

# A Man's Fall: C. O'Neil Hamrick

Six men stood at the judge's bench in U.S. District Court at Greenville last Wednesday week. Two were ministers; four were farmers. All appeared distinguished. One awaited sentencing for fraud. C. O'Neil Hamrick, former Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation (ASCS) director in Cherokee County, had been convicted in District Court Sept. 24 on charges of defrauding the Farmers Home Administration. Hamrick, 49, of Rt. 2 Gaffney, had worked for the ASCS 30 years, 15 as county director. That Wednesday he was jobless, and facing a possible five-year imprisonment.

Hamrick's conviction for fraud involving soybeans was, in the words of his defense attorney, less "for financial gain" than "just trying to keep his head above water." It is a story that District Judge Matthew Perry calls "a human tragedy." The downfall also raises larger questions for this area as it:

\*crosses the state line into Cleveland County where

35,000 acres are grown in soybeans; involves two Shelby banks and a stay at a Boiling Springs hospital; includes allegations of incompetence against Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) by Hamrick's lawyer and local bankers.

C. O'Neil Hamrick's story begins in the small town of Gaffney. As in other small towns, many are willing to talk about O'Neil Hamrick; few are willing to be named. It is clear, however, that Hamrick's downfall

*"they treat a real farmer like a red-haired step-child."*

began with the unusually dry weather of 1977 and with two pieces of paper on file at the 1930's-style Cherokee County Courthouse.

The drought of 1977 qualified Hamrick and other farmers in the area for emergency loans from the

Farmers Home Administration, testified county FmHA administrator Jessie Hiers at Hamrick's trial. In November, 1977, Hiers said, he processed a loan for Hamrick for \$246,000. For collateral Hamrick pledged farm equipment, livestock, and proceeds from the sale of soybeans he planned to raise the following year on 11 tracts in Cherokee County. Hamrick owned one tract and rented ten.

As part of that transaction, Hiers in November 1977 signed and had put on file at the Cherokee

courthouse a "UCC-1" a two-page form listing the 11 tracts and FmHA's claim to crops grown on them. In doing this Hiers had "perfected" the lien; that is, he legally had established FmHA's first mortgage to proceeds of the crops.

The perfected lien became an important part of the government's case of fraud. Hamrick continued to borrow throughout 1978 pledging as collateral to two Shelby banks proceeds from soybeans on the same 11 tracts he had pledged to the FmHA.

Loan officers from the First National Bank and the Northwestern Bank at Shelby testified that they were unaware the soybeans Hamrick pledged as collateral were encumbered. At Northwestern, a loan officer testified, Hamrick signed a statement that the collateral was clear of security interest and claims.

On the other hand, Hamrick made no effort to conceal or destroy the UCC-1 on file at the Cherokee courthouse. It took a reporter unfamiliar with the filing system less than 10 minutes to find the form.

"The facts are there," Hamrick's defense lawyer Will Dunn, Jr., was later to argue in court. "Hamrick did just what he was charged with doing." But Hamrick did not intend to defraud, Dunn argued.

Hamrick repaid the Shelby banks. In 1978 Hamrick harvested his soybeans, bringing in 7,856 bushels worth approximately \$48,690. But he paid FmHA only \$793.

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# The Foothills View

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## Rape Suspect Surrenders

A suspect named in a warrant charging him with the rape of a 15-year-old girl voluntarily turned himself over to Boiling Springs police Tuesday.

Charles Douglas Glenn, 25, came to the police station accompanied by his wife. The girl Glenn is charged with raping is her sister, Glenn's sister-in-law.

The girl lives with her mother in a trailer next to Glenn's at Hambrick Trailer Park. She told patrolman Dan Ledbetter that while her mother was at work Sunday, Glenn entered her trailer about 10 a.m., pushed her on a bed, and raped her. She was treated and released at Cleveland Memorial.

Glenn was arrested Tuesday and taken to jail at Shelby. He was to have a bond hearing Wednesday.



## On The Square

Doug Mayes of WBTV's "On The Square" program talks over the high cost of postage with Gardner-Webb student Todd Greene Tuesday at noon. Interviews with local townspeople and students will be broadcast Thursday night on Chanel 3's six o'clock news and again on Friday on the Top O' The Day show at noon.

## Rescue Squad 'Family' Part of United Way

By Juanita Bouser  
Special to View

Editor's note: United Way's fund campaign geared up last week, announcing a goal for the Boiling Springs area of \$2,250. From our contributions, United Way supports 27 human service agencies, 17 of which are local. One of the 17 is the Boiling Springs Rescue Squad. Juanita Bouser describes below the men and women put to work for us by United Way contributions.

