



TARHEEL FIREFIGHTER



AND CAROLINA RURAL FIREMAN

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MAY, 1974

Officials' Fear Comes True

Fire Destroys Garner Town Hall

GARNER - An early morning fire destroyed the nearly 100 year - old historic Garner Town Hall recently along with many valuable and irreplaceable town records.

The fire was reported at 12:20

a.m., just 25 minutes after the last town employee left the building for the night.

The Garner Volunteer Fire Department responded to the alarm in just four minutes, but to

no avail as far as salvaging any part of the building.

Alex Umstead, assistant fire chief, said that the roof caved in within seconds after five Garner fire - fighting units arrived.



CARRIED TO SAFETY - Town Manager Gus Ulrich (left) and alderman Sherwood Johnson bring a charred file drawer from the still blazing ruins of the Town Hall. Thanks to their efforts and the efforts of other firemen on the scene, the minutes of past board meetings, perhaps the town's most important records, was saved. Ulrich, Johnson and Mayor Joe Creech were praised by members of the Garner Board of Aldermen for their efforts in saving the valuable records.



UP IN SMOKE - Garner's historic Town Hall went up in smoke and flames between 12:30 a.m. and dawn recently. The extra heavy roof on the structure collapsed within minutes after firemen arrived on the scene. After the collapse, the firemen concentrated their efforts on hosing down the water tower to keep the intense heat and flames from buckling the legs.

"When we got there, the basement and second story of the building were fully involved," Umstead said.

Fire Chief B.R. Poole said the fire worked fast and had begun eating the auditorium of the building by the time equipment was set up and connected to at least three fire hydrants.

An immediate call for back - up assistance was given to the Swift Creek Fire Department and to the Clayton Rescue Squad. Both arrived within 20 minutes to the call.

The Garner firemen concentrated fully half their efforts to protecting and saving the big blue water tower just north of the old Town Hall.

Witnesses at the scene of the blaze said that flames were shooting as high as the bottom of the tower as the firemen arrived.

Fireman John Ellis, who lives in Heather Hills, said that as he was crossing Highway 70 on the Highway 50 bridge, he could easily see the flames flapping in

the breeze above the trees and reflecting off the water tower.

Another witness who was coming toward Garner from Raleigh at the time of the fire said that much of the sky over Garner had a reddish cast to it as flames consumed the old church which the town has used as its headquarters for more than a decade.

Umstead said that a gas line helped feed the fire for a while until firemen were able to cut off the gas going into the building.

The structure had three heating systems -- oil, gas and electricity. One fireman on the scene remembered seeing a blue jet of flame at the rear of the building where the fire was feeding on the escaping gas.

"Gus' (Ulrich, town manager) and Mary Lou's (Heath, town clerk) offices were just flat out gone," Umstead said. Their offices were in the rear of the building, where the fire is believed to have started.

See GARNER, Page 3

Robert Angel Cited For Heroic Rescue

BUNCOMBE COUNTY -- Robert Angel of Pisgah View Road received two life saving awards in a recognition service sponsored by the West Buncombe Volunteer Fire Department recently at the Fire Department with Zeb Sheppard and Dale Lance, presiding.

Angel was cited for the heroic rescue of Norman Walker, 52, and his nephew, Roy Walker, three years old, from a burning mobile home on Deaverview Road on the night of Nov. 11, 1973.

The presentation of the state award as made by Curtis Radcliff, Chairman of the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners and a resident of the Ervin community. He was introduced by Jerry Vehaun, Buncombe County Director of Civil Preparedness.

A special award from members of the West Buncombe Volunteer Fire Department, in whose district the rescue occurred, was presented by U.S. Representative, Roy Taylor of Black Mountain and Washington, D.C. He

commended Angel for his bravery and outstanding performance in the face of danger.

Taylor also commended the West Buncombe Fire Department for the contribution they, and other volunteer fire departments were making in rural areas. Beginning with a small amount of assistance from the County, the volunteers have spent much time and effort in providing protection in their communities.

Clarence Little, a member of the Murphy-Taylor Grading and Excavating Company, presented a letter of congratulation and commendation to Angel on behalf of the company and fellow employees.

A spokesman for the company said they first learned of Angel's part in the rescue only recently, when they were called and invited to attend the ceremonies. Angel, 28 years old, has been employed by the company only a short time and is highly regarded by fellow employees. He is married and the father of a little girl.

Dale Lance, assistant Chief of

the West Buncombe Fire Department gave this account of the incident. The three-year-old, Roy Walker, was very devoted to his uncle and spent much time in his company, often going to a nearby store for treats. The night of Nov. 11 was to be a special night, because permission had been given for Little Roy to spend the night in the small mobile home. Shortly after nightfall, while the two were watching TV, the door suddenly opened and a man with a flaming bottle of gas stepped inside the door and threw the bottle into the room. The elder Walker, with the child in his arms, tried to make it to get the door open. In the meanwhile, someone had noticed the home on fire and knew the two were inside.

Angel was visiting nearby and heard someone say "That trailer if on fire." He tried to open the back door, yelling for someone to help him. No one moved from the crowd to assist him and he then began trying to find something to batter the door open. He found an

See ANGEL, Page 3

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Fire Departments

Perform Great Service

CLEVELAND COUNTY - Being involved in any way with the fighting of fires requires that one be versatile and ready to go no matter what time of day or night. It also means long, uncertain hours.

Delane Davis, Fire Marshall for Cleveland County discussed the responsibilities of his job as well as the work that the county's eleven volunteer fire departments do. "I was appointed to this job in 1970 by the Board of Commissioners on a part-time basis, but it's a full time job, I spend as much time on my job as any other county employee does on his." The fire marshal, who is owner and operator of Davis Jewelry, noted that in his 1974-75 budget he is requesting that his job become full-time and that he be allowed to employ two other people on a full-time basis.

