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Impromptu Ferry Service

The Intracoastal Waterway bridge on the beach road near Southport was demolished early Tuesday morning by a passing barge. The bridge is shown in the background, with the small boat of

the Town Creek Rescue Squad approaching the northern bank of the canal with a passenger coming off the beach. (Photo by Spencer)

Schools Have Big Enrollment

The enrollment of students in public schools in Brunswick County is expected to reach nearly 6,500 for the 1971-72 school term by the end of the first week, according to Ralph C. King, Superintendent, Brunswick County Schools.

According to best estimates at least 150 county students are attending private institutions in and outside the county. However, it appears that this loss of students has been more than offset by the influx of new students into the county. All schools have reported a number of new students enrolling for the first time in the county schools.

The Southport area schools showed the greatest increase with 155 more students enrolling this year than were in the schools at the close of the 1970-71 school term. Presumably, this growth is accounted for largely by the increase of persons connected with construction projects in the area.

Enrollment had reached 6,356 as of Thursday of last week with additional students expected to enroll during the week. The school system requests that all students enroll as promptly as possible so that their attendance will be reflected in the first ten (Continued On Page Three)

Party Official Answers 'Weak Link' Accusation

Franklin Randolph, second vice - chairman of the Democrat Executive Committee for Brunswick County, took exception to the story carried last week in The Pilot reporting the recent meeting at which Odell Williamson was elected chairman, replacing Grover A. Gore, who had resigned.

His letter is self explanatory, and is being printed in full:

"First of all I would like to say that I am surprised at the way the news editors write their news. Some things they print and some things they

don't print, especially when it looks bad on our so called party leaders in this county. But the people who read that half-true statement in the papers last week and those false statements about me, I think they should know the whole truth about the matter.

"First of all it has never been in the history of this county to hold an election for the purpose of electing a chairman of the Democrat party in between regular elections. Over the past years whenever the chairman resigned the vice chairman moved up in the chairman's

position and finished out the unexpired term, and at the regular election another chairman is elected. But this year things were a little bit different because this is the first time in history that a black man ever held the position of second vice chairman, and I might add that it was mandatory that a black man be second vice chairman. So if the party had followed the old pattern it would have meant that the black man moved up next to the chairman. So to eliminate this they held an election to keep this black man just as far from the chairmanship as possible. I would like to say this is wrong in my opinion, and I would like to voice the opinion and sentiment of the whole county.

"I also understand that the executive committee of the Democratic party held a meeting, or meetings, prior to the one of the 29th to discuss the issue, and if something wasn't wrong or something going wrong in this or these meetings why wasn't I notified of the meeting, since I am on this executive committee.

"Reply to Mr. Hubert Bellamy's is accusations (Continued On Page Three)

Time And Tide

The best news on the front page of The Pilot for September 9, 1936, was that the late Dr. J. Arthur Doshier had been elected to American College of Physicians and Surgeons. This is the highest degree of recognition which may come to a member of the medical profession. A vessel manned by personnel from the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries was tagging shrimp in local waters with the object of being able to check on migratory habits.

The men's singles were being run off in Southport tennis tournament which had stretched over a period of several weeks, with Fred Willing having defeated Carey Reese in one of the early upsets. Bad weather had interrupted Labor Day weekend fishing; the editor had a stirring piece about the benefits of having electric lights in homes, and expressed the hope that lines soon would run the full length of Highway No. 17 (Continued On Page Four)

Mass Murder In County

The father who beat four of his children to death near Leland Tuesday morning said he performed the brutal act in an attempt to get his wife to come back home.

Robert Atlas Johnson, a 47-year old Wilmington man, has been charged with four counts of murder after the killings in a wooded area in Northeast Brunswick County. A fifth child survived the attack and was admitted to New Hanover Memorial Hospital in serious condition.

The oldest victim was nine-years old.

In the most brutal and puzzling incident ever to occur in the county, Johnson, an unemployed truck driver, reportedly called a Wilmington television station after the murders so his wife would learn he had killed the children and would come home.

Earlier, he had called the

same station, asking that a request be made for his wife to return. He said she had left "because with all the children she couldn't do anything anymore."

Johnson led police to the rural Brunswick County area where he killed daughters Janet Lynn and Elizabeth Ann and three-year old son Patrick Lee. Four-year old Carol Lorraine was still alive, sitting near the bodies of the dead children, and Robert Michael, mortally injured, was also alive but he died a short while later at New Hanover Memorial Hospital.

The illogical murders were performed with a tire tool.

