bullard said he was trying to secure a copy of the state highway department's policy on the use of state equipment. It is hoped the city will be able to use the state policy as the basis for its own policy, if in fact the city doesn't have one yet, the mayor said.

"We're asking if we do have a valid policy," Bullard said. "I think we'd be at fault if we didn't look into it."

The mayor contested a comment made to The Robesonian last week by

See CITY Page Two

## City...

(Continued From Page 1)

an unnamed attorney. The attorney said he had never seen any state law which "authorized the spending of public money on private property."

Bullard responded, "If his house was on fire, he's want us to come and spray some city water on it. And, who picks up his garbage?"

Bullard said the city is designed to support the private system, and "we are required by state law to provide services. But striping a parking lot may be something else," the mayor said. "Somewhere along the line we will have to draw the distinction with our attorney," he added.

Due to a backlog of city business, the mayor doesn't expect the council to come to a quick decision on the equipment use policy.

A local businessman offered Monday, to pay compensation for the city's work on the Alliance church parking lot, Baxley said. "The man was

alarmed and disturbed over reading the article."

Baxley said the businessman described the city's work on the Alliance parking lot as a good gesture. "He said that all the city had to do to receive reimbursement for the work was to send him an itemized statement of the bill and he would gladly pay for it."

Baxley said that when he authorized the work, he was unaware the church had been talking with a private contractor. He said the pastor of the church has since informed him that the church's executive committee had not formally accepted the contractor's bid.

Horace Britt of Britt's Lakewood Enterprises said he quoted the church a price of \$175 for the parking lot work. The church's pastor said the church was quoted two prices by Britt: \$175 and \$280.

Baxley said that had he known about the private quotes earlier he would have sought guidance from the city council before making any decisions.

The parking lot issue began when Elmer Williams, Alliance Church deacon and member of the church's executive member, reportedly asked Baxley if he could borrow the city's striping to paint the parking lot lines. Baxley said he told Williams he would rather send city men along with the equipment to operate it.

Earl Williams, city sign technician, and Herman Thompson were the two city men employees who performed the parking lot work.

## Lumberton's Watergate?

"There was some Watergate involved in that story," City Councilman Dr. E. B. Turner said Monday about a story published in The Robesonian about city workers and equipment doing work on private property.

Turner said the "parking lot striping story" was publicity that the city did not need.

The councilman from South Lumberton said if there was a violation committed in striping a church parking lot with city paid employees and equipment, it was due to an absence of policy governing the city departments.

"There is talk in the places where people drink coffee that the council is responsible for this. We are not," Turner said.

Mayor Clifford Bullard called the problem part of Lumberton's "growing pains."

"I can't see how that picture taker got there on the scene," Turner said of the picture of the church parking lot being striped with city equipment.

## The Saga Continues

# Trojans Rally Over Littlefield

F

By **BOB DENHAM**  
Robesonian Staff Writer  
**MAGNOLIA** — Gary Locklear poured in 30 points and Thomas Canady added 22 as the Magnolia Trojans overcame a 11-point second quarter deficit to slip by the Littlefield Hornets, 68-65 Tuesday night.

The Hornets held a 21-11 first quarter lead only to see it dwindle to a mere five points at half time. The Hornets were out to sting Magnolia as the taller Littlefield team dominated both boards in the first quarter.

But it was Gary Locklear's ability to penetrate the Hornets

zone defense as 20 of his 30 points came on lay-ups. His play eventually pulled Magnolia within striking distance in the third frame.

Holding a 30-19 lead with 5:38 left in the first half, Littlefield went cold as they were out-scored 16-8 before the half. Canady and Locklear capitalized on the Hornets' cold streak by combining for 14 of the last 16 points Magnolia scored in the first half.

Littlefield's Anthony Monroe held the hot hand for the Hornets in the first half as he scored 12 points from 10 and 15 feet out.

At the start of the second half, both teams traded early baskets before Magnolia was able to score five straight points to pull within four with 2:25 remaining in the third quarter.

Littlefield's Charlie Roller scored six of the Hornets' 10 third quarter points, hitting on three easy lay-ups with an assist from Ronnie Revels. It was Magnolia's team effort and determination which saw Littlefield's lead disappear at the end of the quarter.

Locklear hit on jumpers from 12 and 15 feet out while Bobby Jones hit a 12-footer from the right corner and drew a charge to spark the Trojans' third quarter surge.

After gaining the lead, the Trojans never trailed, although Littlefield stayed close behind. At the start of the fourth quarter, both teams again traded baskets until Littlefield's forward Roller converted on a three-point play to cut Magnolia's lead to 63-61 with 2:24 remaining.

With a little over a minute to play, Magnolia went into a deliberate offense looking to the middle for an easy shot. And it did open, but only once. Revels knocked the ball away from Magnolia's Canady and Roller scooped it up to score on a lay-up to tie the game at 65 all with 1:25 remaining in the game. That was Littlefield's last score.

At 1 minute Locklear was fouled. He made one of two free throws to give Magnolia a slim 68-65 margin.

Littlefield then took the ball down-court with Roller missing a 10-footer from the left corner with 32 seconds left on the clock. But the Hornets wouldn't give up. Canady of the Trojans again had the ball knocked away by Revels and Littlefield set up for the final shot. The biggest play of the game came for Magnolia's Johnny Davis when he blocked James Sellers' shot with 11 seconds remaining. Canady came up with the ball for Magnolia.

After a time out, Canady was fouled with one second remaining. He hit both shots to ice the game for the Trojans.

Littlefield was led by Roller's 22 points and Monroe added 14. Whitted and Sellers each had six, Carter, seven and Neal, two.

Other scorers for Magnolia were Davis with six, Jones with five, Spears with five, and Brewer with two.

Magnolia is now 8-5 and will

**BOYS VARSITY**  
Littlefield (65) — Roller 22, Revels 8, Whitted 6, Monroe 14, Sellers 6, Neal 2, Carter 7.

Magnolia (68) — Canady 22, Davis 6, Jones 5, Locklear 30, Spears 5, Brewer 2.

**GIRLS**  
Littlefield 2 6 10 6-24  
Magnolia 12 10 8 15-45  
Littlefield (24) — Leigh 2, Risen 4, Lowery 4, McGill 2, G. Ard 5, Carter 1, Wilkins 2, R. Ard 2.

Magnolia (45) — Freeman 13, Hardin 9, Locklear 8, Lowry 9, Chevs 2, Brooks 2, Bell 2.

**J.V.**  
Littlefield 10 12 8 2 32  
Magnolia 13 2 8 12 35  
Littlefield (32) — Nagan 9  
Magnolia (35) — Oxendine 18.

# Magnolia Captures Win Over Parkton

By **BOB DENHAM**  
Robesonian Staff Writer

The Magnolia Trojans easily captured their tenth win of the year breezing by the Parkton Bruins 80-58 in Friday night high school action. The dynamic duo of Thomas Canady and Gary Locklear combined for 47 points to lead the Trojans.

The six-foot Canady demonstrated his superiority on both ends of the court as he grabbed countless rebounds, made several steals and knocked in 28 points to lead the Trojans. Locklear complimented the effort by penetrating the Bruins defense with his dazzling moves to the baskets with nearly all of his 19 points coming on lay-ups.