"All the fire fighting and fire training done in this county is on a volunteer basis," Davis continued. "No rural department is paid. The county provides each department with \$150 per month which possibly pays for utilities and for gas to operate the equipment."

He commented that all fire departments were invited to attend training classes which went on recently. Firemen receive training periodically in five different fields, and Davis explained the courses. "The first class in fire fighting deals with the use of breathing equipment as well as other ways to protect oneself at a fire; fire rescue teaches firemen how to get themselves and others out of a burning house and how to rescue people from rooftops and windows; in essentials of fire fighting recently, we burned houses at the Dover Mill to show firemen how to put out a flame; LP gas and flammable liquids teaches how to control flammable fluids that might be involved in a train wreck or a tractor-trailer truck wreck; and, instruction in industrial sprinklers shows firemen and industrial fire brigades how to check a sprinkler

system to be certain it is operational, when to cut it off during a fire, and when to attach the pumpers to the sprinkler system for pressure."

The main function of the fire marshal's job is to investigate fires that are of a suspicious nature. "If a station goes on a call where they suspect arson, they call me. I must investigate by talking to people in the area and gathering evidence from the scene of the fire. If I do find a suspect, then the sheriff's department brings him in for questioning," Davis said.

Besides keeping records of fires of a suspicious nature, Davis is responsible for checking all county-owned fire extinguishers annually with the exception of those at the jail which are done semi-annually. He keeps records of training and of fire inspections done for rest homes, foster care homes, and day care centers, which must be done annually in order for those institutions to get their licenses. Also, anytime a large crowd is expected in a place, he must make sure it is checked for exits. "I try to get to the place to check it, but I can't cover the entire county," Davis explained. "I have a working agreement with the sheriff's department that if they find any doors locked or chained they asked the owner to open them. Then, if there is any trouble, they call me."

Davis also has an agreement with the building inspector concerning inspection of schools. "If he finds anything wrong in connection with fire exits or extinguishers, he calls me," Davis related. He told that the school principals do their own fire drills. "They would probably welcome some pointers, just as the students could use some pointers, just as the students could use some instruction in using fire extinguishers, but I just can't find the time to do it."

The newest of Cleveland County's fire departments is No. 7 at Lattimore. "We helped with the paperwork involved in getting them approved by the Fire



COUNTY FIRE MARSHALL

- Delane Davis is pictured above at a desk he uses in the Cleveland Volunteer Fire Department. Davis is responsible for keeping records pertaining to fire loss, training, etc., as well as for investigating fires of a suspicious nature. Behind him is a map of the county which is used to plot the location of fires. Davis wears a two-way radio so that he can be contacted by the sheriff's department if needed. He hopes to have an office in the new Law Enforcement Center. - Cleveland Times Photo

Insurance Rating Bureau in Raleigh." Davis said, and explained what this means. "You can have a fire department and not have it approved by the bureau, and it still gets the job done. However, if it is approved, the people in that district get a savings in their fire insurance. All insurance companies in the county are notified of the rating, and they must abide with it, and if an insurance company is found to be overcharging, their license may be revoked."

He noted that the highest rating for a rural fire department is 9-AA, "Several of our county departments have this, but most of them are 9-A, which is very good."

In further discussion about See SERVICE, Page 7

Editorial



EMILY H. KING

In my last editorial I wrote about the trouble the firemen of New Hanover County were having with some of the owners of rural property in their respective districts. The property owners had interfered with firefighting efforts to protect their property and neighboring properties. I think I now have some idea of how they felt - not the property owners, the firemen!

Although it is not the same thing, a most unpleasant thing happened to my husband and I lately, due to a property owner in Halifax County. This is not a fire matter, it is a personal one, but I believe this man would be the type to react to the firemen in the same way the ones did in New Hanover County.

Due to the recent death of my husband's mother, we had decided to sell our property in New Bern and make our home in Halifax County to be near his sister, and also nearer to his work. I guess New Bern will feel like home for a long time, but I have always liked the Roanoke Rapids area and have not forgotten the support and encouragement I received there from several of the Volunteer Departments when the Carolina Rural Fireman (Tarheel Firefighter) was in its infancy.

Since both my husband and I prefer rural living, we had asked his sister to help us find a few acres there. We had very little time to look for it. We thought we had found a few acres not too far from town. We paid for an option, and made a down payment on a mobile home to be used as temporary living quarters while we built our home on weekends. My husband is a brickmason and wanted to do the work himself. The real estate agent told us to go ahead and clear up what we wanted to; locate the septic tank, etc. We spent two weekends with our brother-in-law, who was also working with us, and even doing some work when we were not there.

Imagine how we felt after a hot and tiring day, resting a few minutes to admire our efforts, when up marches the man who adjoins this property (though his

house is not too close) and informs my husband that we were not going to put a mobile home on the property. He said that he would see to it we would not, since the road running across one edge of the proposed acreage we were going to buy was a private road, and he would block it off. It did not seem to matter to him that the original owner had given him a portion of the property for said road, and as this was not in writing I assume he was within his rights. At first I was as stubborn as usual and was going into court to battle with him. However, after cooling down a bit I talked it over with my husband and decided that even if we won, and a lawyer said we would, I didn't want to live that close to the man, anyway. So we still haven't sold our property, and have not as yet found any property reasonably close to town, with freedom to live as we choose, which is very simply.

If the firemen had had to contend with a rude, shouting man like we did, I almost wouldn't blame them if they just sat there and let the house go up in flames, although I know that they would never do that, regardless! It was a good thing the man we encountered decided to depart when he did, without giving us much chance to talk, because my husband is shorter on words than action.

