

Spann appeals death sentence

Continued from page 1A

guilty. "I just knew what I had heard," Sizemore said this week.

Before long, however, he'd tracked down evidence that, if substantiated in court, proves Spann's innocence.

An outline of that evidence, backed by a 14-year-old diary entry, videotaped interviews with the confessor's brother-in-law and analysis by criminologists, contend that Spann is innocent.

Spann was arrested four days after Melva Harper Neill, 81, was found strangled and sexually assaulted in her home in Clover. He allegedly had in his possession a gold coin that belonged to Neill. Later, authorities produced a palm print belonging to Spann which they say had been found on some papers in the dead woman's bedroom.

The new evidence indicates that the murder for which Spann was convicted was actually a chain of at least three murders of elderly white women within a 12-mile radius of each other. The murders occurred between July and November 1981.

Spann is charged with the second murder, Neill's. No one has been charged in the first murder, the July 12, 1981 killing of Mary Ring of Clover.

William Johnny Hullett is serving a life sentence in the third murder, the November killing of Bessie Kate Alexander, 69, of Smyrna. Spann was already in custody when Alexander was killed.

In all three murders, the victims were elderly white women, who were sexually assaulted, beaten and strangled.

"The killing finally stopped when William Johnny Hullett was arrested for and confessed to the murder of Bessie Alexander," according to the motion filed last month. "On Feb. 5, 1996, nearly 15 years after the crimes, Hullett signed a sworn declaration, against his penal interest, admitting his own involvement in the death of Melva Neill and stating unequivocally that Sterling Spann was not present during her murder."

Hullett has confessed to being outside while his stepbrother, Fred Kimble of Kings Mountain, went inside the Neill home and returned with some jewelry. Hullett said Kimble, who denies involvement in the murders, later told him he had killed Neill.

Two forensic specialist concluded the three murders were committed by a serial killer and one, after examin-

ing Hullett, said Hullett was probably the perpetrator of all three murders. That conclusion is collaborated by the statements of Hullett's wife and daughter, who allege he violently sexually assaulted them.

Spann had said he got the coin from a red-headed white man. Jessie Pruitt, who has red hair, was located and gave an affidavit saying he got a gold coin from Hullett in 1981 and that he gave it to a black man, though he did not know Spann's name.

Hullett and Kimble had a produce route that ran by each of the three victims' homes. He'd said Kimble told him that he was going to collect some money that was owed him when he entered Neill's home.

While caucasian hair was found at the murder scene, no hair particles consistent with people of African descent were found. And the clearly defined palm prints, supposedly made when Spann pressed his hands on the bed as he assaulted Neill, was on two pieces of unwrinkled paper and were not smudged, according to Sizemore. He said no other fingerprints were produced at trial.

A fingerprint expert disputes the state's theory of how the fingerprint was made, saying

West sees need to advance struggle

Continued from page 1A

in his 70-minute speech, but the issue of race and race relations once again took center stage.

"Any time one talks about race mattering, one must begin with tradition," he explained. "Tradition raises the fundamental question of what it means to be moral, courageous and committed."

The theologian/activist said that African Americans are not just people with problems, but problem people who are blamed for society's ills, whether real or imagined.

"Problem people are subject to extinction and various other forms of subjugation, because of what they have been reduced to," West said.

Although race and race relations was his primary focus, West also touched on an issue that concerns Americans of every kind. West said that paranoia and poverty are at the root of what is destroying America.

"Paranoia creates fear and

distrust and poverty in turn creates hopelessness and despair," he said.

West said that events like the Million Man March last year are the result of discontent in the country, especially among African Americans. He said that the march was good for the African American community and the entire nation.

"It's very important for a variety of blacks, including Farrakhan, to come together for the purpose of advancing the black struggle," he said.

Nurica Goode of the Black Student Coalition described West as inspirational.

"He changed the way a lot of people here viewed the issue of race," she said. "He was real positive."

Quoting everyone from Plato to DuBois, West ended his address on the premise that despite her problems, America still has the potential to go down as the greatest nation in the annals of history.