But it was the fierce full court pressure of the Trojans which baffled the Bruins. The rowdy defense caused 18 Parkton turnovers as they built their lead throughout the evening.

Magnolia jumped quickly to a 6-0 lead on layups by Locklear, Canady and Grady Spears. The Bruins knotted the score at 6-all on jumpers by Carl McCormick, Lonnie Adams and a lay-up by Willie

Dozier. But the Bruins could only manage four more points during first quarter play. The Trojans cruised to a 22-10 first frame lead on long-range jumpers by Canady coming from 10, 12 and 20 feet out.

Down by 12, the Bruins mounted an attack which saw the Magnolia lead dwindle to just six points with 3:04 left in the first half. McCormick scored six of his 11 points and Jim Simpson added 10 of his 12 points during second quarter play to spark the attack. But the Trojan horse began to roll again. Magnolia outscored Parkton 14-6 down the stretch and went into the locker room with a 47-33 lead.

Although Parkton played Magnolia even during third quarter play, they were clearly outmatched in the final quarter. The Trojans wasted no time increasing their lead to 28 points with 5:35 left in the game. Magnolia's full court pressure caused Parkton to turn the ball over six times in less than three minutes. Canady stole two passes in early fourth quarter action and fed off to Locklear to score on

easy layups. Johnny Davis also stole the ball, passed off to Bobby Jones who gave it back to Davis for a 10-foot jumper. Canady connected on 6 of 9 from the free throw line in the final quarter and Tracy Brewer added four points to stop the Bruins.

Other scorers for Magnolia were Davis with seven and Jones with six.

Parkton was lead by Willie Dozier with 13, Simpson with 12 and Williams and McCormick

who had 11 apiece.

Regina Miller hit 48 points, her greatest total this season, as the Lady Bruins defeated the Lady Trojans of Magnolia 78-49 here Friday night.

Jacobs added 16 for the Lady Bruins. Lowery led Magnolia with 20 points. Parkton's girls are now 11-2 for the year.

Magnolia is now 10-7 on the year and will travel to Nakina, Tuesday. Parkton falls to 1-12 and will host Fairgrove the same day.

# Cats Subdue Tryon

By BOB DENHAM  
Robesonian Staff Writer  
PROSPECT—With blackening thunder clouds lurking nearby, there was doubt the game would go all seven innings. But the weather held up just long enough for Prospect's Eric Collins to deliver his own shower on Tryon's hitters.

Collins struck out 13 as the Cats rallied behind his 3-hit pitching to defeat Tryon's Tigers 6-2 Wednesday and advance to the 1-A state finals for the second consecutive year.

"He was the best pitcher we have seen this year," said Tryon Coach Steve Aldred whose Tigers came into Wednesday's game boasting a 14-1 record.

For the third consecutive time in playoff games, eight of the last nine outs were made by strike outs—victims of Collins' fast and curve balls. With rain threatening in the top of the 7th, Collins quickly fanned the last three Tryon hitters to end the game.

Collins, who knotted his 30th career win, experienced some trouble by giving up four walks and hitting one batter in the fourth. "I thought Eric was struggling a bit; he wasn't as strong today," Coach James Howard Locklear said.

Both teams felt the playoff pressure, committing three errors apiece. "I was very disappointed over our errors,"

Locklear said. "It's the first time our team has done this."

Tryon scored first in the top of the second on an error by second baseman Bobby Locklear. He was unable to hold a throw from third baseman Terry Bullard for a force out at second. Brian Counts then scored as the ball went into the outfield.

Tryon got two of their three hits in the third on singles from Wayne Horne and Dennis McBride but were unable to bring anyone home after Collins struck out Counts to end the inning. Collins did not allow a hit after the third inning, but nevertheless gave up an unearned run in the fourth after he hit lead off batter Gary Walker with a pitch. Walker advanced to second on a bunt by Davle Edwards. Edwards was called safe at first after second baseman Locklear dropped the throw from Collins while covering first. Walker finally scored from third on a sacrifice fly to right field from Bruce Butler.

Trailing 2-0 in the bottom of the fourth, Prospect finally got cranked up, scoring three runs while taking advantage of two Tryon errors on one hit.

Collins led off the inning with an infield hit. With a man on second and no outs, Lynn Locklear struck out but Tryon catcher Barry Skipper dropped the ball and was forced to

throw to first for the out. First baseman Butler arrived at the bag late and Locklear was called safe.

Darrell Locklear walked, loading up the bases for Bentley Locklear's line drive to the shortstop. But Dennis McBride dropped Bentley's line shot for the inning's second error and Prospect scored their first run. The Cats scored two more times before Wayne Horne struck out Gary Brayboy to end the inning.

Prospect scored again in the fifth after designated hitter Lynn Allen Locklear led off the inning with a triple over the right fielder's head and then scored on Collins' ground shot to second base.

With time running out and the clouds growing darker, Tryon could not buy a run. Collins' hot hand stifled an attempt in the fifth after one man reached base on another Prospect error and another walked. Walker went down swinging to end the inning and the Tigers last serious threat.

Tryon's ace pitcher, Wayne Horne, who sported a 8-1 record into Wednesday's contest, got his feathers ruffled in the sixth when he gave up two hits, three walks and two more runs.

After Carlton Cummings led off with a single to right field, Horne then walked Terry Bullard and Ronnie Sanderson to load the bases. Gary

Brayboy, who was the only player on either side to collect two hits, bunted safely to bring in the Cats fifth run. Prospect scored its last run when Horne walked designated hitter Locklear.

"We thought Horne threw the ball well but he was not as fast as we believed," Locklear said. "When we put a little pressure on him, he got wild."

Prospect hit the ball well but most of the time right at somebody. "We felt we would hit him (Horne) sooner or later; we were just hoping the hits would begin falling in," Locklear said.

Prospect will host either Jamesville or Midway June 7, 8 & 9 for the state championship. The Cats dropped two straight to Lucama last year in the state championship series.

What does this squad have over last year's ball team? "Experience, even though we don't have the hitters we had last year," Locklear says. "We are mentally prepared and we'll be hard to beat."

After it was all over, the Tigers of Tryon quietly gathered up their gear, quickly loaded the bus and reluctantly began a long and painful four and one-half drive back home. For the Tryon Tigers had become just another statistic and one of many that had battled one of the state's best 1-A baseball teams and lost.

## More Sports

# Parkton Upsets Fairgrove

By BOB DENHAM  
Robesonian Staff Writer  
ROWLAND—If they were out to prove something, they certainly did it with excellent pitching, hitting and flawless defensive play.

The Parkton Bruins, behind the three-hit pitching of Buzzy Parnell, stunned a Fairgrove team after collecting nine hits and came from behind in the latter innings to upset the Bears 4-2 in 1-A tournament play.

The big story was ace right-hander Parnell who after suffering from a sore arm most of the regular season lamed the Bears on three hits, striking out nine and walking only three.

But it seemed Parnell and the Bruins were in for another long afternoon as Fairgrove quickly jumped out to a 2-0 lead in the first inning scoring on singles by Timmy Hunt, Evan Davenport and Kenneth Graham. The Fairgrove bats were never heard from for the rest of the afternoon.

Parkton's first score came in the top of the fourth on a

questionable play which saw Scott Darden steal home and Craig Hall, who was the batter, called out after he apparently interfered with Fairgrove's catcher Ray Oxendine's attempt to tag Darden at the plate.

