

Ahead In Carolina
The Democrat led all N. C. weeklies in 1965 Press Assn. contests. Four first place awards included the one for General Excellence.

WATAUGA DEMOCRAT

An Independent Weekly Newspaper . . . Seventy-Eighth Year of Continuous Publication

BOONE WEATHER			
1966	Hi	Lo	Snow Precip.
May 3	63	38	.41
May 4	65	46	
May 5	71	34	
May 6	73	52	
May 7	73	52	
May 8	78	53	
May 9	73	49	
Snow Given To Nearest Half Inch			

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With the Watauga County Prison Unit in the background, Mrs. Josephine Gaines of Boone and Fulmer M. Rudisill of the N. C. Prison Department, pause as they go about the work of organizing a new program for inmates in North Carolina. (Staff photo)

First In Carolina

Citizens Asked To Join In Helping State Prison Inmates

BY RACHEL RIVERS

A Watauga County woman and a supervisor of alcoholic rehabilitation in the state prison department are pooling their efforts to build a "Bridge of Understanding" between inmates of the local prison and professional people in Boone.

Fulmer M. Rudisill of the Hickory division said that the program getting underway in the Watauga Unit is a first in the state of North Carolina. The idea is to set up a program which ultimately will benefit

both the community and the men who will serve their sentence or be paroled in the area.

Rudisill explained that the state program is part of the new administration of prisons under V. Lee Bounds, and that the plan calls for transfer of inmates into the prisons in the area where they will be living when they are released.

"The time to treat the man is when he's in prison," Rudisill said. "Our philosophy in the North Carolina Prison Department is treatment rather

than punishment." In order to open new paths of interest and desire to inmates, Rudisill said, all men, regardless of where they entered prison, will eventually be quartered in their home area.

Role Of Alcohol

Between 75 and 80 per cent of the more than 10,000 inmates in the state are in prison because of the influence of alcohol upon their lives.

"Alcoholics Anonymous is most effective in getting them to realize that alcohol is their

basic problem. In addition to alcohol problems, many have personality and behavior problems"—and, he added, narcotics and alcohol often go hand in hand.

Two years ago, an AA group was started at the local prison unit, which serves Alleghany, Ashe and Watauga counties. Although an AA in Boone would have been the logical support of prisoners, there was no group here and AA workers from Lenoir, Hickory and other towns had been helping with the local program, according to Rudisill. Recent demand to expand their own programs has prevented these workers from assisting here.

So the "Bridge of Understanding" is being built.

Community Approach

The importance of the community approach cannot be overemphasized, said Rudisill. Since the prisoners in the local unit will soon be residents of the area, community leaders (Continued on page three)

R. A. Doughton Memory To Be Honored Friday

A memorial plaque will be unveiled on the courthouse lawn in Sparta Friday, May 13, honoring the memory of Rufus A. Doughton, former Lieutenant Governor and veteran Legislator.

The exercises will begin at 2 o'clock when Judge Johnson J. Hayes, Edwin Duncan and W. B. Austin will pay tribute to the career of Mr. Doughton.

Judge Crittendon of the State Department of Archives and History will present the memorial which will be unveiled by David Doughton Gregory and John Sidney Miller, grandchildren of Mr. Doughton. The public is invited.

Besides the office of Lieutenant Governor, Mr. Doughton had served as Chairman of the State Highway Commission, was State Commissioner of Revenue, and served many terms in the North Carolina House of Representatives. A graduate of the University of North Carolina, Mr. Doughton provided leadership in the fields of public education and banking.



ASTC SPEAKER—Dr. Dean W. Colvard, above, will be speaker for Commencement exercises at Appalachian State Teachers College on Friday, May 27. Dr. Colvard, a native of Ashe County, is chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and is a former president of Mississippi State University.

Dr. Colvard Will Speak As 545 Receive Degrees

Dr. Dean W. Colvard, Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, will be the speaker at commencement exercises at Appalachian State Teachers College Friday, May 27, when approximately 545 seniors will receive degrees.

Dr. Colvard is scheduled to speak at 10:30 a.m. in outdoor exercises planned for William J. Conrad Stadium.

Dr. Colvard, recently appointed Chancellor of the University at Charlotte, is a former president of Mississippi State University. He was Dean of Agriculture at N. C. State College, Raleigh, from 1953-60, when he assumed the reins at Mississippi State.

He is a native of Ashe County and is a graduate of Virginia-Carolina High School at Grassy Creek. He was graduated from Berea College in 1935, received his M. A. degree from University of Missouri in 1938 and his Ph.D. from Purdue University in 1950.

Dr. Colvard joined the faculty at N. C. State in 1947 when he became professor of animal science. In 1938 he was appointed head of the Department of Animal Science at the college.

