

## 2 survive crash landing



STAFF PHOTO BY RITCHIE E. STARNES

Witnesses describe to Edenton Police Chief Jay Fortenberry (far left) and Harry Davis, Northeastern Regional Airport manager (far right) how a pilot flipped his airplane during a landing, Friday.

## Two crash landings in four days

By RITCHIE E. STARNES  
Editor

For the second time in four days, an airplane crash-landed at Edenton's Northeastern Regional Airport.

An Indiana couple survived a

crash landing Friday afternoon after an apparent gust of wind tilted the airplane's wings and forced the pilot off the runway where it turned upside down, authorities said.

Edenton police identified the pilot as Floyd W. Griffin, 62, and his passenger wife, Alice, of Avilla, Ind. as

the victims of the 1:20 p.m. crash. Neither was seriously injured, but paramedics took Alice Griffin, 69, to Chowan Hospital amid complaints of sore ribs and bruises to her head and nose, police said. Floyd Griffin

See CRASH, 2A

## Sour economy downs Edenton Furniture

By RITCHIE E. STARNES  
Editor

Count Edenton Furniture Company among the latest casualties of a sour economy.

A downtown business anchor since 1946, Edenton Furniture will be closing, pending the sale of its inventory. Owner Alton G. Elmore, 78, said the decision to close was difficult, but one that had to be made.

"With my age and the general economy, now was the time to do it," Elmore said.

The veteran retailer points to a worsening economy as the main reason he decided to close the store.

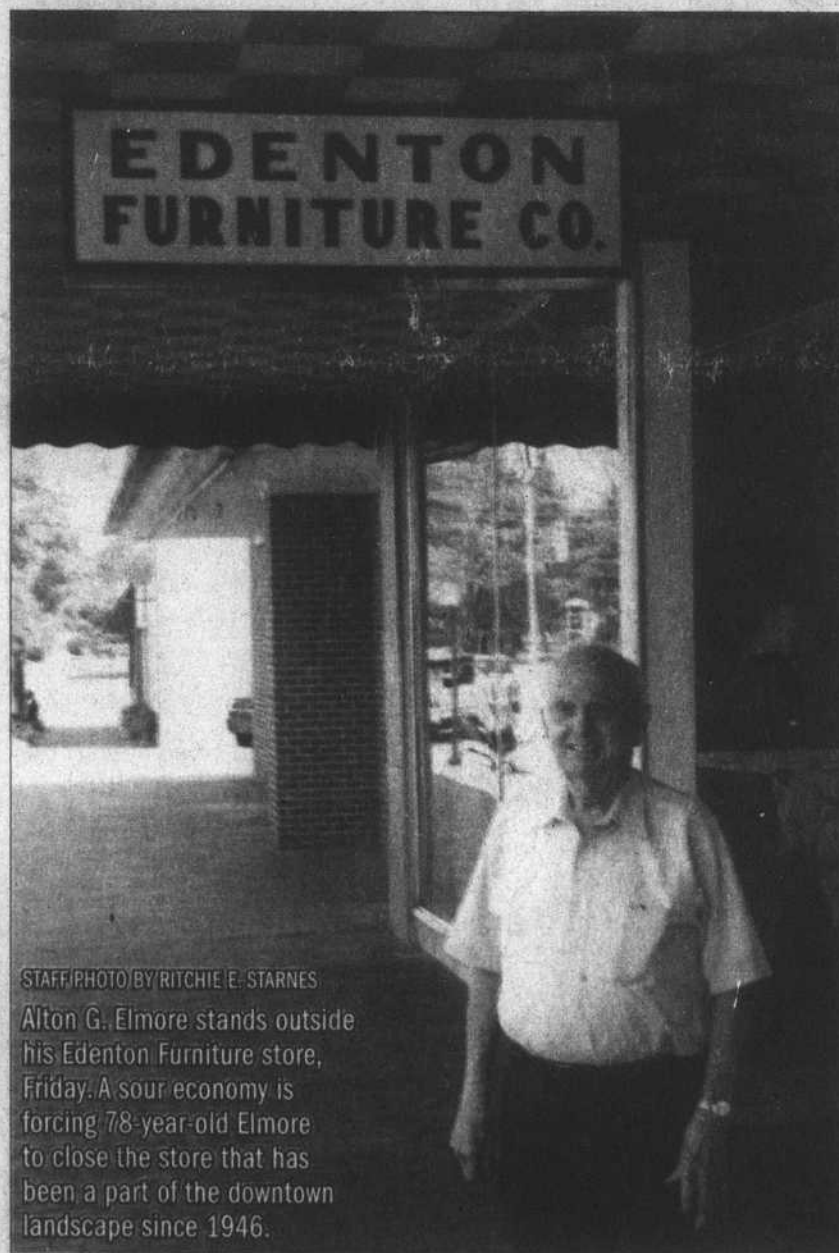
"In all my experiences, I've never had it so tough," Elmore said. "We're probably doing half (revenue) what we were doing two years ago."