The Bruins pushed across two more runs in the fifth to overcome Fairgrove's slim 2-1 lead on singles by E. G. Smith, Theodore Lilly and Parnell. Doug Thompkins who replaced Parnell as baserunner stole second and then scored on an error by Fairgrove's third baseman who was unable to come up with a ground shot delivered by Darden.

After adding an insurance run in the seventh, Parkton smelling an upset, were not to be denied as Parnell added the Bears Eugene Blue, Jeff Hunt and Jeffrey Hunt to his strikeout column to end the game.

Prospect-6  
Maxton-4

ROWLAND — For the conference 1-A champions, Prospect Cats, Wednesday afternoon's battle with the

Maxton Eagles was no picnic, but they prevailed for a 6-4 win to advance to today's finals with the upstart Parkton Bruins.

Prospect took an early but short-lived lead in the bottom half of the third inning after Ronnie Sanderson reached first on an error by first baseman R. Strickland and then scored from second on a double to left field by Eric Collins.

But Maxton quickly bounced back in the top of the fourth scoring three runs on only one hit. Southpaw Bentley Locklear never really found the strike zone as he pitched erratically at times, giving up 11 walks in six innings, six of them coming in the fourth when he walked in three of Maxton's four runs.

Trailing 3-1, Prospect got in the runs back in the bottom of the fourth when the Cats scored three times on four hits on singles by Bentley Locklear, Carlton Cummings, Bobby Locklear and double by Gary Brayboy which scored two runs.

Bentley, forgetting he ever had a control problem,

blistered Maxton batters in the fifth, striking out E. Smith, M. McDaniel, and W. Blue — to retire the side.

But Maxton tied it four all in the sixth when R. McDaniel scored after catcher Cummings fielded a bunt hit with bases loaded and threw to first base for the out.

The Cats finally caged the flying Eagles in the bottom of the sixth when they again collected four hits in one inning and scored the deciding runs.

Collins came in for relief of Bentley in the seventh striking out R. McDaniel to end the game and record a save.

Prospect plays Parkton today at 4 p.m.

Parkton 000 120 1 4 9 0  
Fairgrove 700 000 0-2 3 3  
Pitchers & Catchers: (W) Buzzy Parnell and Scott Brown. (L) Jeff Lewis and Ray Oxendine; Bobby Ransom in relief for Lewis in top of 6th.  
LH: Scott Brown 2-3; Theodore Lilly 2-4.  
Records: Parkton 4-12; Fairgrove 13-4.

Maxton 000 301 0-4 3 1  
Prospect 001 302 X-6 10 1  
Pitchers & Catchers: (W) Bentley Locklear and Carlton Cummings. (L) Eric Collins in relief for Locklear in top of 7th. (L) A. McDonald and W. Blue.  
LH: Eric Collins 3-4; Gary Brayboy 2-3; Carlton Cummings 2-1.  
Records: Maxton 6-12; Prospect 11-4.



# Holland Given 12-Year Term In Cocaine Case

G

By BOB DENHAM  
Robesonian Staff Writer

James Robert Holland, 25, was sentenced to 12 years in prison and fined \$6,000, Thursday afternoon, after being convicted of two cocaine charges by a Robeson County Superior Court jury.

The jury deliberated for less than 30 minutes before returning guilty verdicts on charges of conspiracy to possess cocaine, and possession of cocaine with the intent to sell and deliver.

Both cocaine charges could have carried a maximum of 20 years and a \$20,000 fine.

Before sentencing, defense attorney Michael Tarkoff, speaking in behalf of Holland, told Judge Anthony Brannon that Holland, whether found guilty or not, wanted to return to his job at Lumberton Motors as a body painter.

Although Holland and his wife were not legally

separated, they had not been living together the past month. Tarkoff said a major reason Holland had moved from Hope Mills to Lumberton since his arrest was because his wife had encouraged him to meddle in illegal practices because "it's good money."

The defense said Holland would make his best living at the body shop and that the job would provide him with a comfortable living.

Tarkoff said that even if Holland was the connection in Miami that the connection without Jim Bullard's money was worthless. He said one with money can find a connection.

Tarkoff told Brannon that had it not been for Bullard, Holland would not be sitting in court awaiting sentencing.

Assistant District Attorney Woodberry Bowen cited April 6, 1978 as the date a car, travelling in Nebraska, was stopped after erratic driving. Authorities found a pound of cocaine and 10 pounds of marijuana in the car. On a scrap piece of paper inside the car was the name sandman and written next to it was the name Bobby Holland. Bowen said Holland's phone number was found on the paper.

Before handing down the sentence, Brannon said the sentence, which people will read of this case, might keep someone from picking up the phone and making a drug contact.

According to testimony, the conspiracy began when Holland and three other men met in Fayetteville last July, planning to bring a pound of cocaine to Lumberton.

Voyd Mitchell Faulk, a key witness for the prosecution, worked as an undercover agent for the Sheriff's Department and State Bureau of Investigation.

Faulk, Holland, Jim Bullard and Tommy Cain drove to Miami and made contact with a Cuban named Amello, who delivered to Faulk the 17½ ounces of cocaine, testimony revealed.

Faulk and Cain drove back with the cocaine while Bullard and Holland made plans to fly back.

Faulk and Cain were stopped inside Robeson County on I-95 and officials arrested Cain after SBI agents and deputies found the cocaine located under the floorboard of the car.

Holland was arrested a few hours later in his Hope Mills home.

Holland testified that he went to Miami for "peace of mind." Holland said he had been having marital problems and that he needed a vacation.

Holland maintained he never knew of a cocaine conspiracy, or transaction. He said he inquired about going to Miami with Bullard but had no idea the other three were going to buy cocaine.

Bullard and Cain pleaded guilty to the charges of conspiracy to sell and deliver cocaine and possession of cocaine for the purpose of sale and delivery.

Bullard and Cain received two year sentences.

Both men were sentenced on one of the two charges filed against them. Both had judgments continued on the

## Debut As A Court Reporter

## Key Drug Trial Witness Puzzled Over Source Of Expense Payments

By BOB DENHAM  
Robesonian Staff Writer

A key prosecution witness in the cocaine possession trial of James Robert Holland has no idea of his mailing address or who is paying his living expenses.

Voyd Mitchell Faulk testified Friday that the last time he held, as the defense termed it, "a legal job," was sometime in 1978 when he worked with his uncle for about two weeks.

In April, 1978, Faulk was arrested and charged with possession of narcotics and conspiracy to sell heroin and valiums. He was released on \$10,000 bond, but Faulk doesn't know who posted that bond. All he did was give his signature. His release took place after he had been seeing Detective Garth Locklear, Faulk said.

"I had no idea I would get out

of jail. The day I got out was a big surprise to me," Faulk testified.

The defense asked Faulk if he had thought that by cooperating with law officials he would receive a lesser judgment after the Holland trial.

Faulk said he didn't know whether or not he would, but he had hoped it would reduce his sentence. He said no one had promised any such agreement.

A recorded tape conversation between SBI agent Mary Ellen Shepp and Faulk was played before the jury as evidence against Holland. In the recording Faulk can be heard calling his home in Lumberton from a motel in Florida. Faulk told the agent that he and the others, including Holland, were staying at a motel. He told them they were preparing to leave with the cocaine. He and

another man would travel I-85 and Holland and his friend would fly back.

