

ne fire; volunteers offer assistance

"I think the final effort indicates years of training and pre-planning and working together and the cultivation among firemen and fire departments in the whole entire eastern part of the state and generally the feeling of togetherness is the only thing I can say that exists among firemen. It's a sense of pride I guess. In any severe emergency, you just go in and do your job and don't worry about the consequences. I would put our men up against any fire department."

CHARLES SKINNER JR.
Chief
Hertford Volunteer Fire Department

"Everything went like clockwork. Everyone took their place and did their job. I'm very proud of the fire department."

LOYD E. "PETE" RIDDICK
Assistant Chief
Hertford Volunteer Fire Department



PORTRAIT OF DEDICATION — Chief Charles Skinner Jr. of the Hertford Volunteer Fire Department was the officer in charge on the scene and worked some 30 or more volunteer hours during the 51 hours spent at the fire site.

"I've been in the fire department going on 11 years and I've never seen a fire department that works so closely together as here. I'd like to have some of the Norfolk firemen come down here and take lessons from Hertford's firemen. Saving this city didn't have anything to do with luck. It came from the hard labor of every man that showed up."

EARL DEANS
Paid Norfolk Firefighter
Norfolk, Va.
(assisting on the scene)

"This is truly the most rewarding day I've ever spent — to see people of all religions join hands spontaneously and work for 30 or more hours for the love of their town and the safety and comfort of our great firemen."

GENEVA SAWYER
President
United Methodist Women

"The cooperation was good from all departments. The rescue squad personnel were out there all day and part of the night and did a great job. Several stayed all night."

EMMETT ELMORE
Captain
Perquimans County Rescue Squad



A BREAK ON THE FIRE LINE — Firemen from Hertford and surrounding departments take a temporary break from the fire line for a little rest and coffee. Donations for the firefighters came in from several sources, some of which were the Perquimans County Schools, local Red Cross, and Salvation Army.



HOME IS SAVED — A view of fire aftermath taken from Covent Garden facing Grubb Street shows how close the fire came to reaching the T. Erie Haste Jr. home. Directly behind the house, the remains of the garage are visible.

Free papers

Free copies of *The Virginian Pilot*, Wednesday, Jan. 11 edition are available at *The Perquimans Weekly* office and Hertford Hardware and

Supply Company in Hertford. This issue contains the story and pictures of the Winslow Oil Company fire and is available to anyone

**WE WOULD LIKE TO
THANK THE COURAGEOUS
FIREMEN FOR THE OUTSTANDING
JOB THEY DID DURING THE FIRE**

J. DEES CERAMICS
CHURCH ST., HERTFORD

"I just feel we're fortunate that there were no losses of life. I think all of us will be able to absorb the property losses we have. And I appreciate the local grain dealers who have been a big help in keeping our customers supplied and the many others who offered their help."

LLOYD LANE
Partial Owner
Farmer's Feed & Seed

THANK YOU

There is no way to appropriately express our gratitude and thanks to all who united their efforts recently on behalf of our town. Our heartfelt thanks are extended to all members of all the fire departments, law enforcement officers, rescue squads, Red Cross, Salvation Army, Atlantic Strike Team, U.S. Coast Guard, county dispatchers, area hospitals, merchants, all church organizations, and all individuals who helped in any way during our recent fire. We are deeply grateful.

THE TOWN OF HERTFORD

Photos by
Kathy Newbern
Les Bell
and **Jim Reid**

The saints

TO THE SAINTS OF
HERTFORD

"This is the day the Lord hath made." This is a day for thanksgiving — and for "thanksgiving." The events of last week leave us with a deep sense of gratitude.

We are grateful to God that in Tuesday's fire there was no loss of life or serious injury, that employees of the businesses managed their quick escape in the few seconds before the flames destroyed their firms, that homes were not destroyed, that residents were able to escape unharmed, and that fuel tanks of adjoining oil companies did not explode. Our blessings are beyond number!

We pay great tribute to the courage of our firemen, and those from other fire companies who joined them, in sparing the community from a great disaster. Their endurance, determination, and skill is to be admired and appreciated by all. And, tribute is due to all those who volunteered to feed and shelter the firemen and residents of the area.

We witnessed something beautiful in the midst of all that was frightening — a community united, a warm spirit of care and concern for each other. The ties that bound us together should not be permitted to be loosened.

REV. CHARLES BULLARD
Hertford Baptist Church
Hertford, N.C.

