

# The Warren Record

Published Every Wednesday By  
Record Printing Company

P. O. Box 70, Warrenton, N. C. 27589

HOWARD F. JONES  
Editor

GRACE W. JONES  
President

THURLETTA M. BROWN  
News Editor

ENTERED AS SECOND-CLASS MATTER AT THE POST OFFICE  
IN WARRENTON, NORTH CAROLINA, UNDER THE LAWS OF CONGRESS  
Second Class Postage Paid At Warrenton, N. C.

**SUBSCRIPTION** In Warren and  
adjointing counties Elsewhere  
**RATES:** \$12.00 Per Year \$15.00 Per Year  
\$ 7.00 Six Months \$ 8.00 Six Months

## Possible Solution

Several weeks ago we wrote on the problem of traffic congestion in downtown Warrenton, particularly on Friday afternoons when industrial traffic often merges with business traffic to cause considerable inconvenience to just about everyone.

Judging from the response we have received, we were far from alone in our hope that the problem can be remedied.

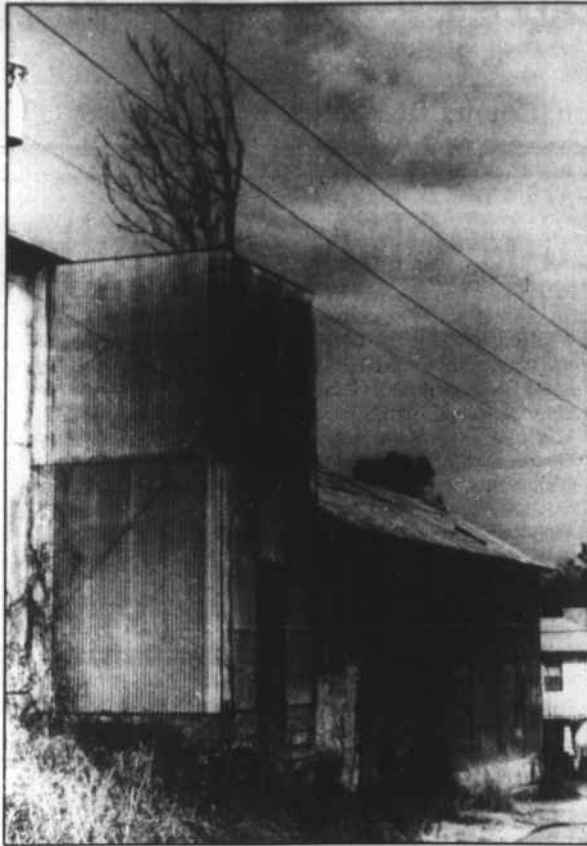
One of the most sensible suggestions we received was from Warrentonian George

(Pepi) Perkinson. He told us he felt the matter could be taken care of quite easily by posting signs at a couple of intersections, most particularly at the intersection of Main and Macon streets.

These signs would read: "No left turn between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. Friday."

We feel that Perkinson's suggestion has real merit. We hope that the Warrenton Board of Commissioners will give it some thought. And we regret we didn't think of the possible solution ourselves.

## The Warren County Scene



A tree was found growing out of the old building where farmers used to take their cotton to have the seeds removed before being baled. The portion of the building from which it grew has no roof, allowing the tree to receive the sunlight and water it needs.  
(Staff Photo by Phyllis H. King)



Thurletta Brown

## A Story Of Faith

Sometime when you are driving in the Oine community here, cruise along the unpaved road numbered 1206 and peer into the woods a bit behind Russell Union RZUA Church. Nestled there, about 100 yards off the roadway, are the remains of the old St. Luke's Episcopal Church.

Both Russell Union and the old St. Luke's Episcopal Church are on the property adjacent to that on which Robert L. Harris, Jr. and his wife, Luthenia, live today and theirs is a family history that is rich in the heritage of the Black Church, most specifically the Episcopal tradition.