Johnson's wife Bonita, 29-years old, reportedly left home Monday after marital difficulties arising from her taking a job at a Wilmington drive-in. About 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, he called the television station and asked

that a plea for his wife to return be broadcast, and then he took the five children to the wooded area near Leland where police said the fatal beatings occurred.

He then returned to his Wilmington home and called the television station again, this time reportedly saying for his wife not to come home to the kids, but to come home to him because he killed the children and needed her.

He already had called Wilmington police, who notified the Brunswick County Sheriff's department to report their suspicion that the murders had been committed. Johnson led police to the death scene, located off rural unpaved road 1422. Johnson's sister lives about one-half mile away from the scene, it was reported.

Brunswick County Chief Deputy Milton McCumbee assumed charge of the in-

vestigation, assisted by deputies George Reed and Harry Perkins. Johnson was returned to the Wilmington police station where he was questioned about the deaths.

The defendant is to be sent to Cherry Hospital, a mental institution in Goldsboro, and a preliminary hearing of the four murder charges is set for September 28 in Southport.

Johnson maintained an apparent calm throughout the day and sat in a nearby car while the Leland Rescue Squad removed the bodies of the three dead children. The injured girl and boy (who later died) were taken to the Wilmington hospital by law enforcement officers.

An SBI agent on hand said Johnson was convicted of interstate transportation of a stolen airplane and forgery some years ago, but has no record for the past 12 years.

State Of Emergency

Barge Cuts Oak Island's Only Link With Mainland

Between 3,000 and 4,000 persons have been isolated on Oak Island for the past 48 hours after a tug and barge plowed into the bridge over the intracoastal waterway near Southport shortly after midnight Monday and state, municipal and Coast Guard officials have been busy for the past two days trying to devise a workable solution to the problem of getting people and vehicles back and forth across the canal while repairs are being made.

Jack Hayward, Manager for the Town of Long Beach, called this afternoon to report that members of the council at Yaupon Beach and Long Beach had met in joint session to discuss some of the problems brought on by this emergency. One result was a request to Governor Robert W. Scott to declare Oak Island a disaster area.

"The greatest benefit from this action," said Hayward, "would be to bring us some relief in the manpower situation. Our rescue squad members have been working round the clock, and they are worn out. They and members

of the Town Creek and Shallotte Rescue Squads have been just great."

Hayward, who is Civil Defense Director of Oak Island, said that a move was taken by joint action of the boards to limit gasoline sales

on the island to 5-gallons per customer. "We have no crisis situation," Hayward explained, "by with only 3,000 gallons of gasoline supply on the island, we need to have it fairly distributed."

Hayward said that

arrangements have been made for delivery of milk and bread, plus other grocery supplies, from Howells Point to Bluewater Point by boat. "There is no food shortage at this time," he said.

Another cooperative project between officials of the two municipalities on the island has to do with garbage disposal. The Town of Long Beach has an available area for landfill operations and has made this facility available for use by residents of Yaupon Beach.

Meanwhile, the big problem is how to get people on and off the island, even on temporary basis since more than 300 school age children live there. State Highway officials have been working with Chief Arthur Skipper of the U.S. Coast Guard on a plan which will have a passenger ferry travel to Oak Island Coast Guard station to transport children and workers who live on the island and work in Southport. A ferry has been made available for this operation, but it would not be until late this (Wednesday) afternoon before it is known whether there is sufficient water at low tide to allow the vessel to come from the river through the channel to the Coast Guard Station.

A great deal depends upon the outcome of this test. If it is successful it may solve the problem of handling pedestrian traffic. It possibly

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Governor's Statement

September 7, 1971

Mr. D. McLaughlin Faircloth
Chairman
N.C. State Highway Commission
Raleigh, North Carolina

Dear Mr. Faircloth:

I have been informed that the Fort Caswell Bridge spanning the intracoastal waterway on NC 133 between NC 211 and Long Beach, North Carolina, was hit by waterway traffic on the morning of September 7, 1971.

This accident destroyed the only highway link between Long Beach, Yaupon Beach and Caswell Beach from the mainland.

In view of this situation, stranding several hundred people on the island, including school children, I declare this an emergency situation and, therefore, direct the North Carolina State Highway Commission to take steps to restore highway traffic to this area as expeditiously as possible.

With kindest regards and best wishes, I am

Cordially,
Robert W. Scott

Waccamaw Bank Grand Opening Set Next Week

The grand opening for the new home of the Southport branch of Waccamaw Bank & Trust Co. has been scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday of next week, with Queen Sandra Allen, Miss Fourth of July, due to cut the ribbon at 9 o'clock.