Shepp told Faulk, as heard in the recording, to be sure to make their stopovers in Jacksonville, Fla. and Florence, S.C.

The cocaine was carried in a brown sachel bag on the front seat of the car. They were told to run the air conditioner on high in order to preserve the cocaine, Faulk testified.

They were arrested on July 11, as they traveled north on I-95, south of Lumberton.

In earlier trial action on Friday morning, a shotgun, three pistols, a hot-box to test cocaine and a fuzzbuster were introduced into evidence.

Holland was arrested, along with two other men, on July 11, 1978, as they drove along I-95, south of Lumberton.

The state will contend that the guns and other equipment entered into evidence this

morning were seized in the arrests of Holland and the two other men.

The trial was delayed for several hours, Thursday afternoon, as Judge Anthony Brannon ruled on the admissibility of several tape recordings.

Brannon allowed three tapes to be entered into evidence and the jury heard one of those tapes, which is purported to be a conversation between Holland and an undercover agent, Thursday afternoon.

Voyd Mitchell Faulk, who worked as an undercover agent in the case, testified Thursday that Holland was involved in the planning of the cocaine sale. He said Holland was involved as early as July 15.

Faulk testified the group bought the cocaine in Miami, Florida, and that they were transporting it to Lumberton.

The trial is expected to last into next week.

## Armed Robbery Trial Witness Says Defendants Threatened Him

By BOB DENHAM  
Robesonian Staff Writer

A prosecution witness in the armed robbery trial of John Davis and Robert Brown testified in the jury's absence Thursday that he had been threatened by the defendants during an early afternoon recess.

Assistant District Attorney Woodberry Bowen stormed into the courtroom following the afternoon recess and said his witness, Michael Smith, was told by the defendants that he could be charged with being an accessory after the fact if he testified against them.

Michael Smith immediately took the stand and testified he had spoken with the defendants during the recess.

"They asked what I was

going to do. I told them I was a witness for the state," Smith said. The defendants told Smith that if he took the stand and told the court that he had painted the car used in the getaway he could be an accessory after the fact, according to testimony by Smith.

John Davis and Robert Brown are charged with the July 28, 1977 attempted armed robbery of the North of the Border cigarette shop, located just inside the North Carolina state line, off I-95. A third man, Horace Stevens, was convicted of the crime in 1977.

According to earlier testimony, three black masked males, one carrying a gun, entered the cigarette shop and demanded to know the whereabouts of a safe.

The robbery attempt was interrupted when an unexpected customer drove up, walked up to the shop, and screamed at first sight of the gunman. A son of the store's operator quickly jumped up, grabbed a .22 pistol and fired at the fleeing robbers.

Superior Court Judge Anthony Brannon ordered tighter courtroom security following the conversation between Smith and the defendants during the recess.

Brannon said no handbags would be allowed in the courtroom for the remainder of the trial and that all spectators, including females, were subject to search. Spectators and witnesses for both the defense and state were ordered to vacate the first five rows of the

courtroom.

Judge Brannon told the court he had been informed by the Robeson County Sheriff's Dept. that a lock had been tampered with and a panel loosened in the room where the defendants stayed during recesses.

Maximum security was also ordered by Brannon for the defendants.

During second day testimony, Larry Davis, son of the store's operator, Joyce Dickens, told the court that after firing at the robbers, two of the three made a getaway in a car located in front of the shop.

Larry Davis testified his brother, Jeff Davis, was out the front door of the shop first carrying a shotgun. Larry (See C on Page 13)

# Robeson's First Female Deputy Patrols County

H

By BOB DENHAM  
Robesonian Staff Writer

Never before in the history of Robeson County had it ever happened. A man's job: a profession of danger requiring the macho image. But that was before Hubert Stone became sheriff last month.

Since then, Maria Lowry, wife and mother of a 17-year-old daughter has been assigned to be the first female field deputy in Robeson County.

Shortly after Sheriff Stone filed for election in Feb. '78, he promised to county voters to hire female deputies, believing they were seriously needed.

"I felt like the county needed female field deputies that, in some instances, they could do a better job. For example, cases involving assaults on females in which the presence of a female deputy would be necessary," Stone said.

As a result of that belief, Maria Lowry now patrols the Pembroke area in her red and white county squad car. Inside the car on the front dash, lies a pair of handcuffs and not far from her reach, stands a short black night stick.

Her equipment and uniform are no different than any other deputy's. She wears a .38 detective special strapped to her hip and dresses in the regulation two-tone brown uniform. She wears sunglasses and often chews gum, unbothered by the notion that she is the first female deputy to patrol in Robeson County.

"The feeling I get is that I'm no different than any other deputy. My peers don't treat me any differently because I'm a woman," Lowry says.

She grew up on a Red Banks farm, four miles west of Pembroke. In March 1956 she married and three years later graduated from Pembroke Senior High School.

After attending a 12-month nursing program at Fayetteville Technical Institute in 1964, Maria was certified as a licensed practical nurse. Her training earned her a position as a staff nurse at Southeastern General Hospital where, "I worked every floor, including, most often, the maternity ward," she said.

She moved on, leaving Southeastern General in 1967 and becoming in March of the same year an active member of the Tri-County Community Action Program. A program designed to work with youths in Robeson, Scotland and Richmond Counties.

"It was a challenging program," Maria says. She worked first with preschool students, administering physical examinations. She then expanded her training through an "Early Childhood Development" course at UNC at Greensboro, working her way up as youth program supervisor.

We worked with school dropouts and encouraged them to stay in school by giving them jobs," Maria recalls.

One of those jobs was a communication operator position for the Pembroke Police Department, which is how Maria first became acquainted with law enforcement.

For years Maris worked closely with Pembroke police through the action program, until she too cherished the thought of working law enforcement.

"I wanted to work for the Pembroke Police Department because I had always held an interest there," she said. "It was an area I wanted to know about."

"While I was working with the youth program in Oct. 1974, I was approached by then Pembroke Mayor Juddie Revels about becoming a female police officer," she said.

So in March 1975, she left the action program to begin her new career in law enforcement as a dispatcher (communications operator) for the Pembroke Police Department.

"I didn't exactly encourage her to become a police officer in Pembroke, but I wasn't against it, either," Stanford Lowry, Maria's husband of 22 years said. "If that was what she wanted, then it was O.K. with me."

So Maria continued her training. While working as a dispatcher, she attended 168 hours of Basic



ROBESON COUNTY'S FIRST female field deputy, Maria Lowry, working the Pembroke area. "I'm very satisfied with the job she is doing, and I have heard some fine compliments about her from the rest of the department," Sheriff Hubert Stone says. (Bob Denham Photos)

Police Science school, a prerequisite every prospective officer must meet. And again in 1976 she completed 85 hours of Emergency Medical Technician school for her own personal benefit. "I felt it would help me do a better job."

But Maria remained a dispatcher for the Pembroke Police during the next four years, except on special occasion.

"I would only go out in special cases involved attempted rape or if someone was seriously injured," she said.

"I had worked with police for four years, so I knew I wanted to be in this type of work. But I didn't want to be confined in one city. I didn't like being one place," Maria said.

Maria had applied for a county deputy's job in 1976 but was turned down for lack of funds. "It didn't upset me when I was turned down; I understand how budgets work, and they just didn't have the money to hire me," Maris says. "So I didn't apply any more after that."