If we are lucky enough to locate a place there, I will let you know in good time. We may not move our mailing address from the present one, as I will still be able to carry on my duties from there. I just wanted to blow off a little steam, so used you to listen to my "tale of woe," and thought again of the firemen who must have run across a good many ill-mannered people like this one in their experience!

Emily H. King

Emily H. King

Weight Rule Dropped

DURHAM - A weight rule for Durham policemen and firemen was abolished recently by Public Safety Director Esai Berenbaum.

He said he abolished the rule rather than making an exception ordered by City Manager I. Harding Hughes.

All police, fire and public safety officers were required by the order to weigh no more than a limited based on their height and build in order to qualify for

See WEIGHT, Page 7

Fire Chief Recommends

Smoke Detection Systems

CHARLOTTE - The 12 fire-related deaths that occurred in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County during the last fiscal year were just a fraction of the 12,000 in the United States and Canada.

But 6,000 of those victims died in fires in their homes and their deaths may have been preventable, city fire officials said.

Charlotte Fire Department Chief John E. Lee recommended "that people give serious consideration to installation of a smoke detection system in their homes."

"For just a few dollars we feel (fire deaths) can be nearly totally prevented," Lee said.

A smoke detection system is better than a heat detection system, Lee said, because it will usually sound an alarm earlier.

With a heat detection system a person could die from the smoke

before a room got hot enough to set off an alarm, he said.

Smoke detection systems are usually mounted on the ceiling of bedrooms or in specific "danger" areas near stoves or fireplaces. When activated, the units sound a bell or horn that alerts the homeowners to the danger of smoke, Lee said.

"The smoke detection system would alert someone before their life was endangered," he said. "Smoke does not necessarily awaken a sleeping person. We know this to be the case."

"Smoke detection systems have a distinct value. The chances of survival are improved with one," Lee said.

The systems are available in Charlotte, Lee said, and range in price from about \$5 to several hundred dollars. The more expensive systems are usually better, he said, but anything is

better than nothing.

"If a cheaper system works it will alert you," Lee said. "If it doesn't you won't be any worse off."

A firm that sells the systems would be able to recommend the best places in the home for locating the units, Lee said.

Home fire detection devices are already required by some states and may be required in North Carolina before long, Lee said.

"Ultimately I predict they will be required in all new homes," Lee said.

Anyone interested in more information about the systems can call the fire department's Fire Prevention Bureau. The fire department will not recommend a specific brand name system but will mail a list of retail dealers in Charlotte to those interested, Lee said. -News by Phil Whitesel.

---FIRE DESTROYS GARNER TOWN HALL---

Continued from page 1

Umstead said that the first truck on the scene started immediately to delay the spread of the fire until the other trucks arrived to fight the blazing inferno.

It took the fire fighters about 45 minutes to bring the fire under control, but the structure continued to smoke and in spots break into open flame during the night and throughout the day.

Poole said that his department deployed three 2½-inch lines shooting about 300 gallons of water per minute each on the flames along with five 1½-inch lines which each put out about 90 gallons of water per minute. The crew laid 41 50-foot sections of water hose in their fire-fighting effort.

Swift Creek responded with 12 to 15 men plus a pumper and water wagon while Clayton Rescue sent a truck with floodlights to illuminate the area. Beacon Ambulance had two rescue units on the scene.

Beacon personnel said they treated three firemen on the scene for minor injuries and burns during the fire. None were hospitalized.

Umstead recounted that much of the effort expended was to cool the water tower to avoid structural damage. He also cited the building's frame structure as a reason for its quick destruction.

"That roof went the fastest I've ever seen in my years as a fireman," Poole commented the night of the blaze.

Umstead concurred, noting that there was a triple thickness of shingles on the roof and it was the heavy weight of the shingles that helped collapse the roof.

The roof collapsing was probably a good thing since it made the heat escape," Umstead said. "That made it easier to protect the water tower."

Mayor Joe G. Creech said town officials knew a third set of shingles would make the roof heavy.

"We tried to save money. We didn't have any trouble with it, but it was real heavy," he said.

Almost from the beginning of the fruitless battle against the fire, efforts were made to protect the \$90,000 water tower. Hoses were placed on the legs of the tower

throughout the stage of intense heat.

"There was a danger that the heat would weaken the legs of the tower, causing it to collapse," Umstead said. Town officials planned to have the tower inspected for the possibility of structural damage.

Throughout the night, Creech and Ulrich watched the town's made-over office building burn, and with it many of the town's records.

"I'm just sick about it," Creech said in the predawn hours.

Flames were still evident and smoke and steam abundant when Ulrich, aided by four firemen started pawing through the charred remains in an effort to rescue filing cabinets with the hopes that some records could be saved.

About 2:30 a.m. Ulrich brought an armload of charred books to a charred picnic table behind the burned out shell that just three hours previous had been the Town Hall.

"I think these are the minute books," he said wearily, but hopefully.

His suspicions were confirmed and he went back for another armload. Water was gently sprayed to cool the smouldering books that Creech and Ulrich termed the most important records in Town Hall.

Many of the records were hot enough to catch fire and burn, but because they were tightly packed in filing cabinets, air could not get to them and thus did not start burning until they were brought out for inspection.

Ulrich, Creech and the firemen continued to drag out filing cabinets, desks and other office equipment throughout the night and all day.

Each time a cabinet was brought out, Ulrich and other town hall personnel at the scene would carefully open it and try to salvage what records they could.

Helping with the hunt for records were Sherwood Johnson, an Alderman and a volunteer fireman, Ross Whitfield, parks and recreation director, and his assistant, Chris Williams who is also a volunteer fireman, Mrs. Heath, town clerk, Eunice

Jackson, of the utilities department, Mrs. Jo Wallace, in the tax department, and Pat Thomas, administrative assistant to Ulrich.

