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FIREMEN FIGHT TO SAVE COTTON GIN

Arson Ruled Out In Warehouse Fire

Friendly Four Warehouse, Mullen's Department Store, Shoe Shop Destroyed

A fire of undetermined origin hit Louisburg's South Main Street again last Tuesday night, destroying the Friendly Four Tobacco Warehouse, Mullen's Department Store and Mullen's Shoe Shop. The blaze, the second in the vicinity in the past six weeks, threatened for awhile to burn several nearby buildings.

Louisburg Volunteer firemen, assisted by several rural departments and a City of Henderson unit, brought the blaze under control around 2 A.M. Wednesday. Louisburg Fireman Gerald Eury discovered the fire around 11 P.M. Tuesday when he went outside the fire station. Fire Chief, R. G. Person, Jr. happened to be at the station at the time and ordered all rural units alerted. A short time later, after conferring with Louisburg Mayor V. A. Peoples, Person decided to request help from the Henderson Department.

The rural units answering the call included Franklinton, Youngsville, Bunn, Justice, Centerville and Epsom. Person was high in his praise of all the departments and expressed his department's appreciation for the assistance.

Mayor Peoples issued a statement here Monday in which he also praised the rural units and the Henderson department along with the Louisburg Department. Peoples said, "They all did an outstanding job. On behalf of the people of Louisburg, I want to extend my sincere appreciation to every department and every fireman. I hope the people will remember the kind of job these units are doing when any of them seek financial assistance from the public". Peoples, himself a member of the Louisburg Department, was on the scene minutes after the blaze was reported.

Rep. James D. Speed said Monday that he and his associates in the warehouse business "will probably build back". He did not say if the warehouse will be rebuilt on the same site. He indicated that this decision has not yet been made. Speed was reluctant to estimate the loss but had been quoted earlier as saying the two leased store buildings and the warehouse itself would "exceed \$150,000.00. Chief Person also said he could not make an assessment of the losses but he was satisfied it was in the thousands. The warehouse was a block long reaching the full length of West Nash Street although it fronted by way of a vacant lot only a portion of West Nash.

Chief Person disclosed that Al Pearce, a special fire investigator with the N. C. Department of Insurance,

was called to look into the possibility of arson. Person said no evidence was found to indicate the blaze was set. He did say however the fire was started about middle way the 50-year-old structure and he did not believe it came from faulty wiring. He gave several ideas as to how it might have started indicating that he is still somewhat puzzled as to the origin of the blaze.

On November 6, a fire also of undetermined origin struck the old ABC Store building across the street from the warehouse. The entire building was gutted and all contents were lost. The damage was estimated at around \$50,000.00. Two pool rooms and a grill were totally destroyed in the blaze. Firemen contained the fire inside the block long building and prevented damage to the fire and police station housed in an adjoining building. The November fire was also discovered by Fireman Gerald Eury around 2 A.M. and the county alarm system was knocked out in the blaze necessitating local firemen having to alert rural departments in person.

Person said his strategy in the latest disaster was to hold the fire within the warehouse and save all nearby buildings if at all possible. In this he was most successful as McKinne's Seaboard Stores a few feet north of the warehouse was undamaged. All buildings and businesses fronting West Nash

Street were also saved although threatened for awhile. These included O'Neal Drug Store, Harris Cash and Carry Grocery, City Lunch, Economy Auto Supply, the Louisburg Theater, Plus-Value, Williamson's-Cotton Gin, Franklin Booking Service, Strickland's Watch Shop and the Hobby Shop. Medlin's garage was saved on Church Street.

Rowe's Men's Shop and several business offices were also threatened along South Main Street. Debris from the blaze set fire to an awning in front of the Fashion Shoppe on East Nash Street and Rose's Dime Store on North Main Street.

Mrs. N. C. Mullen said Monday that she and Mr. Mullen will retire and will not reopen their department store business. She said her son, Crateman, operator of the shoe shop, had not yet made a decision on whether to re-establish his shop.

Speed said the area will be cleaned up within a few days and any walls posing a threat will be torn down. Speed, A. M. (Gus) McGhee and R. C. Pearce are co-owners of the building and the warehouse business.

Henderson Fire Chief Ranger Wilkerson accompanied a pumper truck, fire regular department members and six volunteers to the Louisburg blaze. The Henderson unit, called around 11:30 p.m., returned home around 3:30 A.M., according to reports.

In Wake Of Breakins, Robberies:

Dement Issues Call For Protection Of Property

In the wake of a rash of breakins and robberies in Franklin County, Sheriff William T. Dement today called on property owners to exercise care in protecting their own property. Dement said it "is physically impossible for my department to patrol the entire county." The Sheriff and his four deputies have had "very little Christmas," according to Dement as the entire force has been busy investigating breakins and robberies.

Dement asked citizens to report immediately any suspicious actions, particularly from strangers, and to get license numbers of strange cars in their vicinity. He urged citizens to lock their doors and take whatever precautions necessary to protect their own property

while assuring the people, "We are doing all we can."