But Maria's application remained intact, along with 15-to-20 other females who had applied for the same job. And it was Sheriff Stone who started the wheels rolling.

"After I knew I was elected, I went before the county commission and applied for additional help with the understanding a few could be employed. When the funds were made available, I contacted Maria the first of November about the opening," Stone said.

"I was excited and proud of the fact that I was picked to work with the Sheriff's Department," Maria said of her appointment.

"I was glad for her to get it, because that was what she wanted," said Stanford, a Pembroke Sheriff. (See A on Page 12)

A Story from A  
Local Page

University graduate and now a counselor for special programs at PSU.

"My daughter, Lisa, and I have never really thought about the danger that could be involved," Stanford says. "I think the people around the Pembroke area accept her and the job she is doing."

"I'm very satisfied with the job she is doing and I've had some fine compliments from other department members," Stone said.

On the job, Maria answers calls, makes reports, and routinely investigates reports of larcenies and breaking and enterings.

"A deputy will go to the scene of a complainant no matter how minor or major the problem," Maria says.

"I watched her closely," Stone says, "I've listened to her on the radio, and I've checked her reports. She's doing a good job."

"During the recent double murder in Fairmont, she and Deputy Earnest Chavis were the first two officers on the scene. I was the third to arrive. She was doing a good job at keeping people back from bothering crime-scene-evidence. It had been the first time I had been on the scene while she was working," Stone said.

For Maria, the job has been a time of adjustment, but only a temporary one. She's used to the shifts and different working hours from her previous experiences. And she doesn't mind the 24-hour stand-by call either.

"I'm enjoying it so far," Maria says of her new job. "It's a challenge."

# Town Meetings, Too Long And Boring

## Rowland Board Takes Action

# Game Rooms Regulated

By BOB DENHAM  
Robesonian Staff Writer  
ROWLAND — The town council passed an ordinance Tuesday night regulating game rooms in the Town of Rowland. Council members unanimously agreed to implement rules and regulations outlining the operation of game rooms inside the town limits. The ordinance defined a game room through examples which included pool rooms, bowling alleys and amusement centers.

Persons interested in opening a game room business will first be required to pay a privilege license tax and then to obtain from the town council an operator's license. Game room

owners must have the permission of the council before operating, the ordinance states.

The operating hours for game rooms will run from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., Monday through Thursday, close at midnight on Friday and Saturday nights and will remain closed on Sundays.

No one less than 16 will be allowed on the premises and the manager of the business must be at least 18-years-old. Councilman M. H. Walker told fellow members, in the presence of Police Chief Stuart Williams, that the town will have to depend on the police to rid Rowland of "pot traffic" which he said was evident near

the game room area. He said young people are carrying beer in paper cups on the premises of these game rooms and that it was time Rowland police did something to curb this action. "The Rowland Police Department has just as much power as the sheriff's department," Walker said in response to Williams' comment that he is working with the sheriff's department concerning the "pot" problem in Rowland. "We always want someone else to do the job for us instead of doing it ourselves. We don't have enough guts to carry the weight on our own shoulders," Walker said in reference to past action taken by the Rowland police enforcing game

room regulations.

"I'm sure they are playing pool on Sunday and there are some that are under 16 years of age going into these game rooms," Walker said.

The council also considered an ordinance prohibiting dance halls inside the town limits of Rowland, but were unable to come to any decision.

Council members questioned the definition of public dance, and some suggested that dances be restricted, not prohibited.

"I think we are guessing at this. We should invite the town attorney to May's meeting when we discuss this ordinance the next time," Mayor Don See GAME Page 10

# Sewer System Work Pushed

By BOB DENHAM  
Robesonian Staff Writer  
ST. PAULS — The board of commissioners voted Thursday night to apply for a state permit to begin construction of a sewer system for families living in a tiny section southwest of St. Pauls.

This was the first formal step on a request made last month by Town Councilman David Jackson who had earlier urged board members to consider this area of town for immediate action.

After the permit is obtained, the Town of St. Pauls will advertise for construction bids. The estimated cost for the sewer is \$100,000; the town would be required to pay 75 percent of that amount. Originally, the area was to be

served under the federally funded "201" sewer construction plan which will encompass a square-mile area from US 20 to Elizabeth St.

But the plan was moving slowly, according to board members, and it was felt some alternative plan was in order.

It is hoped by board members that the town's decision to go ahead with some sort of plan will not hinder their application for federal funds.

The sewer evaluation system, called for in last month's board meeting, has been approved in Raleigh. The survey is designed to find flaws in sewer lines. The cost is \$6,907 and the town and state will pay \$1,151 apiece while the remainder will be paid with federal funds.

The board agreed to adopt a resolution calling for the second stage of the "201" plan. This stage of the plan calls for the development of engineering plans which will cost the town about \$2,000. The total cost for the plans is \$16,000 but the Environmental Protection Agency is providing for 75 percent of the cost. The state and St. Pauls are splitting the remaining 25 percent.

In other action, Mayor Claude W. Fulghum Jr. conducted the second and final reading of an ordinance describing the duties of a town administrator.

The ordinance resulted from a call by board members to create the position to relieve what they say is an overburdened town clerk.

The Town of St. Pauls will be receiving applications for the position of town administrator through March 15.

The mayor also conducted the second and final reading of an ordinance increasing monthly cablevision rates by 50 cents, effective April 1, with an additional 50-cent increase becoming effective Oct. 1.

The increase came at the request of Harrison Daniels, a representative to Jones Intercable of Red Springs, who told the board in January that a \$7.50 monthly rate would be charged to "Showtime" subscribers. "Showtime" is a cable service providing St. Pauls viewers with expanded cable programming.

The board agreed to begin See SEWER Page 12

# St. Pauls To Buy Rec Center Land

By BOB DENHAM  
Robesonian Staff Writer  
ST. PAULS — The board of commissioners agreed Friday afternoon to purchase 15 acres of land which they say will be the future site of a "much-needed" recreational facility. The decision came after more than a year of negotiations between the board and the Ralph Powers family, the property owners who are selling the land to the Town of St. Pauls for \$45,000.

According to board members, the two parties could not agree on a price for the land until recently. The board said they had been trying to secure rights to the land since November, 1977, and according to one member, former Mayor Luke Maynor became interested in the land acquisition more than two years ago.

The board and an attorney from Charlotte representing the Powers family finally agreed on a price of \$3,000 an acre. "The area runs adjacent to the big ditch on the eastern side of town," Town Clerk Doris Sutton said. "It extends from Blue St. southward to Clark St."

The motion, which requires that the Town of St. Pauls pay a \$4,500 option fee toward purchase of the land, carries a stipulation which could complicate the land acquisition.

The board included, in the motion, a stipulation that an additional 30 feet of land be dedicated by another land owner to ensure extension of Clark St. The board is confident the land will be dedicated and expects to hear word of the anticipated contribution this

See ST. PAULS page 13

# St. Pauls

morning.

The option fee, which includes 10 percent of the total land cost, gives the board until April 1, 1980, to make a final decision in the purchase, but should they decide to back out they would lose the \$4,500.

The Robeson County Parks and Recreation Center, will contribute \$15,000 to the purchase of the land with the remaining \$30,000 coming from St. Pauls General Funds Surplus.