Each find caused delight to employees. At one point personnel found a filing cabinet with budetary information. Mrs. Heath expressed gratitude that she would not have to reconstruct all of that information.

Town officials were at a loss to place a value on what was destroyed by the fire. Part of the reason stemmed from the fact that all the inventory records were thought lost in the fire although some charred remains were found late Thursday and employees were trying to read the ink on the charred remains.

Also, it is hard, they point out, to place a value on the paper work that was lost.

Purvis Jones, the town's insurance agent, said that the structure was insured for \$10,000 and its contents for \$11,000. Ulrich said he was sure that the actual loss would run much higher.

Approximately 70 to 80 percent of the town's records were lost in the blaze. These records included key financial records, checkbook, zoning maps, current project files and other files the town doesn't even know are gone yet.

Fortunately, some files thought lost have been recovered, such as about 98 percent of the accounts receivable files, all water records, the town's minute books, much of the tax records and others.

The town's cash receipts for the day before the fire were relatively intact since they were locked in a safe. The money was dark brown, but identifiable.

Also burned in the fire were certain bond documents which were necessary for the preparation of the bond issue for the new town hall/library complex.

Town Attorney G. Earl Weaver said, however, that the documents can be reconstructed and no time will be lost on the bonding timetable.

The Board of Aldermen had met briefly the previous evening at Town Hall to sign certain bond documents which were destroyed in the blaze.

Later that evening, Whitfield

held a meeting with coaches for the upcoming ladies softball league. The meeting broke up about 10:15 p.m.

Town officials were notified at different times about the fire. Within minutes after the fire department was notified, Police Lt. Tommy Lockhart radioed the police communications center and requested that Ulrich be notified of the fire.

About 1 a.m. Creech was notified. He in turn notified all the other Aldermen except for Johnson, who responded to the fire as a fireman.

Mrs. Eunice Jackson heard about the fire on her son's police and fire radio.

"I got here about 12:30 a.m. and called Pat (Thomas)," she recalled. "When we got the call, we couldn't see the fire anywhere," she said, noting that she lives on Hill Top Avenue. "But when we came out the door,

we could see it. I knew it was gone."

The building continued to smoulder as various town employees sifted through the remains for more records and documents.

Billy Faulk of Faulk Plumbing and Heating, contacted during the night, authorized drilling out the lock on a vacant building he owned across the street, and town officials began putting record scrapes into the building.

Many people and businesses began bringing in equipment and supplies so that Town Hall could start to function once again. A cash register was in place before 9 a.m. and three water payments were accepted before noon.

And the work of going about the town's business, although confused, began amidst the smouldering ruins and smell of smoke and charred remains.

---ANGEL---

Continued from page 1

axe in a neighboring yard and ran back to break the door down. He was met by a wall of flame but crawled inside and soon found the child. He came out and asked someone to take it, and still no one offered assistance. He put the child on the ground and crawled back inside to find Norman Walker. When he brought Walker near the door, an older man by the name of Grandpa Walker, came to his assistance. Both victims had been overcome by the smoke and flames and were apparently beyond help. Someone had finally called for an ambulance and one happened to be nearby and answered the call.

To those standing by and watching the flames consume the mobile home, it seemed of little use to take them into the hospital, but the older Walker said "Doctors and hospitals are doing big things now days."

At the meeting recently it was evident that big things had been done. Uncle Norman was there with his bright-eyed little nephew in his arms and in spite of serious burns and injuries, both seemed well and happy, thanks to the Angel that was nearby on that night.

The man who was responsible for the fire has been tried and convicted.

Others taking part in the big night were Don Radford, who gave the invocation, and members of the Ladies Auxiliary of the West Buncombe Fire Department. Also present were the two ambulance drivers who responded to the call and the nurse and technician on duty at Memorial Mission the night of the fire. - Canton Enterprise by Mary Lacy Byrd

E.G. Fire Chief

MT. HOLLY - The new East Gaston Volunteer Fire Department held the first annual election April 22 and named Ronald Robinson chief of the group.

Taking office with him were two assistant chiefs, Frank Hough and Ed Towery.

During the past year they have acquired two fire trucks and the necessary equipment that is required to operate them. All firemen now have the required protective clothing to be worn while fighting fires.

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Vass Firemen Dedicate New Building

VASS -- The Vass volunteer fire department recently dedicated a new annex to their building, with prayer, pride and thanks for the community's loyalty and support.

Fire Chief D. Hugh McLean, who is also mayor of Vass, welcoming the visitors, told them, "This is your building, for you made it possible."

The cost of the handsome 40 x 75-foot addition, with interior painted snowy white, with green floor and baseline, had been largely met, he said, through proceeds of the annual Fireman's Jubilees, held on the first Saturday in November for the past three years. The rest had been made up by individual gifts and contributions of the firemen themselves, and their friends.

As a guest speaker on the program, Joe W. Adams, county fire marshal, also said, "Good equipment and good community support make a good department, and that is what you have given your volunteer firemen over the years. The result is you have an outfit unsurpassed in the state."

The prayer was provided by the three local ministers, the Rev. Chester D. Brown, of the Methodist Church, offering the invocation; the Rev. Joe Reynolds, of the Presbyterian Church, the benediction; and in between, the Rev. Jesse Mansfield of the Baptist Church giving the dedicatory prayer.

He also caused all present to participate in the program through a pledge ceremony, in which the firemen pledged their continued dedication to service, and the townspeople committed themselves to continued wholehearted support.

Mansfield, who serves his church as interim pastor, and holds the full-time position of occupational education director of Sandhills Community College revealed that the State Department of Community Colleges is planning to expand its fire service training program, that Sandhills would be in full cooperation with the expansion, would be receiving more equipment and providing more training for firemen of the area.