Elmore calls the late 80s and early 90s the store's heyday, adding that once Edenton-Chowan began to lose those industries that provided plentiful jobs and payroll, merchants started to feel the pinch. Companies like United Piece Dye Works, George C. Moore, Carter's Ink and the Edenton Cotton Mill once ensured enough disposable income to keep the community thriving, he said.

But, those companies are gone. Elmore said the boat builders are the region's latest employment pillars to have fallen on hard times, leaving hundreds unemployed and without the means to support surrounding businesses.

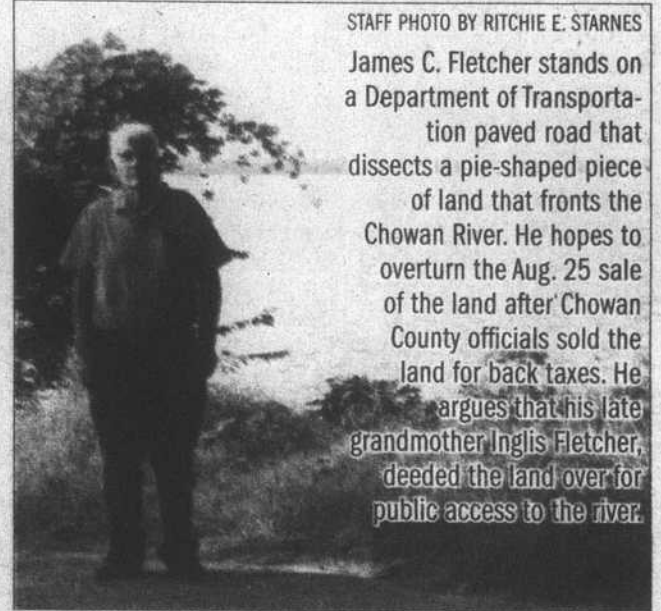
"If it wasn't for the economy,

See FURNITURE, 2A



STAFF PHOTO BY RITCHIE E. STARNES

Alton G. Elmore stands outside his Edenton Furniture store, Friday. A sour economy is forcing 78-year-old Elmore to close the store that has been a part of the downtown landscape since 1946.



STAFF PHOTO BY RITCHIE E. STARNES

James C. Fletcher stands on a Department of Transportation paved road that dissects a pie-shaped piece of land that fronts the Chowan River. He hopes to overturn the Aug. 25 sale of the land after Chowan County officials sold the land for back taxes. He argues that his late grandmother Inglis Fletcher, deeded the land over for public access to the river.

## River access sold for back taxes

### Fletcher fights for late grandmother's request

By RITCHIE E. STARNES  
Editor

When it comes to honoring his late grandmother's request, James Fletcher comes armed with a briefcase loaded for bear with what he calls "10 pounds of paperwork."