According to Mayor Claude Fulghum, the board has also applied for a federal grant which will match the \$45,000 the county and St. Pauls are putting up for the land.

He said the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR) grant will contribute toward construction costs of the recreation facility which will include little league baseball and softball fields.

# Routine 'Police Beat' Stories

## Trooper Finds Own Wife Dead In I-95 Accident

By **BOB DENHAM**  
Robesonian Staff Writer  
A tragic scene awaited rookie  
state trooper P. A. Stanton,  
formerly of the Lumberton

Police Department, Friday  
morning, when he was called to  
investigate his first traffic  
fatality located one-half mile  
north of Fayetteville on I-95.

The victim was his wife: 25-  
year-old Judy Bradshaw  
Stanton, who had died  
moments before his arrival.

Mrs. Stanton, of Rt. 1, Wade,  
was on her way to work in  
Fayetteville, when she lost  
control of her vehicle on an icy  
bridge. According to patrol  
reports, Mrs. Stanton was  
thrown from her pickup truck  
as the vehicle crossed the  
median, rolled over twice, and  
came to a halt 183 feet down the  
road.

Mrs. Stanton was travelling

between 40 and 45 mph when  
the accident occurred, the  
report said.

Trooper Stanton, who joined  
the Highway Patrol Depart-  
ment in July, was the second  
trooper to arrive on the scene.  
Veteran trooper C. L. Salmon,  
who was assigned to assist  
Stanton investigate the fatality,  
arrived first.

Trooper Stanton "had no  
idea" it was his wife who was  
involved in the accident until he  
recognized her wrecked Toyota  
truck, a patrol officer said.

"Another officer was on the  
scene by the time Stanton got  
there, and he handled the  
situation as best he could," a  
duty sergeant at the patrol  
station in Fayetteville said.

Salmon said Friday night  
that he recognized Mrs.  
Stanton as soon as he arrived  
on the accident scene. He said  
"I got her covered up and,  
about that time, he (Stanton)  
arrived on the scene and  
recognized the truck."

"He wanted to go over there  
and look at her," Salmon said.

"He raised the sheet and saw it  
was her and he went into  
hysterics. We forced him back  
into the car until we could get  
some help for him. He taking it  
awful bad."

Before joining the Highway  
Patrol, the Maxton native  
worked for the Lumberton  
Police Department, where he  
began in July 1974. He left the  
Lumberton force last March,  
when he went to the State High-  
way Patrol Basic School for 15  
weeks of training.

(See 'C' on Page 2)



**Action Line**  
Call 738-8844

Or write Box 1100, Lumberton, N.C. 28358

## Child Dies In Accident

Henry Lee Collins, 6, of Route  
1, Shannon, was killed Friday  
evening when he reportedly ran  
into the path of a Shannon  
driver five miles north of Red  
Springs.

According to reports, Felicia  
Locklear of Shannon, was  
traveling east on State Road  
1754 about 6:50 p.m., when the  
Shannon youth apparently ran  
from behind a parked vehicle  
onto the road.

The road was dark with no

area lights and according to  
the report, there was a cloudy  
overcast at the time of the  
accident.

The vehicle was said to be  
traveling 55 miles-an-hour in a  
55-mile-an-hour zone just  
before the incident. The car hit  
the child traveling at 50 mph,  
according to a report filed by  
State trooper Al Williams.

No charges have been filed  
against Locklear.

## Police Investigate Two Armed Robberies

Two armed robberies, one in  
Fairmont and the other in  
Little Marsh, occurred within  
35 minutes of each other  
Saturday night.

According to reports, two  
black males entered the Kay-  
Ron Food Store on NC 41 truck  
route in Fairmont, pointed a  
gun at the lone attendant and  
demanded that she give them  
the money out of the cash  
register. They are said to have  
left the store in a white car.

The second armed robbery  
was reported at 7:25 p.m.

Three white males repor-  
tedly entered the convenience  
store at Little Marsh, on US 301  
South of St. Pauls and  
demanded an undetermined  
amount of money.

They are said to have made  
their getaway in a '73 white  
Chevy Super Sport.

The Sheriff's office is in-  
vestigating the incidents.

## Rescue Squad Ambulance Wrecked While On Call

A Lumberton Rescue Squad  
vehicle, enroute to a call,  
collided with a '73 Plymouth on  
Roberts Avenue Sunday.

According to Major B. R. Tojar,  
of the Lumberton Police Dept.,  
the ambulance, driven by  
Hubert L. Covington of 306 W.  
'3rd St., Lumberton, was  
traveling south on Roberts  
Avenue.

A third vehicle, a  
Volkswagen driven by William  
K. McCallum, of Rt. 2, Box 75,  
Rowland, was stopped at a red  
light heading north on Roberts  
Avenue.

The Plymouth, driven by

Timothy B. Jackson, of B12  
Rozier Homes, Lumberton,  
was reportedly turning from or  
onto 7th Street when his car's  
left front hit the rescue unit's  
right front fender. The ambu-  
lance then crossed over and  
hit the right front of the  
Volkswagen.

Damage to the ambulance  
was estimated at \$2,000. The  
Volkswagen and the Plymouth  
had estimated damages at \$800  
and \$1,800 respectively.

There were no serious in-  
juries. The cause of the ac-  
cident is still under in-  
vestigation.

## High-Speed Chase Ends In Wreck And Arrest

By **BOB DENHAM**  
Robesonian Staff Writer

A Lumberton city patrol car  
involved in high speed chase  
Monday night crashed into the  
fleeing automobile after the  
vehicle failed to make a turn  
and spun into the path of the  
oncoming patrol car, according  
to a report filed by State  
Trooper E. G. Brown.

Ricky Flower, 20 of Rt. 2  
Lumberton, was arrested at  
rural paved road 1820 and rural

paved road 2218, and charged  
with careless and reckless  
driving, driving while under  
the influence and speeding.

According to reports, Officer  
Mendy Wenker gave chase to  
Flower from Lumberton to  
Long Branch Community,  
covering four to five miles.  
Flower's vehicle is reported to  
have reached speeds up to 100  
miles an hour.

Flower's car was traveling  
old U.S. 74 when his car ap-  
proached a stop sign located in  
the middle of the road. Flower  
tried to make a right hand turn  
on rural road 2218, reports say  
but the car spun around and  
came back on U.S. 74. The  
patrol car, traveling on U.S. 74,  
then hit the right back end of  
Flower's car head on at ap-  
proximately 35 miles an hour.

Damaged estimated to the  
patrol car was \$2,500. The  
Camero damage was estimated  
at \$2,000.

According to the report there  
were no serious injuries, only  
minor cuts.

y, February 28, 1979

## Local Cops Detain Three Men; Assault Charges Filed In Hoke

By **BOB DENHAM**  
Robesonian Staff Writer

A father and his two sons,  
charged with several counts of  
assault with a deadly weapon  
by Hoke County law officials,  
were picked up by Lumberton  
law officials Sunday at  
Southeastern General Hospital  
and held until Hoke County  
deputies could arrive.

Baxton Willoughby, 49, and  
his two sons, George, 24, and  
William, 28, were arrested at  
Southeastern General after  
seeking treatment for a gun-  
shot wound Baxton is believed  
to have received during a  
skirmish in Hoke County.