After the 2 p.m. dedication, "open house" continued till late in the afternoon, with punch, cakes and cookies served by the Auxiliary in the recreation area, and the fireman acting as hosts and guides to show off their handsome new building,



VASS FIREMEN -- Volunteer firemen are shown in front of their new building -- built as an addition to the old one, which is out of sight at left. Those of the 33 members present at Sunday's dedication and open house were, from left, kneeling, Bruce Lassiter, Joe Lassiter and Davis Coore; standing, Joseph Frye, Eddie Boggs, David Moore, Dana McKenzie, David Kimball, Leon Keith, Jr., Billie Jessup (second assistant chief), Richard Keith, Chief D. Hugh McLean, Roy Jackson, Bracey Chavis (first assistant chief) Roy Frye (secretary-treasurer), Ernest Allen, Preston Boggs, Wendell Anzor, Gerlad German.. -- Southern Pines -- The Pilot Photo

decorated for the occasion with baskets of flowers.

Rearrangement of the space in the old and new portions, thrown together, has provided a splendid

expansion of facilities, with room for all three of the department's trucks, and plenty left for a much-needed recreation area and meeting space. Additional storage

cabinets - planted with ivy on the top and new rest rooms, with two showers for the firemen to use when they come in after a fire, are among many new convenient features.

Fuquay Firemen's First Banquet

FUQUAY - VARINA -- Fuquay Firemen and their wives held their first Banquet at the Hickory House, April 6, 1974.

Several members of the Fire Department received awards. Fire Chief James Mauldin received the Fireman of the Year award, for outstanding job done for the department and the community.

Eleven firemen received 10 year pins. Those receiving 10 - year pins were: Clifton Keith, Milton Lanier, W.W. Blackman, Elmer Bryant, H. Johnson, Max Ashworth, Larry Sherron, Tommy Pleasant, Garland Stuart, Frank Boone and J.W. Mangum.

Ed Schmelzer received the "Fireman of the Year" plaque which list all the recipients of the coveted award.



Four of the eleven members who received 10-year pins (from left to right) Larry Sherron, Clifton Keith, Tommy Pleasant and Frank Boone.

Utter Says Many Favor Fire Plans

HAMLET -- "Most everybody seems to be in favor of countywide fire protection," Charles Utter, chief of the Hamlet Fire Dept., told Ernest Dunn and other members of Hamlet city council recently.

His statement was somewhat in answer to a query from Dunn who wanted to know if he was "going over Hamlet's authority to the county" when Utter again advanced the countywide concept. He had promoted the idea at an earlier council session.

The chief maintained that what he really wanted to do was work with all others concerned to be in a position to give the most people in Richmond County the best possible fire protection.

"This board will say where our fire dept. goes," Dunn said with firmness. He noted it was his understanding that the Rockingham Fire Dept. has stopped making out of town fire calls, after an exchange of views about Hamlet personnel going out of the city limits for fires. Utter said that was not correct.

Mayor Covington said he understands that the county board of commissioners will take care of fire problems by underwriting fire protection for each designated area of the community. He pointed out that the front-line pumpers would stay inside the city limits. They would be of no real value outside because the tankers perform that mission.

Covington said Hamlet would be prepared to act, once the county determined in which direction it was going.

Councilman D.K. McNair noted that "as long as the county board does not double-tax the people of Hamlet for it, Chief Utter's plan might be good. We won't try to tell the county board of Commissioners how to run their business. The fire chief has some good ideas and I commend him for it."

The praise from McNair was not the only tributes to HFD. The dept. came in for other accolades from the mayor and from the District Forester, Gene Barnes, of the N.C. Forestry Service, who wrote the council.

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JAMESTOWN, N. C.

Spontaneous Combustion Blamed

100 Firemen Save Brown High

KANNAPOLIS -- The recent fire at A.L. Brown High School was not as damaging as it looked for a couple of tense hours, firemen and educators said later.

Tommy Hudson, assistant chief of the Kannapolis Fire Department, said the fire which erupted at 12:30 p.m., was confined to the attic in the center section of the building. Reinforced concrete between the third-story ceiling and the roof kept the flames from coming down into the classrooms. However, a lot of water seeped through.

Dr. Grier Bradshaw, superintendent of schools, said there was no fire in any of the classrooms, and he believed studies could be resumed after the water is removed.

The N.C. Department of Schoolhouse Planning sent a structural engineer to inspect the building.

"It will take a lot of cooperation, a lot of communication, a lot of understanding, but we can have an adequate educational program at Brown High the remainder of this year," Bradshaw said.

Permanent repairs will be made during the summer. The damage is fully covered by insurance, Bradshaw said.

Auditorium Damaged

The auditorium was damaged slightly by smoke in the fire. The library was unharmed, except for water on the floor. The gym, music building and vocational education plant, which are in separate buildings, were untouched by the fire.

Assistant Fire Chief Hudson said many people asked about the library. He said he went through that area and "didn't find one wet book."

He said a temporary roof of polyester could be put over the center section of the school where the roof collapsed to protect the building until a permanent roof could be built. The classrooms could be used after "a bit of cleaning up."

Combustion Blamed

Spontaneous combustion was blamed for the fire, which for a time threatened to destroy the building which opened in the 1951-52 school term. Hudson said

old furniture, some books and empty cans which had contained fluid to clean rollers on copying machines were stored in the attic. The fire apparently started in that area.

It was a stubborn fire. Starting in the attic near the firewall built when the school was expanded, the blaze moved eastward.

"We had trouble finding the fire," Hudson said. A State Highway Patrol helicopter took Hudson above the school and he directed the firemen by radio.

"That was the turning point," Hudson said. "I could see the blaze and could tell the firemen where to direct the water. I could see the whole roof. It was impossible to track the fire from the ground or from ladders."