In recent weeks, a man was held up at gun point and robbed of \$1,500 at Youngsville, Strickland Electric in Louisburg was entered and several televisions were taken and at least two homes in Louisburg were entered and antique furniture and silverware was stolen. While these crimes fall under the jurisdiction of Youngsville and Louisburg Police Departments, Dement's department is assisting in these investigations.

Donald Hagwood, a New Hope storekeeper, was seriously wounded by one bandit while attempting to apprehend two others sighted inside his store last week. Hagwood and his brother, J. O., and their families have posted a \$500 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the robbers. Dement said today he will ask Governor Bob Scott to increase the reward with state money. Hagwood is recovering from a facial wound and a side injury.

The T. H. Dickens Store in White Level was entered sometimes during the Christmas holidays. The robbery was discovered by a deliveryman last Saturday morning. Thirty pairs of pants, three watches and around \$18 in cash is reported missing. A large pile of shoes were discovered at a store window but officers believe the thugs were frightened off before they could load up the footwear.

The Fred Cash Store between Louisburg and Youngsville was robbed of around \$300 in cash, an adding machine and other items earlier this week and thieves entered the home of Mrs. Lottie Weldon of Epsom taking a pistol and a dress.

A few days ago, a private garage at Royal was entered and around \$500 worth of tools were taken and a few nights ago, the Bunn School was broken in to.

Louisburg Police Chief Earl Tharrington said earlier that he is still working on breakins at the home of Mrs. L. V. Parker and the late A. W. Person on North Main Street. Antique furniture was taken from both places. The Person house is unoccupied and Mrs. Parker was not at home when thieves entered her house.

Dement, obviously disturbed over the rash of breakins and robberies, said he felt nighttime deputies were needed

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The Spectacular, Spiraling Sometime Sneaky Sixties

If the sixties simmered, it was, perhaps, during the 1964-66 period that was hottest here in Franklin County. During these years, trouble seemed to slip up on the area. But, as Franklin people had been doing since the Tuscaroras were driven from the banks of the Tar, they survived and prospered.

1964 began, as most years did in the sad sixties, with a highway fatality. W. J. Benton was named Industrial Development Director signaling a remarkable period of development and at the end of January, Southside Warehouse burned with several other businesses with a loss of \$150,000. Before the decade ended, several other disastrous fires would be experienced.

Louisburg switched over from a 2400 volt Delta system to the new 4160 WYE system of electric power and then, as now, there was a rash of breakins and robberies. The County Commissioners began the free food plan in March but voted the plan put in in April. Over 16,000 Franklin citizens lined up on a Sunday afternoon to receive their polio vaccine sugar cube and a number of unexplained fires struck the rural areas.

By Clint Fuller
Times Managing Editor

Third In A Series

In May, the Central Alarm System was installed—proving to be one of the finest moves of the decade as time after time, it was used to muster fire fighters across the county. Also in May, Alex Wood—ho, hum—led the ticket as Richard Cash and E. M. Sykes gained seats on the County Board and Lloyd West was elected to the Board of Education. The hot race was between Youngsville's James T. Moss and incumbent Rep. James D. Speed for the House of Representatives. Speed won in a June runoff.

As June warmed, eight Negroes applied for admission to the Louisburg High School. The Board of Education denied the request after several withdrew. The action seemed harmless enough at the time, but it marked the beginning of years of litigation in federal court over school desegregation.

Franklin supported Dan Moore for Governor in the June runoff and favored Clifton Blue over Bob Scott, 8212 to 2663 for Lt. Governor. Before

the decade ended, however, Franklin voters gave Scott a margin of over 1,000 votes in his race for Governor.

July brought hope with the announcement that Gay Products would locate a plant here with an expected annual payroll of \$1 million. Louisburg had a brief tear over selection of its fire chief and a local couple found \$20,000 in confederate money and woefully hoped that the South will

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OEO Group To Meet

Franklin-Vance-Warren Opportunity, Inc., the local anti-poverty agency, will hold its second meeting with representatives of the low-income residents of Franklin County, Monday, January 5, at 7:30 p.m., at the Courthouse in Louisburg. The meeting is open to the public.

Members of the board of directors will continue to deal with issues raised by poor residents in the Franklin County area. Wages for domestic help were singled out as a dominant example, being quoted as from \$3 to \$5 per day.

A second major concern to be considered at the suggestion of poor residents is the existence of a large number of rowdy night clubs or "piccolo" joints. Poor residents felt these

to be a destructive influence in the community.

Other needs to be considered are the need of job training for school dropouts, a general lack of jobs, and problems relating to public welfare, inflationary prices and stable wages, inadequate recreational facilities, improper garbage disposal, and a wide variety of other problems.

At the January meeting the Franklin County directors, in conjunction with the residents, will seek to formulate plans for operation of Franklin-Vance-Warren components in Franklin County between July 1, 1970, and June 30, 1971. Indications are that the anti-poverty agency will have an additional \$18,000 to invest in Franklin County operations.



CROWDS VIEW COSTLY BLAZE