According to a spokesman  
for the Hoke County Sheriff's  
department, Baxton and his  
sons were shooting billiards in  
a pool hall near McNeill's Lake  
when an argument developed

between the three men and  
Frank Bullard Locklear, 18, of  
Rt. 1, Shannon, and his friend.

According to the report, both  
George Willoughby and  
Locklear pulled out their  
pistols and began firing.  
Baxton was the only one injured  
in the exchange.

Locklear was charged with  
assault with a deadly weapon  
inflicting serious injury by  
Hoke County law officials. He is  
currently in the Hoke County  
jail.

Baxton was charged with two  
counts of assault with a deadly  
weapon, George with three  
counts of assault with deadly  
weapon, and William with two  
counts of assault with a deadly  
weapon. According to the  
report, the three men used pool  
sticks in the fight which  
brought about the charges  
involving a deadly weapon.

According to the report, the  
three men used pool sticks in  
the fight which brought about  
the charges involving a deadly  
weapon.

According to Detective  
Robert Brice of the Lumberton  
Police Department, he and  
Detective Frank Lovett were  
called to the hospital after  
hospital officials reported some  
troubles with the three men.

Hospital officials apparently  
wanted to treat Baxton's in-  
juries outside the presence of  
his sons. But, they refused to  
leave.

Lumberton detectives, after  
arriving at the hospital,  
recognized the men as fitting  
the description radioed by  
Hoke County deputies.

The men were detained by  
the detectives until Hoke  
County officials arrived.

## Maxton Boy Shot In Face While Playing At Home

### News From "Off The Blotter"

Kevin Jones, 7, of Rt. 3, Maxton was accidentally shot in the face by his nine-year-old brother Wednesday afternoon after the two were reportedly playing "cowboys and Indians" inside their home, a sheriff's department spokesman said.

The .410 shotgun blast has left Jones in guarded condition in the intensive care unit at Cape Fear Hospital in Fayetteville. According to a spokesman there, Jones' condition could grow worse or better; he is listed as stable.

According to Sheriff's Detective Luther Sanderson, the two boys were playing by themselves inside the house. A babysitter was supposed to have sent the boys to school but the boys stayed home when the girl went to school. The parents were at work.

Nathan Jones, Kevin's brother, told deputies he did not know the gun was loaded. He said Kevin was hiding behind the heater, and when he stood up he fired the shotgun.

The shooting accident took place at the intersection of Highway US 74 and Harper's Ferry Road, two miles west of Pembroke. After the shooting, Nathan ran about a quarter of a mile to his grandfather's house to inform him of the accident.

Robert Danny Smith, 28, of Linkhaw Apts. and Kenneth Dean Callahan, 17, of 80 Jerome St. were arrested Wednesday evening and charged with breaking, entering and larceny.

Police officers say they spotted the two males on top of a building after receiving a call from the area.

According to the report, the two males were apprehended following a brief attempt by the two to escape.

After investigating the premises, police officers found that change boxes from two pinball machines had been broken open and that several packs of cigarettes were missing.

According to the report, a shoe was found in the store at the base of the staircase and four packs of cigarettes and \$15.88 in change was found on top of the building.

Sampson Seaford of 2736 5th St. reported to Lumberton police Wednesday morning a breaking, entering and larceny.

According to the report, a window was broken and several packs of chips, valued at \$5, were removed from the stand. Nothing else was reported missing.

Jane C. Hargrave School reported to Lumberton police Wednesday morning a breaking, entering and larceny. Glass to a door was broken and the door unlocked from the inside.

Wilson Dairy Products of 4th and Water Streets reported to city police this morning a breaking and entering.

According to the report, the office door had been tampered with, causing an estimated \$25 damage to the door.

Annie Gerald of 105 Powell St. reported to Lumberton police Wednesday evening a breaking and entering.

Police say a lock was broken off the front door and phone wires located outside the house were cut.

McDonalds of Roberts Avenue reported to Lumberton police Wednesday evening that a firearm was discharged inside the building.

An employee told police that she was seated at a table eating when she heard a loud pop. She said a white male and female got up hurriedly and left the premises.

A bullet hole in one of the seats caused an estimated \$25 damage.

An accident occurred Wednesday morning between drivers Billy Bell, 25, of 404 Cottage Rd., Fairmont and

Ruby Mae Patterson, 28, of Rt. 4, Box 407, lot 19.

According to the report, Bell stopped on West 5th St. when Patterson was unable to stop in time, sliding into the rear of Bell's vehicle.

Lumberton Police Officer Horace Downing indicated on his report that Patterson was driving with improper equipment due to the sickness of the tires.

Damage to the Bell vehicle was estimated at \$200 and the Patterson vehicle suffered an estimated \$75 damage.

No injuries reported.

An accident occurred Wednesday in the Masonic building parking lot after Ruby Holloman Malpass, 55, of Rex, hit a parked car owned by Murchison Bolton Biggs of 2900 Shaw Ave.

According to the report, Malpass backed out of a parking space and hit the Biggs vehicle in the side.

Lumberton Police Officer Harold Scott indicated on his report that Malpass made a safe movement violation.

Damage to the Biggs vehicle was estimated at \$450, and the Malpass car was estimated to have suffered \$50 in damage. No injuries were reported.

Mary Lou Poole of Rt. 1, Orrum, reported to county deputies Wednesday afternoon a breaking, entering and larceny.

Elaine McNeil of Rt. 1, Orrum reported to county deputies Wednesday afternoon a breaking, entering and larceny.

Jacolyn Scott of Rt. 4 reported a larceny to county deputies Wednesday afternoon.

Keith Canady, 23, of 512A, Chavis Trailer Park, and Peppers Marston, 29, of Rt. 5, Boaz, Ala., were arrested by county deputies Wednesday and charged with breaking, entering and larceny.

## Kidnapping Laid To Shootout Suspects

By BOB DENHAM  
Robesonian Staff Writer

Two men who were arrested earlier this week and charged with assault on a policeman following a shootout in the Sambo's parking lot have been charged with the Feb. 7th armed robbery and kidnapping of a Parkton youth.

Herman Bentley Stewart, 25, and Solomon Anthony Kozmo III, 22, who were positively identified by sheriff and SBI officials Thursday, are being held on \$25,000 bond on charges of assault on a police officer with a firearm. Additional charges were filed Thursday against Stewart and Kozmo. Police say they forced Jimmy McCrowie, 16, and another youth into their car at 8:15 p.m. Feb. 7 on US

301, outside of Parkton.

Police have charged the men with beating up McCrowie and stealing \$119 in personal property from the two. Police say the alleged kidnapping and robbery were conducted at gunpoint.

A spokesman for the sheriff's department said more charges are expected to be filed today in connection with the alleged kidnapping and armed robbery of McCrowie's companion, Adrian Chamberlain.

Detective Benson Phillips of the Lumberton Police Dept. said they are still investigating other charges, in other counties, which might be levied against the two.

Both men earlier claimed to be Thomas

Eugene Solberg. Police officials had tentatively identified the men Wednesday afternoon as Stewart and Solberg. But further investigation revealed that Solberg really is Kozmo.

Kozmo was described by Phillips as a "drifter," who claims to be from Iowa. Police believe that Stewart, who had earlier claimed to be from Iowa, was living in Clinton. Stewart told police he was born in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Stewart and Kozmo were apprehended by Lumberton police following a shootout they had with officers Glenn Rogers and James Strickland in the Sambo's parking lot about 3 a.m. Wednesday.