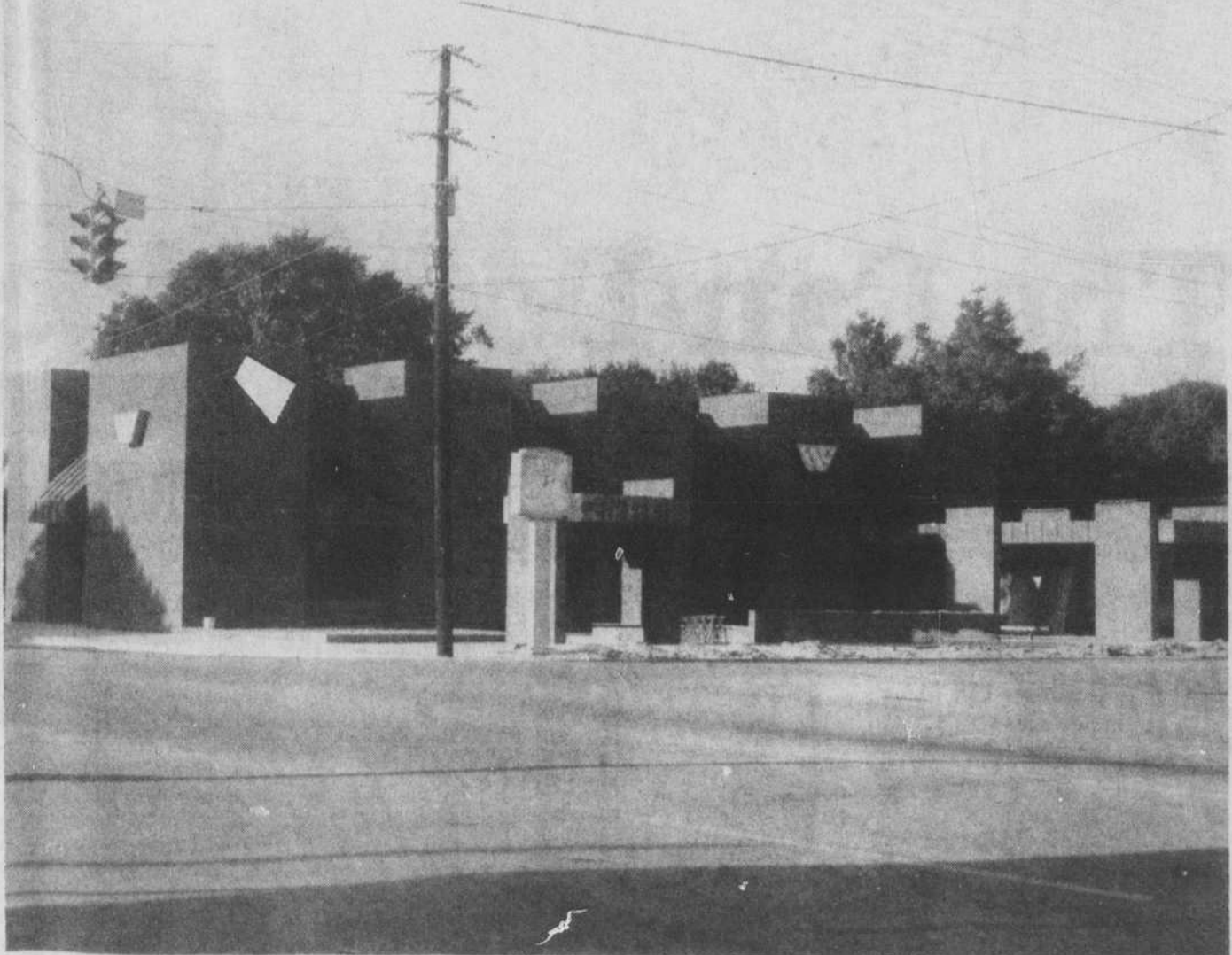
The pastor, Rev. John C. Dean, states that the church invites the public to share in these services of worship.

the Waccamaw Bank and Trust Co., located at the junction of highways 211-133-87.

The new building has been in use since May 1, but the formal opening has been delayed until grounds and landscaping was completed. It is a handsome, two-story structure designed by Ballard, McKim and Sawyer

of Wilmington, with J.W. Cook and Sons of Whiteville as general contractors.

It was built only six years following the completion of a new building at the same location. However, the unusual and unpredictable economic growth in the Southport area prompted bank officials to take the (Continued On Page Three)



Grand Opening For New Bank Building

The new Waccamaw Bank & Trust Company building in Southport will hold open house next Wednesday and Thursday. The imposing structure stands at the corner of Moore and Howe

streets in Southport and is one of the most impressive office buildings in the Waccamaw system. (Photo by Spencer)