They're a family. That's the way members of the Boiling Springs Rescue Unit see themselves -- as a family of 17 men and

women bound by a commitment to help others.

Indeed, their headquarters north of Boiling Springs resembles a family home. The clock on the wall ticks quietly in the background. A large white Bible rests on an end table. Six yellow and black swivel chairs stand in formation at the breakfast bar.

It's a homey atmosphere. But this family's residence is equipped with a radio room and a garage full of ambulances. And when the crackle of a radio message filters into the living

room, this family listens. Members have been responding to calls for help since 1971, when the unit was founded. The squad helped 850 people last year.

Their pay? "We get paid," says David Atkins. "We don't get any money, but we get paid. When I know that I helped somebody, that's plenty pay."

Atkins estimates that its costs each member at least \$500 a year to participate in this volunteer activity. How much would it cost Boiling

Springs in this volunteer activity. How much would it cost Boiling Springs area residents if the unit were manned by paid personnel? "They couldn't afford it," say squad members. The unit will receive \$13,000 from the Cleveland County United Way next year.

The men and women in the unit work together on equal footing. The six women in the squad were "in the back seat to start with," says one member. They began as auxiliary members but gained full status about six or seven years ago.

"It's kind of rough

sometimes," says Debra Bartee. "It gets to you emotionally and physically." Members take a personal interest in every victim they help. "We try to keep up with our patients," one member says. "We don't lose touch with them."

They rejoiced with a teen-age boy who survived a heat stroke one summer at a Boiling Springs football camp. The thermometer recorded his temperature at 107 degrees. "The thermometer wouldn't go any higher," one squad member recalls. "He was as dead as he could be and

still be alive." But he recovered, thanks to the Boiling Springs Rescue Unit, and was able to play in the last game of the season at his high school in Westminster, S.C.

People in the community who have received help from the squad know that the members, all emergency medical technicians, are dedicated individuals. And they support the squad's efforts. Said one lady who benefited from their knowledge and care: "I'd fight for that rescue unit."

That's the kind of pay David Atkins was talking about.

## G-W Homecoming

## Eagles Close Home Door

The 27-17 Homecoming loss to Carson-Newman may well have cost the Bulldogs the chance to make the NAIA playoffs.

It seemed mostly a case of nerves. Two early and very costly turnovers - a tipped pass and a fumble - led to a pair of first quarter scores by the Eagles.

Eagle defensive end Jerome Taylor intercepted a Stuart pass which had been tipped by another Eagle lineman and ran the ball to the Bulldog 19. Two plays later, running back Van Williams romped untouched into the end zone.

On the ensuing kickoff, disaster struck again. The Bulldog receiver fumbled the football and an alert Steve Shedon, an Eagle defensive back, fell on the loose pigskin. It was a costly miscue for the Gardner-Webb receiving team, since it gave the Eagle offensive team the ball on the Bulldog 27. The Eagles were quick to take advantage of the miscue. Van Williams ripped off five yards, Eagle quarterback Connor hit his wide receiver Bryan Bell, who carried the ball inside the Bulldog ten yard line, and Van Williams once again romped into the end zone untouched.

However, it was not to be all Carson-Newman. On the next series of offensive plays, the Bulldogs got on track.

Paula Dawn Mills of Mooresville was crowned Gardner-Webb College's Homecoming Queen Saturday afternoon. She is a senior religion education major and the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Paul G. Mills.



Photo by Ed Pilegard

Their sparkling offensive and defensive play continued into the fourth quarter. An offside penalty against the Eagles kept a Bulldog drive alive, and with 13:21 left to play in the game Jamie Pope headed off tackle and exploded 36 yards for a score. The conversion was good, and the Bulldogs had pulled within four.

It seemed as if the tide had really turned. On its next possession the Bulldog offense picked up where it had left off. Three consecutive first downs carried them to the Eagle 44. Sadly for the fans on this homecoming weekend, it was a far as they were to go. The Eagle secondary broke up a Bulldog pass on fourth down and their offense took over.

A 21-yard gain by Eagle running back Hugh Rutledge coupled with a 15-yard roughing-the-kicker penalty gave Carson-Newman the ball on the Gardner-Webb 21. It took only six plays for the Eagles to score. Rutledge burst through the Bulldog defense for eight yards and a touchdown. This made the final score 27-17.