The officers were answering a call that

reported two men inside Sambo's with guns and drugs.

After the officers talked the men into stepping outside, the men broke into a run, firing at the officers as they ran.

According to reports, five shots were fired in the exchange injuring a police officer and one of the suspects. Rogers was slightly grazed across the forehead by a shot fired from a .357 Magnum, and Officer Strickland returned fire and shot one of the men in the arm.

Stewart, who was shot in the right arm, was admitted to Southeastern General Hospital and later transferred to Central Prison Hospital. Kozmo is still in Robeson County Jail, Benson said.



SPONSOR EDITORIAL #822

ADDRESS

Written  
3/14/79

Begins

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DIAL 739-3394 --- P. O. BOX 1056

LUMBERTON, NORTH CAROLINA

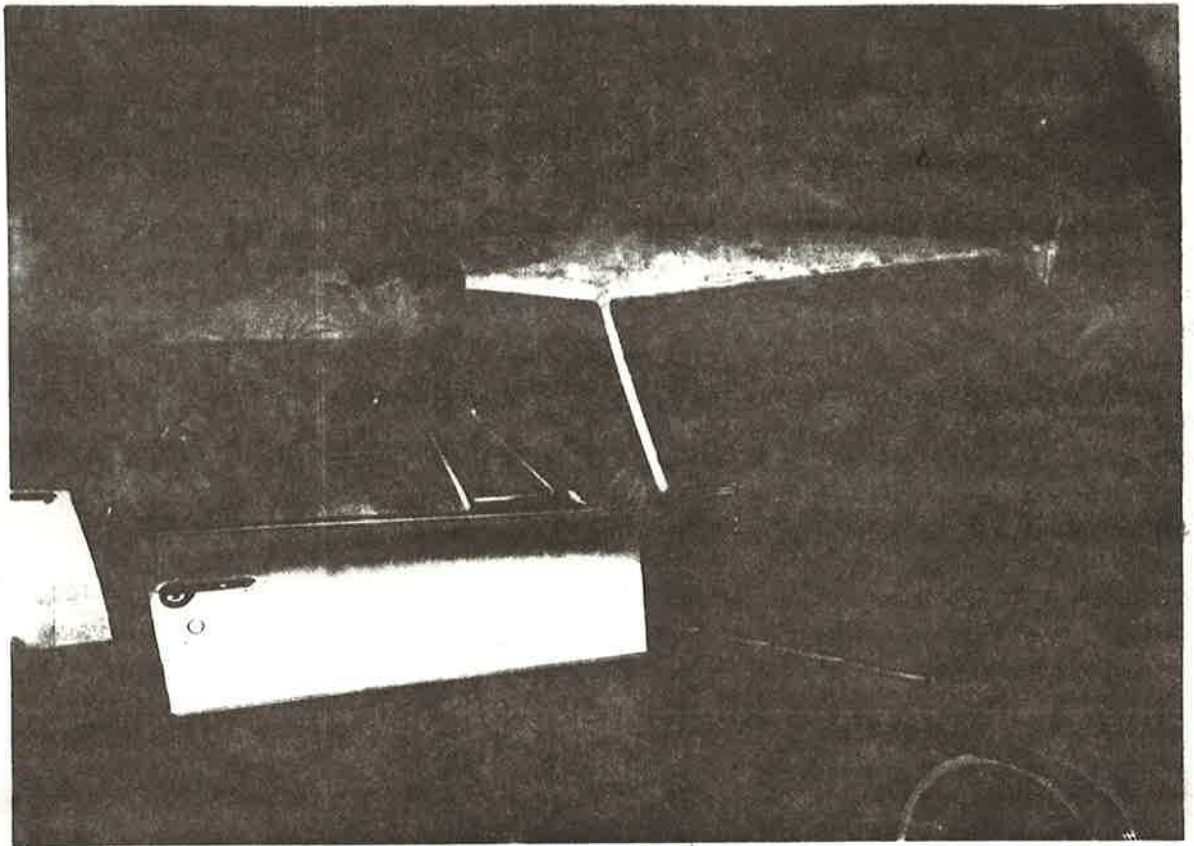
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1 THE HOOPLA SURROUNDING THE CASE OF THE CITY AND THE CHURCH PARKING  
 2 LOT IS NOT GOING TO BE DECIDED OVERNIGHT. AT THE PRESENT TIME, THE  
 3 MAYOR HAS ASKED THE CITY ATTORNEY TO LOOK INTO WHETHER OR NOT THE CITY  
 4 IS IN THE RIGHT IN PROVIDING CITY EMPLOYEES AND EQUIPMENT TO PERFORM  
 5 WORK FOR NON-PUBLIC ENTITIES. FOR THE UNINFORMED, THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER  
 6 RAN AN ARTICLE WITH AN ACCOMPANYING PICTURE SHOWING A CITY EMPLOYEE  
 7 USING CITY OWNED EQUIPMENT TO LINE A CHURCH PARKING LOT. THE QUESTION  
 8 WAS WHETHER IT WAS BEING DONE WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MAYOR AND CITY  
 9 COUNCIL. THE ANSWER APPEARED TO BE THAT, WHILE THAT SPECIFIC INSTANCE  
 10 WAS NOT DONE WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF COUNCIL, IT HAS BEEN A SORT OF  
 11 UNOFFICIAL POLICY OF THE CITY TO HELP OUT IN THAT SORT OF THING. AS  
 12 THE CITY'S PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR WAS QUOTED, IT'S GOOD PUBLIC RELATIONS  
 13 AND HELPS TO PROMOTE CHRISTIANITY. IN THE MEANTIME, A LOCAL BUSINESSMAN  
 14 WHO IS IN THE BUSINESS OF LINING PARKING LOTS IS UPSET BECAUSE HE,  
 15 SUPPOSEDLY, HAD GIVEN THE CHURCH AN ESTIMATE ON THE WORK AND, SINCE THE  
 16 CITY HAD DONE THE WORK INSTEAD, HE FELT HE HAD BEEN DONE OUT OF A JOB.  
 17 WHETHER THERE IS ANYWHERE A POLICY OR STATUTE THAT GOVERNS THE SITUATION  
 18 REMAINS TO BE SEEN. IT'S VERY POSSIBLE THAT IT WILL WIND UP WITH THE  
 19 COUNCIL HAVING TO MAKE A DECISION ON INSTITUTING A POLICY TO COVER SUCH  
 20 A SITUATION. IN THE MEANTIME, THE CONTROVERSY GOES ON. WE DO WONDER ONE  
 21 THING, THOUGH. HOW DID IT HAPPEN THAT THE PAPER'S PHOTOGRAPHER CAME  
 22 UPON THE SCENE TO TAKE A PICTURE? THERE WAS NO PARADE...NO TRUMPETS  
 BLARING...JUST A MAN OPERATING A SMALL MACHINE IN A NON-CONGESTED AREA.  
 AN IDEAL SUBJECT FOR AN INNOCENT PICTURE? MAYBE.



The getaway car used in the armed robbery of a convenient store located in downtown Fairmont. At the time of these photographs, law officials had not arrested anyone. Only hours later did county deputies realize they had allowed their prime suspects to slip through the road block. Deputies used these two shots of the car to locate it the next day, abandoned.

## LIST OF REFERENCES

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