Dr. Colvard has been prominent in a number of professional organizations. Among others, he presently is Chairman of the President's Council of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant colleges. He was chairman of the Mississippi Rhodes (Continued on page three)

Signs Detailed Confession

Former Vilas Man Says He Killed, Buried Three

Says Prayer Made Him Feel Like A New Man

BY RACHEL RIVERS

A Vilas, North Carolina man sought by the FBI after escaping a Greene County, Penn., jail on July 17, 1965, confessed to three murders and hundreds of burglaries and robberies when police in Maywood, Calif., arrested him on April 25 in connection with a shooting.

James Morris Fletcher, 48, signed a detailed confession, in which he stated, "When they shot me the other night I thought I was gonna die . . . and as I said, I've been goin' to church and I prayed, 'Lord, save my life and I'll confess everthing and then You can do what You want to but take me to Heaven'. I wanted to get this all off my mind and I went to that hospital and . . . after I prayed at night, I felt like a new man the next morning. I couldn't walk or anything, and the doctor was amazed at my recovery."

Fletcher was stopped by a police bullet when he returned to an apartment owned by Pat Dennis of Maywood. He and Dennis had struggled with a gun earlier after arguing over a woman. Fletcher said the gun went off "accidentally", the blast hitting Dennis in the ankle.

Fletcher fled from the scene, and Dennis was taken away in an ambulance. Later Fletcher saw police patrolling the area, jumped out of his car and ran. An officer yelled "Halt", then fired.

Described as ruddy complexioned, with blue eyes and gray hair, Fletcher is 5 feet, 11 inches tall, weighs 175 pounds, and was born July 8, 1918, at Vilas.

He said the men he had murdered are all buried in Greene County, Penn., and that he would show authorities the graves when he was transported back to Pennsylvania. Watauga officials say that if three bodies are found, Fletcher will be charged with murder and tried in Pennsylvania.

The local man stated that the murders were committed in the fall of 1964 in Greene County before he was jailed on seven charges of burglary, said to have been in Watauga County. He named a woman accomplice in the murders, and named three as accomplices in more than 1,000 burglaries.

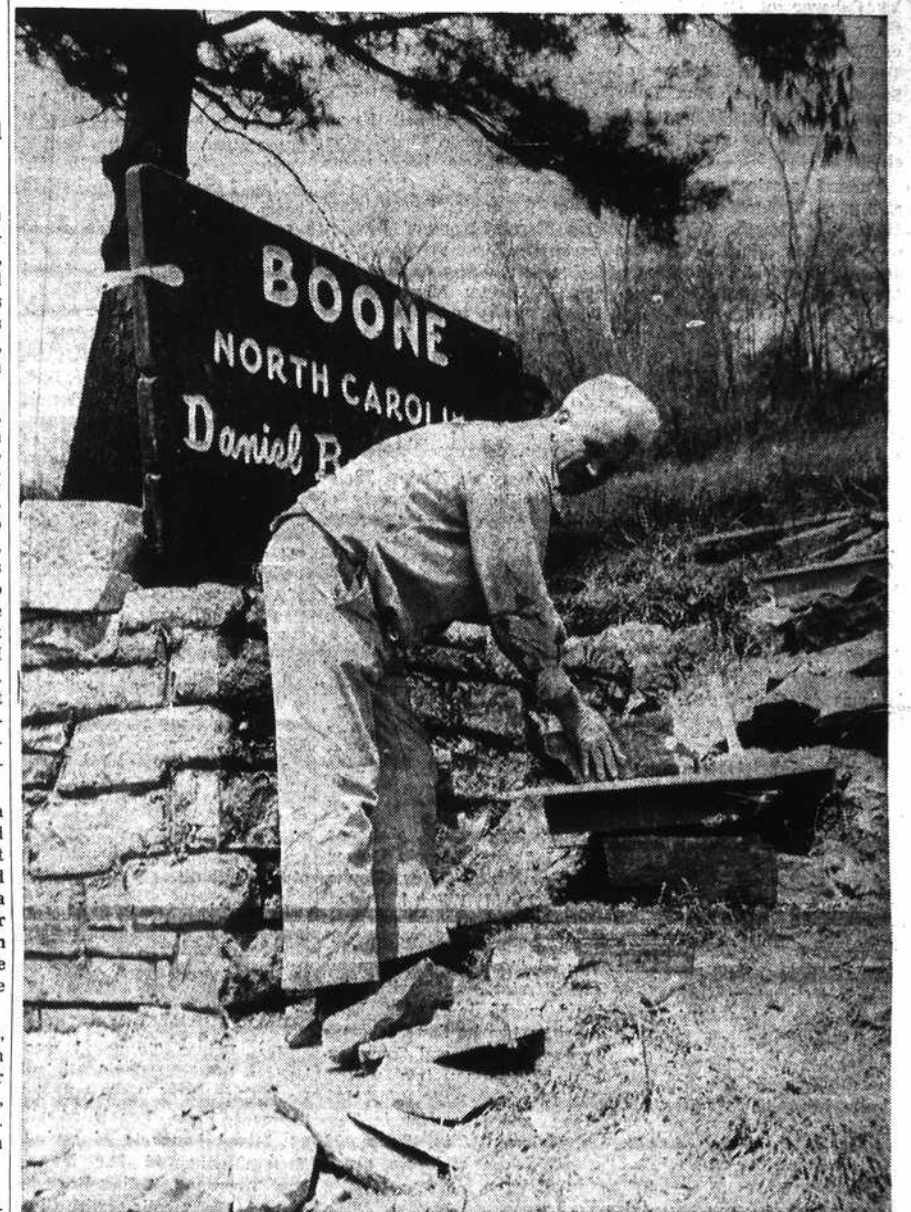
He stated that he had had one large truck and two small ones on "jobs".