Salute to the firefighters

To The Editor:

Enclosed is a poem written especially for every fireman — whether paid or volunteer — who bravely fought for control over the disastrous fire which destroyed Winslow Oil Co. and other property in Hertford, N.C. on Jan. 10, 1978.

On that day, as I sat in the cozy warmth and safety of my living room here in Edenton, my thoughts drifted out into the cold, bitter winds and subfreezing temperatures these men faced. The following prayer not only entered my mind and was uttered from my lips, but it filled my heart, also.

Please dedicate this to the many firemen involved in the spectacular task of maintaining the safety of Hertford citizens and fellow fire fighters, along with a special acknowledgement of every effort put forth. Each effort — no matter how large or small — contributed to only one factor. These men risked their lives for the safety of others! We as friends, neighbors and loved ones of these outstanding men, should be thankful for their selfless concern, and offer them due gratitude and respect.

It is for that reason that I offer this poem to each of them in due appreciation. God Bless them every one!!

PROTECT HIM

God, You're looking below from your window on high,
Watching the little town through a smoke filled sky.
A monstrous fire raging out of control,
Is burning its way through the icy cold
He's out there somewhere, along with the rest,
Joining the battle, putting forth his best,
Reach down to him, and lend him a hand,
Give him the strength he needs to withstand,
The mixture of flames, freezing winds, and smoke,
That devours fresh air and causes him to choke,
Give him steaming coffee for frozen fingers to hold,
And a warm retreat when he's tired, wet, and cold,
Lead his way safely through the black, smokey haze,
Guide his footsteps, shield him from the blaze,
Be his eyesight when he can't see where he goes,
Be the steady, strong hand that directs the hose,
When explosions send flaming debris through the air,
Be a protective shelter surrounding him there,
Give him reassurance, and a friend to offer consolation,
As he forces himself onward in unflinching determination,
Give him rest as his body begins to tire,
A moment of comfort in the midst of the fire,
Keep his mind clear, alert, and fully aware,
Don't let frustration clog his thoughts with despair,
Let him be proud of his efforts and stand tall with that pride,
Give him a feeling of accomplishment to flow freely in-side,
Because, You know the deep concern that leads his way,
Through the dangerous bruden he faces today,
Stand beside him as he helps in any way he can,
Dear God, hear my prayer, "Protect him, the Fireman,"
GAIL P. GRIFFIN
84 Chowan Court
Edenton, N.C. 27932

"We were very fortunate to contain it and that was due to the excellent training our volunteer fire department has had over the years. But we know that they couldn't have done it by themselves. Without the 150 or more assisting firemen from the area and the help of law enforcement agencies in controlling traffic, and the local dispatch system, we would have had more problems. There's no way to really express my feelings at this time concerning what the people in the community have done to support the firefighters."

BILL COX
Mayor of Hertford

"You can't single out any individual group. The harmony was like one big family. The response was far from our expectations. There's not enough praise that could be given. People rallied together in a time of need."

JOHN BEERS
Chairman, Perquimans County Chapter
American Red Cross

Editorial:

The real story

A reporter's first question is often, "What happened?"

But in the Winslow Oil Company fire of Jan. 10, the real story is "What didn't happen."

Townpeople will long remember a blackened sky fiercely lit up with flames throughout the morning. But the townspeople will, thankfully, not have to recall the loss of lives and homes.

The Hertford Volunteer Fire Department, and united efforts from firefighting volunteers numbering over 200, saved this town from what at first report was a disaster.

The heroes of this story are those firefighters, all the more heroic in that they risked their lives constantly throughout the two-day battle for one reason only. They love their community.

Firemen leaving their homes and families in the early morning of Jan. 10 faced the realization that they might not return. Fire fighters, paid or volunteers, face this realization every time the fire whistle is sounded, alerting them that

their help is needed.

Another part of this story is how the community responded in a time of need. Countless groups, agencies and individuals rallied together displaying the same love of community and providing help to those men in whose hands lay the future of the community.

While firemen stayed on the scene for an estimated total of 51 hours, volunteers pulled duty with them doing an outstanding job to provide as much comfort as possible.

People from outside this area may not understand why a fireman would work a 13-hour shift, without pay, to contain an oil fire. People from outside this area might not understand a young woman serving hot meals and setting up cots for the same amount of time.

But residents in Hertford and Perquimans County have no trouble comprehending this feeling of togetherness, because residents here care about community and fellow man.

That was proven Jan. 10.



WEDNESDAY MORNING — The fire site took on a winter wonderland effect Wednesday morning as the millions of gallons of water and foam used to battle the Winslow Oil Company blaze froze in the cold temperatures.