But, it's more than Inglis Fletcher's word, it's a passed down century-old agreement intended to benefit the people of Chowan County. Previous owners of the former timberland and farmland that once banked the Chowan River and currently serves as residential property along Arrowhead Beach agreed to carve out two parcels (Nos. 5940 & 4865) that would ensure public access to the river. The agreement has been officially recorded and the parcels dubbed Holley's Wharf.

"Even at her death, she (Inglis Fletcher) did things correctly with the way it was worded," said James Fletcher of his grandmother who was a revered local author and for whom a marker is erected in her honor at the entrance of Bandon Road in the vicinity of her family's former Bandon Plantation.

When Inglis and John (husband) Fletcher bought the land from J.L. and Allie G. Forehand in the 1930s, they did so with the Forehand's request that river access be preserved for the folks of Chowan County, deeds show. And

when Inglis and John Fletcher sold Bandon Plantation to Southern Properties on Feb. 4, 1964 for \$27,150, two parcels were intentionally left out to guarantee the public's river access, said James Fletcher.

"She (Inglis Fletcher) gave her word to the Forehands and I want to see it so," James Fletcher said. "It goes back before the Forehands."

Despite the documented stipulation and the public's ancient continued use of the access, the property was never officially deeded to an owner or turned over to a governing body.

James Fletcher, 65, admits that he and his siblings erred for never having properly executed the necessary paperwork.

"We didn't do what we were supposed to do," James Fletcher said.

"I wish they would have put that in writing," said Julie Sharp, Chowan County Register of Deeds.

One move James Fletcher took, however, was the 1992 purchase of a monument that memorializes his grandmother's wishes. The monument reads "Public Beach Access For The People of Chowan County to Enjoy and Preserve." It also bears Inglis Fletcher's name. Already purchased and prepared, the monument has been sitting at Clifton & Clifton Monuments in Elizabeth

See FLETCHER, 2A

## NAACP wants fired school administrator put on paid leave

By RITCHIE E. STARNES  
Editor

A representative with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People asked that the Edenton-Chowan Board of Education allow a terminated school administrator be placed on paid leave.

During Monday night's school board meeting, Keith A. Rivers, president of the NAACP's Pasquotank

branch, asked the board to allow Mary Lyons-Felton to remain on paid leave, pending an investigation into whether she has been the victim of discrimination. On Friday, the board voted unanimously to support Superintendent Allan Smith's recommendation to terminate Felton. Felton has a pending lawsuit against Smith and the school board.

"This is an issue of justice," Rivers said. "I'm asking you if we can settle this issue in an appropriate manner. We don't want to attack, and we don't want to be attacked."

The board declined to discuss the matter Monday

*"This is an issue of justice. I'm asking you if we can settle this issue in an appropriate manner. We don't want to attack, we don't want to be attacked."*

Keith A. Rivers

President, Pasquotank branch of the NAACP

night, but suggested a future talk.

"I can't tell you that we will take it up tonight, but we will take it up later on," said Ricky Browder, school board chairman.

Browder offered, however, an opportunity for Felton and her husband only to talk with the board in

a closed session meeting. Felton has signed a waiver, allowing the NAACP access to her confidential personnel records.

Rivers read from an Aug. 30 typed letter addressed to the school board. In the letter, Rivers requested a number of details related to Felton's job. His request also

suggested that the NAACP is monitoring the number of minority employees in the school system as well as their positions.

Rivers also read Smith's favorable reviews about Felton's job performance prior to her filing charges of discrimination when she was denied an opportunity for the principal's job at John A. Holmes. She had worked there as an assistant principal before Smith later transferred her to Chowan Middle School where she was assigned as a guidance counselor.

"The Pasquotank and Chowan branches of the NAACP have been investigating and closely fol-

lowing the events of Mrs. Lyons-Felton's case," said Rivers. "We believe that the current issues faced by Mrs. Lyons-Felton are by-products of the original complaints of discrimination filed by Mrs. Lyons with the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) and the NAACP."

An EEOC probe has yet to be concluded.

Court records show that Felton failed to obtain a license to work as a guidance counselor. Felton counters that the school system failed to honor her employment contract that called for her to work as an administrator



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