Interstate Chase

When Fletcher fled Pennsylvania, where he was being held for charges in North Carolina, he became a fugitive from justice on an interstate basis, hence the intervention of the FBI.

He stated in his confession that a woman accomplice had "talked him into" escaping Greene County jail, and that she handed him three hacksaw blades to facilitate the escape.

According to his confession, he hauled some of the stolen goods from Pennsylvania to North Carolina. When he escaped from Pennsylvania, he apparently went on to California, with no charges of murder against him. It is not yet known whether the three he said he killed in the Greene County area were reported missing.



ROCK MASON MIDAS WHEELER winds up his work on the Boone entrance sign foundation, Highway 421 East of Boone. He and two other men began work Saturday morning and finished the job Monday afternoon. Fred McNeil, manager of the Chamber of

Commerce, and donor of land for the project, said this is the "guinea pig" project, so that the results of plan and design may be seen before beginning the foundation for the sign on Blowing Rock Road. (Staff photo)

Retired Foscoe Farmer Is Killed By Car On N. C. 105

Linville Aldridge, 76, a retired farmer of Route 1, Banner Elk was struck and killed by an automobile about 6:10 p. m. on Wednesday, May 4, on N. C. 105, six miles south of Boone.

Patrolman George Baker said Robert Mackey Pumphrey Jr., 18, of Bowling Green, Va., was operating a 1962 Chrysler station wagon owned by his father, Robert Mackey Pumphrey Sr., and was traveling south on 105 when Mr. Aldridge entered the highway in the path of the car.

Baker said Pumphrey said he pulled to the left of the road to dodge Mr. Aldridge, but that the car hit him near the center of the road and carried him 75 feet to the left shoulder of the highway.

Pumphrey, a student at Lees-McRae College, was returning to campus with six other students, Baker said. They had been on a shopping trip to Boone.

Baker said Mr. Aldridge suffered spine, skull and leg fractures, and was dead on arrival at Watauga Hospital.

No charges have been made, investigation pending.

Services for Mr. Aldridge were held at 2 p. m. Friday at the Foscoe Christian Church. He was born in Watauga County to James and Sallie Gragg Aldridge.

Surviving are his widow, Mrs. Julie Aldridge; four sons, Shula, Cluss, Garner and James Aldridge, all of Route 1, Banner Elk; four daughters, Mrs. Snow Hooper of Banner Elk, Mrs. Mina Joe Storie of Boone, Mrs. Mamie Shook of Route 1, Banner Elk and Mrs. Eva Burnett Meredith of Trenton, Fla.; a brother, John Aldridge of Boone; and a sister, Mrs. Ethel Wyke of Boone.

Burial was in Foscoe cemetery.

82,000 More On Parkway In 1966 Than Last Year

Laurel Springs — The Blue Ridge Parkway has attracted nearly 82,000 more visitors during 1966 than for the same period in the previous year, the National Park Service office at Roanoke, Va., announced Friday.

For the current year, 997,743 had visited the Parkway thru April compared with 915,622 in 1965.

A large increase in visitors was registered for April. The Park Service said 501,060 traveled the Parkway as compared with 431,506 in April last year. The Asheville District had the

greatest number of visitors last month — 168,312 as compared with 154,534 last year in April.

The Bluffs District, which extends from the Virginia line to Blowing Rock and includes Doughton Park near here, had 95,821 visitors compared to 83,885 in April, 1965.

The James River District at the northern end of the Parkway recorded 100,109 as compared with 88,404 in April, 1965. The Rocky Knob District, also in Virginia and extending to the North Carolina line, had 136,488 visitors as compared with 104,688 in April, 1965.

Saturday Is Last Day To Register

Watauga County voters are reminded that Saturday is the last date for newly qualified electors to register for the primary.

It is re-emphasized that there is no new registration, and only those who have never hitherto registered in a county election will be required to register.

Saturday the 21st is challenge day while the primary comes May 28.