"I'm a prisoner of hope and I hope that we can truly respond as a nation to meet the needs of people and meet

those needs as we proceed with this experiment called America, into the 21st century," he said.

CELEBRATE
YOUR
HERITAGE.



With invitations
by *Carlson Craft*

THE HERITAGE COLLECTION
"Designs For People Who Share
An African Heritage."

PAPERTOWN

4420 Monroe Rd. • 342-5815
(Across From Oakhurst School)

**GET
ADMINISTRATIVE
TRAINING—PLUS
A BONUS
OF PRIDE.**

The full-time pride you'll feel as an American for your part-time service in the Army Reserve is a sound reason for joining.

Another is the excellent experience you'll acquire in today's latest procedures in office administration.

You'll also be well paid for part-time service—usually for one weekend a month plus two weeks' Annual Training.

And for college students, money from the Montgomery GI Bill added to pay earned during a standard enlistment could provide over \$25,100 for education.

Any good administrator should look into the Army Reserve.

Think about it.
Then think about us.

Then call:
372-6876

704-563-0560

IN EAST TOWN

BE ALL YOU CAN BE!

ARMY RESERVE

B-J Fashions

Designer Hats, Suits, Dresses
& Costume Jewelry

704-535-0092

East Town Market
3116-F Milton Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28215

Monday - Thursday: 10am - 7pm
Friday: 10am - 9pm
Saturday: 10am - 7pm

Braces For Children & Adults

DR. PAUL A. MCGILL,
D.D.S., P.A.

"Practice Limited To Orthodontics"
(704)375-7005

1404 Beatties Ford Rd.
NorthWest Gateway Professional Center
Suite 200 • Charlotte, North Carolina 28216



NATIONAL BUILDERS, Inc.

Stop Throwing Your Money Out The Window...

Call 525-1711 Today!

4837 South Tryon St. • Charlotte, NC 28217

NO EQUITY?
NO PROBLEM!
We DO have a program
for you!

Senior
Citizen
Discounts

100% Financing

Get the most for your dollars right away!!
ROOFING • SIDING • WINDOWS

• Additions • Garages • Central Heating/AC
• Carpet/Floor Covering • Kitchen Remodeling
• Bathroom Remodeling • Decks/Patios
• Car Ports/Driveways

\$300 OFF

Premium Vinyl Siding Installation
With Coupon

15% OFF

Seasonal Remodeling With Coupon

Every
2 Minutes
We Make
A Loan.

Ask about
a low fixed rate
home equity loan.

LET'S MAKE THE NEXT ONE YOURS.

As soon as you walk in, you'll notice there's a difference between UCB and other banks. It's our Personal Touch that lets you know borrowing money isn't going to be so trying after all.

Whether it's a new home or an additional room, a car or a boat, a dream vacation or a college education... whatever you have in mind, United Carolina Bank will make borrowing as quick and hassle-free as possible. The reason? We work with you every step of the way to help you get the money you need.

Working together with our customers. It's the reason we're able to make so many loans for so many people. People just like you.

Please stop by any UCB office or call 331-6300.

The Personal Touch. Easy As UCB.

**UNITED
CAROLINA
BANK**



Text telephone number for the hearing impaired, 1-800-876-6545.
©1996 United Carolina Bank. Member FDIC.

WITHERS REALTY

"Government Acquired Homes"

ALL AREAS

- LOW DOWN PAYMENT -

Ask About Rebates Given At Closing

(704)523-5585



CLIFF MILLS SAYS

"I LIKE YOU SATISFIED"

CREDIT PROBLEMS ARE

NO PROBLEM

Special Financing Available

LEASE TURN-INS

WELCOME

All Makes & Models

New & Used Cars



ASK FOR YOUR PERSONAL SALES CONSULTANT... CLIFF MILLS

USE YOUR TAX REFUND TOWARD YOUR DOWN PAYMENT



YOUNG FORD



5411 N. Tryon St.

For Appointment • Call Today 598-2599