While Hudson was in the air, Chief Roy Deyton was busy coordinating the operations on the ground.

Eleven fire trucks and at least 100 firemen helped battle the flames. Trucks and men came from the Kannapolis, Royal Oaks, Winecoff, Kannapolis Sanitary District, Concord, Enochville and Mt. Mitchell fire departments, and firemen came from Landis, Atwell and Allen departments. As these departments moved men and vehicles to A.L. Brown High, neighboring departments moved in to protect their territories.

House Fire

While the army of firemen was battling the school blaze, a house on Margate Ave. caught fire. Trucks and men from Poplar Tent had moved to the Winecoff fire station, and they answered the call to Margate.

Virtually every fire department in Cabarrus and southern Rowan assisted, directly or indirectly, in saving Brown High from destruction.

Nobody was seriously injured. Fireman Jerry Carter mashed a finger and was treated at the Cannon Mills medical department. Charles Wyatt of the Kannapolis Sanitary District Fire Department cut his finger. The wound was treated by a Cabarrus Ambulance Service attendant and Wyatt went back to fighting the fire. Several firemen suffered from smoke inhalation and heat and were given oxygen.

The Cabarrus rescue squad and



Firemen Adjust Hose While Fighting Blaze. Daily Independent Photo.

ambulance service kept men and vehicles on the scene until the firemen completed their work.

Utilities and private businesses helped in the battle by lending "bucket" lifts and other equipment.

Problem Overcome

When the fire trucks began arriving moments after the alarm, hose lines were hooked up to seven hydrants near the school. There was a momentary problem of water pressure, but the pressure was adequate when Cannon Mills' filter plant turned on additional pumps.

Off-duty officers of the downtown Kannapolis Police Department rushed to the area to help direct traffic. Other assistance came from the Cabarrus Sheriff's Department, the Rowan Sheriff's Department at North Kannapolis and the Landis Police Department.

Fire officials, detectives of the downtown Kannapolis Police Department and SBI agents continued their investigation of the fire. Hudson said all

indications were that the blaze started from spontaneous combustion.

Police Chief R. L. Ketchie complimented the firemen from the whole area on the way they "worked as a team to prevent a disaster."

Students helped carry out furniture, office machines and

files, which were stored in the W.J. Bullock Physical Education Building.

The Rev. Don Anderson, pastor of the Elm St. Church of God, and several of his young people kept busy filling cups with ice and cola for firemen, policemen and rescue workers. - Kannapolis Independent by Bill Workman.

Mary Ann Lail Fire

MECKLENBURG COUNTY -- Mr. Dan J. Carpenter, Mecklenburg County Fire Administrator, announced that Mrs. Mary Ann Lail has been appointed as Mecklenburg County's first woman Fire Inspector.

Mrs. Lail has been employed by the Fire Administrator's Office as a Steno for the past two years. During this time she has written various Fire Prevention Materials and has worked in Fire Prevention Programs.

She is a graduate of Central Piedmont Community College in the Liberal Arts Curriculum and is currently enrolled in Psychology at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She has also completed one year's work toward a degree in Fire Science Technology.

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Stored Gasoline Ignites, Damage Estimated At More Than \$18,000

ROCKY MOUNT -- Gasoline stored in a mechanic's garage at a shopping complex on U.S. 301 south was ignited by a spark from a welding torch recently setting off a blaze that destroyed the garage and its contents and threatened the complex.

Fire destroyed the garage, valued at \$10,000, and garage contents valued at \$5,000, and caused smoke and water damages estimated at a total of \$3,000 to other buildings. The total damage incurred were estimated at \$18,000.

Nash County Fire Marshal Perry O'Berry said that the building complex housed the garage, Pick - a - Pack Grocery, House of Wigs, Tape City and a grill. The owner of the building complex and the grocery is Chuck Joyner, and the tenant is Mike Strickland.

Six fire departments -- Sharpsburg, West Mount, Stony Creek, Nashville, Coopers and West Edgcombe -- answered the alarm at 1:45 p.m. and brought the fire under control in about 30 minutes after arrival on the scene.

O'Berry said that the entire complex looked as if it was on fire when firemen arrived on the scene, and after the arrival of the Sharpsburg Fire Department, more help was called in because no fire hydrants are in the area. Later, a pond was located behind the building and firemen began

pumping water from the pond. Ten engines from the six fire departments answered the alarm.

According to O'Berry, the fire spread from the garage into the attic of the entire building complex, which is valued at about \$115,000, including the contents.

The fire marshal said that Tape City sustained \$1,000 in water damage and the House of Wigs sustained \$2,000 in smoke damage.

Firemen Seek Tax Districts

WINSTON-SALEM -- Several rural volunteer fire departments have shown an interest in setting up tax districts to support themselves with property taxes. Two of them, Piney Grove and Beesons Crossroads, have petitioned the Forsyth County commissioners to set up the districts right away.

The commissioners considered the matter at a recent briefing session and seemed reluctant to go along with the plan.

The 19 volunteer fire departments around the county receive some county aid now, but some want more.

The commissioners in the past have said they want to walk a thin line--helping the departments but

See DISTRICTS, Page 8



GASTON -- A 1250 GPM, FMC Bean tanker, with midship pump, was delivered to the Gaston Fire Dept., Gaston, N.C. recently. It was sold by Jack L. Slagle Fire Equipment & Supply Co., Inc., Hwy. 58 E., Box 15, South Boston, Virginia. The phone number of the business is 804/575-7905.



STATESVILLE - NEW OFFICERS - Hubert M. Parker, fire chief of the newly formed Ebenezer Volunteer Fire Department, congratulates David Blackwell, president of the fire department, after election of officers recently. From left are: Charles Miller, vice president; Carl White, treasurer; Parker; Blackwell; and Mrs. James Liles, secretary. The department serves the Bethany Community. Statesville Record and Landmark Photo.

