



**SOPPY, SOGGY, AND SWAMPY**—It was the first clear day after four days in a row of rain and Greg Williams of Wilmar finally had a chance to drain away the water standing in his father's, John Williams, soy bean field by digging a series of water furrows.



**WHITE RIBBON AFFAIR**—Local officials and bank employees look on as Vanceboro Mayor Jimmie Morris cuts the symbolic ribbon to open the new Wachovia Bank building at Main and New Streets. Invocation was conducted by the Rev. Claude Thomas Wilson of the Vanceboro United Methodist Church as the town adlermen and 10 bank employees looked on, including A.F. Whitley and James Pepper.

## Tobacco Crop Gone To Hail

Seems like Mother Nature was out to get Frank Watson last week.

Sending high winds and heavy rains all around West Craven County, she decided to give Frank an extra bonus - quarter sized hailstones right down on top of his freshly topped field of tobacco.

Frank's tobacco is located on land owned by Spencer Dudley of River Road and Spencer described what happened, "It was like a streak of hail come across just my farm and none other and beat that tobacco all to pieces."

"Frank may be able to salvage a little bit of it, but what's left sure is sick looking."

Frank thinks the 17.33 acres of almost full grown tobacco is at least 75% lost and hopes the Federal adjustment man will allow him to turn it under because Frank doesn't want to go through what he called, "The terrible process of cleaning up stalks and suckerin' and redoin' it all and in the end just havin' three or four leaves on a stalk."

Frank said, "I can't make nothin' on three or four leaves and it would cost me more than what I would get rather than if I would just drop it now and take the loss."

Frank thinks his damaged tobacco would have been a 20-leaf crop giving at least 2600 pounds to the acre and was worth a total of about \$60,000.

Frank described his situation, "I broke part of my crop in the button stage in the morning and the hail come and hit it in the afternoon. No more leaves will grow on that part of the crop that has been topped and only two or three leaves will grow on those that hadn't been topped."

"The broken leaves will just fall off at this early stage of the game and dry up - nothin' can be done with them."

"I haven't seen anybody in this area that was hit as hard as me, only some slight damage further down River Road, but not to the same extent."

"I wasn't here when the hailstones hit, but my wife was here and she said they was as big around as quarters."

The hail must have been localized because the little bit of tobacco planted around Frank's trailer which is less than half-a-mile from the main crop is still in perfect condition.

Frank says what he does next will depend on the Federal insurance adjustment man.

"I will determine myself what to do next according to what they evaluate my crop at. It's hard for me to determine now how much I've invested in the 17.33 acres."



**Frank Watson And His Damaged Crop**

There are very few farmers in West Craven County that don't have some kind of crop damage insurance these days.

As a full-time farmer, Frank Watson doesn't have a back-up job and he depends on each crop whether it be tobacco, beans, or corn to carry its own weight. Each crop has to do the best it can to cover itself.

Frank said, "Once the tobacco leaves are broken and hanging, that's it - no tobacco that's been beat off and pulverized by hail and left layin' in the mud is worth the trouble."

"This tobacco is just a loss and there ain't a whole lot I can do about it."

Frank Watson can only hope that his insurance adjustments are taken care of within the next couple of weeks.

"I would prefer to let the tobacco roll and put beans down before the end of the month."

"If it takes any longer to get these adjustments figured out I may have to cut the ground and let it lay there."

Even as Frank Watson sums up the destruction, Mother Nature sends down a blinding rain from thick rolling, angry gray clouds.

And Frank Watson feels it must be hailing somewhere near.

## Question of the Week: Is there enough to do around here in the summer?



**Melissa Ward of Vanceboro**  
"No. I'd like a job, maybe working tobacco. I've just been playin' around the house. I wish I could go to the beach but mother won't take me anyplace."



**Robert Wilson of New Bern**  
"Yes. I stay with Granny and Grandad in Pitch Kettle. I feed the pigs and cows, swim with my uncle, ride my bicycle and motorcycle."



**Stacey Weatherington of V'boro**  
"No. We need some playgrounds and campsites in this area. We also need some softball teams for kids to play on and a big swimming pool too."



**Fitz Bryan of Vanceboro**  
"Yes. I've been playin' pickup games of baseball and working around the house planting flowers. I go to watch little league games in New Bern."