

## National Spinning Company – Washington – 1982

From [Facebook on September 7, 2021](#)

LODD history. On this date in 1982, September 8, four members of the National Spinning Company fire brigade in Washington (NC) died, after overcome with smoke, while trying to extinguish a 12:08 a.m. fire in a dyed yarn storage area. Washington and two other departments battled the blaze for four hours. It was later determined as caused by a faulty light fixture.

Killed were Maintenance Worker James Harris, 26, Packing Operator Greg Lamm, 22, Supervisor Asa Squires, 39, and Machine Loader Jesse Woolard, 25. Here's the Raleigh newspaper story. Any Beaufort County readers with local clippings to share, with more incident details?

The fire was one of the deadliest fires in the state for firefighters, along with the four members of Shelby FD killed in gas explosion on May 25, 1979, and four members of the 145th Airlift Wing in Charlotte, killed when their USAF C-130 crashed in South Dakota, while fighting a wildland fire on July 1, 2012.

### 4 workers die in fire at N.C. yarn-making plant

By JERRY ALLEGOOD  
Staff Writer

WASHINGTON, N.C. — Four men died Tuesday after trying to help douse a fire at the National Spinning Co. plant that filled the huge yarn-making facility with thick smoke. A fifth employee was hospitalized.

"I guess it was just sort of a heroic thing on their part that they stayed back and tried to assist," said Donald Barham, the company's vice president. "It was just a tragic thing."

Authorities said the five workers ~~apparently were overcome by smoke while trying to extinguish~~

the fire, which broke out at 12:08 a.m. in a dyed yarn storage area. The cause of the blaze and a damage estimate had not been determined late Tuesday. A plant spokesman said the amount of damage was significant.

Investigators said the victims died of smoke inhalation. They were identified as James L. Harris, 26, and Gregory M. Lamm, 22, of Chocowinity; and Asa T. Squires, 39, and Jesse Moye Woolard Jr., 25, of Washington.

Terry Woolard of Washington, ~~not related to Jesse Woolard, was being treated for smoke inhalation at Pitt County Memorial Hospital~~

in Greenville. A nursing supervisor said his condition was stable.

Barham said Squires and Terry Woolard were supervisors in the dye plant. He said Harris was a maintenance worker, Lamm was a packing operator and Jesse Woolard was a machine loader.

Washington Fire Chief Anthony R. Abeyounis said firefighters from his department and two area volunteer departments battled the blaze and sifted through the darkened corridors for about four hours. He said the fire, fueled by miles of synthetic yarn, activated a sprinkler system that helped ~~confine the blaze to one room~~

about the size of a football field.

Abeyounis said firefighters were hampered by a roof that had partially collapsed and by thick smoke that limited visibility and air. He said the firefighters worked in pairs, feeling their way into and out of the building with ropes.

Henry H. "Buster" Humphries, the company's vice president of manufacturing, said officials "have zero idea of what started it." He said the workers are assigned specified evacuation routes for emergencies, but the victims ~~apparently stayed in the storage area to try to extinguish the fire.~~

News & Observer, Sep 8, 1982