Newton Named

HOKE COUNTY -- Edwin B. (Buddy) Newton, assistant chief, was elected Puppy Creek Fireman of the Year recently. Newton, Rt. 2, was awarded the conservationist of the year award last June by the Woodmen of the World.

He has attended several firemen's training courses and is a charter member of the Puppy Creek department. He began serving the department in 1966.

The self-employed farmer is a



E.B. (BUDDY) NEWTON graduate of Hoke High School and a native of Hoke County.

Henderson Fireman Retiring

ASHEVILLE -- Lt. W.G. Henderson of the Asheville Fire Department retired recently after a 37-year-career with the department according to Chief Powell N. Ball.

A native of Asheville, Henderson joined the department in 1937 and was promoted to lieutenant in 1952. He and his wife, Mary, live at 94 Belmont Ave., in West Asheville.



Wayne Wortham presents James Mauldin (left) with the Fireman of the Year award.



Donald Cotton (left) presents Ed Schmelzer with the "Fireman of the Year" plaque, which list all the recipients of the coveted award.

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---SERVICE---

Continued from page 2

local departments, Davis related, "All departments in the county have top-notch equipment, and all of them are in the process of replacing that which is old." This buying of equipment is handled locally by each department. "They raise the money for trucks by having chicken pie suppers, bake sales, hot dog suppers, and things like that. Only three districts, Fallston, No. 3, and No. 7, have taxes for the fire district. This money must be used for fire service. Other units have talked about it, but decided not to ask the people for a further tax so long as they continue with their support and donations," Davis said.

Fire equipment and the clothes which these men wear are quite expensive. Davis commented that each station has "three trucks - a pumper which costs around \$30,000; a tanker or water truck, which costs from \$22,000 - \$25,000; and a brush truck, used for fires located in a rough terrain, whose estimated value is \$12,000."

To outfit a fireman costs about \$120. "This consists of a turn-out coat, pants, boots, helmet, and gloves. This suit is fire resistant, and will last from 4 to 5 years if it is properly cared for," he said.

Each fire department has officers which include a chief, two assistant chiefs, secretary-treasurer, and two captains.

This county, in accordance with state law, also has a Rural Fire Commission. This is a body of people appointed by the commissioners to check the fire departments periodically and report to them through the fire marshal, who is the liaison, concerning the workings of the departments. "I've never had a complaint," Davis said.

Another organization offering support for this group is the County Firemen's Association. "Every department, municipal and rural, is asked to participate in this," related Davis. "The dues

are \$10 per department, and the money is used mainly for training. This organization has a training committee which works out all the details on schools and for the all-day training program which is offered once a year." The association also has a fraternal insurance program for its members.

Another policy which was adopted by the county fire department system about six months ago is known as a Mutual Aid Program. "When the Firemen's Association approved this automatic mutual aid it meant that when a dispatcher dispatches the nearest fire department to a fire, he automatically notifies the next nearest fire department too," Davis noted. "Any fire could be a large volume fire, and automatic mutual aid means that there will always be a back-up of manpower and water available if it is necessary. It puts more calls on the department, but our main interest is the saving of lives and property. So far, it's worked like a charm."

Davis, who is hoping for an office in the new Law Enforcement Center because he "needs a place to store evidence," explained that changing the fire marshal's job to full-time and adding more help are the main things he wants. "We could implement more fire prevention programs for schools and businesses, and teach people how to take care of themselves in a fire and use fire equipment correctly if there were more time and people," he said. He also noted that he would like to see the county invest in more foam generators.

"If a train or truck carrying flammable liquids, wrecked there wouldn't be enough foam in this county to take care of a large spillage."

Born in Blacksburg, S.C., Davis has lived in Cleveland County since he was a child. He attended school at Number Three and

served during World War II in the South Pacific. Following that duty, he attended watch repair school in Winston-Salem, and returned to Shelby to take over his father's business.

Davis is married to the former Mary Lou Warlick from Belwood, and they are parents of two children. - Cleveland Times by Glenda Self

---WEIGHT RULE---

Continued from page 2
annual 5 percent merit raises.

Berenbaum reversed the order when Hughes agreed with the formal grievance filed by Det. Danny R. Maynard that he had been unfairly deprived of his merit increase because of the weight standard.

The detective, a muscular and athletic man of 29, asserted that he was in excellent shape, and a favorable physical evaluation by a doctor was included in the grievance.

According to the department's six-month-old weight standard, Maynard was some 40 pounds overweight for a man of 5-feet, 9-inches and a heavy build.

Berenbaum said he cancelled the full program rather than opening the door for special cases by making an exception for Maynard.

"It was my decision to rescind it," Berenbaum said, "but it was not my opinion that an exception should have been made."

The public safety director agreed, however, that his standard, based on the Metropolitan Insurance Co.'s recommended weight chart plus 10 percent was not perfect. But, he said, it's as valid as any measurement of fitness now available and should be used until a better one can be proved.

Promoted

AHOSKIE - Wilbur Terry of Ahoskie Fire Department has been promoted to Captain. His former classification was Fireman.

Terry has been with the department two years and was told of the promotion by Fire Chief J.D. Linkous.



Albemarle Firemen's Association Quarterly Meet

BETHEL - The Albermarle Firemen's Association had its quarterly meeting recently hosted by Bethel Volunteer Fire Department at Angler's Cove Restaurant. There was good attendance from members of the Association coming from the Region "R" ten county area. The meeting was called to order by President Carlton Jackson. Chief John Hobbs gave the opening welcome to the group of firemen. The Perquimans County AFA director, Billy White, introduced the guest members of Perquimans County Fire Commission. Kermit Layton, Jr., executive director of AFA, gave a progress report on the AFA Information & Mutual Aid Assistance Directory. The directory will contain a Mutual Aid Data Sheet from the twenty member departments of the Association. Elwood Inscoc, of the Dept. of Insurance in Raleigh, introduced the special guest speaker, Jim Page. Mr. Page is chief of the Emergency Medical Services program under the N.C.

Dept. of Human Resources. He began by citing experiences from the time he was a rookie fireman in California until he became Battalion Chief of a large Los Angeles Department. Soon after serving in this position, he began writing a book concerning fire command procedures. He was consultant to the paramedic TV program "Emergency". After looking into the Emergency Medical Services program of many states, Mr. Page decided to work with North Carolina where he saw the most progress taking place. His program also touched briefly on the "911" concept for Regional Emergency Medical Service Communications. This number would allow any individual to dial 911 and contact rescue squads, fire departments, etc. anywhere within the state.

Also present were Lin Hawkins, state coordinator for E.M.S. and Mack McKenney, representative of A.H.R.D.S.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tyrrell County in August.

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2 New Fire Units To Be Established

Nash County - Two new specialized fire departments are planned for Nash County, Fire Marshal Perry O'Berry announced during a meeting of the Nash County commissioners recently.

O'Berry said that the two units - one located in the western section of the county and one in the eastern section - would have equipment and capabilities that the other county departments do not have. The fire marshal said the new equipment would include ladder trucks and tankers, capable of carrying large amounts of water.

"If we had a fire at a school or at a large house, this equipment would be a life saver," O'Berry told the commissioners. He said the new departments would work in conjunction with the other 12 departments in Nash County.

Outlining how the county would be divided for coverage by the new departments, O'Berry said that each specialized department would need to be within an approximately range of 20 miles of the most distant point of coverage. From Nashville to the western boundary of the county would be one division, he said, and from Nashville east would be the second division.

O'Berry said that more information would be released on the new facilities when the commissioners consider the 1974-75 budget.

Departments Drill

Practice at coping with industrial fires is one facet of fire-fighting that the Nash departments are implementing in their training program. O'Berry explained that a recent fire drill occurred at Texfi Industries which has the capacity of storing more than one-half million gallons of highly flammable liquid petroleum gas.

The drill was to insure that the Nash departments are prepared in case an industrial fire occurs, O'Berry said.

Work Slated On Hydrants

STATESVILLE -- Statesville Fire Chief Frank Crowson said the complete department will participate in the project of painting the city's 509 fire hydrants, and that the project would be done on a "catch as catch can" basis.

The silver part of the hydrants will not be retained. A bright yellow will replace the silver paint, which Crowson said, "just didn't hold up as we expected."

The project was started a few weeks ago and firemen are dispatched in pairs - two per day until everyone in the department has taken their turns.

Crowson said the city's hydrants are not painted according to any schedule. He added, "They have needed it for some time now and although we are in no hurry, the work will continue until they are all shiny yellow and red."

No One Hurt

Firemen Pelted By Angry Crowd

CHARLOTTE -- "We're there to fight fires and if a crowd got out of control we'd pull out," said Charlotte Fire Chief John E. Lee recently in the wake of a Sunday night incident in which firemen fighting a blaze were pelted with rocks.

No firemen or policemen were injured but one fire truck suffered minor damage, fire officials said, and several police cars were reported dented.

Firemen had answered a 9 p.m. call to a Boulevard Homes apartment on Tinsley Dr. in West Charlotte with no trouble. But a crowd gathered and when the fire fighters returned about 11:40 p.m. to answer an unrelated call to another fire on Tinsley Dr., the crowd, apparently angered by the arrest at 10 p.m. of four juveniles on a storebreaking charge, began pelting firemen with gravel and small rocks. The juveniles had been arrested a block away on Brookvale St. in connection with a break-in at the Boulevard Homes office, 1620 Brookvale.

SUNDAY night's incident was by no means a major confrontation, Lee said and firemen "are taught to keep their cool and not to provoke the crowd."

However, he said, department policy allows firemen to leave the scene if they are endangered by abusive bystanders.

"We don't run from 'a' rock," he said. "But if the abuse is so much, we would have no choice but to pull out. Our protective equipment is protection against fire hazards. If a crowd wanted to give our people a bad time, we



CHIEF JOHN LEE... Won't Run From 'A' Rock - Charlotte News Photo

In the first fire, at 9 p.m. at the home of Phalis Lee Morris, 1624 Tinsley Dr., Apt. B, most of two rooms in the brick, two-story apartment were destroyed. The cause is under investigation.

In the second fire, at 11:39 p.m., fire officials said several children were along in the apartment of Catherine Brewer, 1724 Tinsley Dr., and apparently started a fire on a living room sofa with a cigarette. The fire caused considerable damage to the living room and an upstairs bedroom, officials said. - Charlotte News by Phil Whitesell

---DISTRICTS---

Continued from page 6

wouldn't be capable of protecting ourselves."

"Usually, the people who do this, spontaneously do it," Lee said. "It's not planned. If it's planned you'll know it because it's more serious."

"We want people to recognize the fire department's function. By forcing us to leave, it could jeopardize the people of the community. We would certainly hope that wouldn't be the case."

"Citizens can be an influence in their own community," he said. "We've had good community cooperation as a rule and would urge continued cooperation by the citizens."

Fire officials estimated damage in the two fires Sunday night at more than \$1,000.

letting them maintain their status as volunteer groups, not departments of county employes.

Commissioners Julian F. Keith and John C. Kiger said they don't like the idea of having the county divided up into many different tax districts. They said that just makes government more complicated.

Commissioner John H. Tandy suggested a proration of county aid to fire departments according to population served. The ones that serve the fewest people would get more aid under his plan, because it is harder for them to get enough money from the people they serve.

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