It all started with William Paschall Russell, Isabella, his wife, and their son, Plummer, all slaves belonging to Warren County's John T. Russell, who had purchased the family from their former owner, a Mr. Paschall. You see, Paschall had sold William to the Russells because the slave had wanted to do the unthinkable: to learn to read and write. His new owners, the Russells, were more sympathetic and did what they could to teach William the skills he wished to learn. Although Isabella could not read or write, she made her way in the community as a midwife, delivering babies for both blacks and whites who lived there.

President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, thus freeing William and his family, who 13 years later, purchased 57 acres of land from his former "mastuhs."

Later, in 1886, the Protestant Episcopal Freedmen's Commission began its work with persons of color and on Oct. 3, 1887 the dream of St. Luke's, an Episcopal church for blacks, was born. Former-slave William P. Russell donated the framing, Robert Edwards gave the weatherboarding and they, along with others, constructed the building. One acre of land was deeded to the Diocese of North Carolina and St. Luke's Episcopal Church was born.

William P. Russell and Robert L. Harris, Sr. served as layreaders at St. Luke's.

Who is Robert L. Harris, Sr., you ask? He is the husband of Susannah, one of William's daughters, and they are the parents of Robert L. Harris, Jr., born in 1911, who today continues his family's Episcopal tradition by serving as senior warden at All Saints', which is located at the corner of Front and Franklin streets in Warrenton.

Robert's family moved to Littleton in 1912, where he remained until the age of seven when he returned to Warren County to live in Norlina with his grandparents, Henry and Celia Harris. At the age of 14, he went to work on his parents' farm, where they had lived since returning from Littleton in 1919. At the age of 20, Robert moved to Norfolk, Va. and was employed for seven years as a brakeman with Norfolk and Western Railroad. For five years, partly during World War II, he worked for the government as a machinery oiler before transferring to Sheller Globe, Inc., a Norfolk firm specializing in gaskets and automotive parts, from which he retired in 1971. But, earlier, during the Great Depression, on June 27, 1934, Robert married the former Luthenia Finch, of Wilson, in a ceremony performed by then Archdeacon Bravid Harris in the parish house at Grace Church in Norfolk. (Fr. Harris, a Warren County native, was the brother of Richard "Red" Harris, noted in last week's column as a grandson-in-law of Congressman John A. Hyman.) Robert and Luthenia have four children: Anna Francis, Robert III, William E. and Reginald F. In January of 1985, Robert and Luthenia returned to "the homeplace" in Oine.

But, back to St. Luke's. The first priests to serve St. Luke's were white, but black priests began to serve both St. Luke's and All Saints' Episcopal Church in 1896 or so. Among the black priests who served were Fr. Henry B. Delaney, Fr. William Morris, Fr. George Williams, Fr. J. H. M. Pollard, Fr. James K. Satterwhite, Fr. Robert J. Johnson, Fr. Herbert Banks, Fr. Hill, Fr. Robert B. Sutton, Fr. Odell G. Harris and Fr. Bravid W. Harris. The St. Luke's congregation thrived until the church was closed in the 1940's. It is from "It Can Be Done," an autobiographical book by the Rev. Odell Harris, that much of the historical information in this column has come and to him I am indebted.

Bishop Bravid W. Harris is also the uncle of Mrs. Goldie Baskett, a Warren County resident and treasurer of All Saints'. (She has told me of a Sunday in the 40's when she and her family sat in the balcony at Emmanuel to hear her uncle preach.) Prior to his election as Bishop of Liberia, Africa, he was Archdeacon of Negro Work in the Diocese of Southern Virginia before leaving in 1943 to assume the post of Secretary of Negro Work for the National Council in New York.

When Robert and Luthenia returned to "the homeplace" in January of 1985, St. Luke's was still standing. An addition had been constructed at the rear of the structure by Robert's father, but that had collapsed over time, leaving only the original portion built by slaves. According to Robert, nothing remained inside the church but an old wood-burning stove—and that was stolen last year.

The property on which St. Luke's stands was purchased from the Diocese by Fr. Odell Harris on Feb. 11, 1964. When he died in 1984 or 1985, the property passed down to his daughter, Marian, who resides in Texas. Each August for the past eight years, the Harris clan has gathered in Oine for a family reunion and this year will be no exception. It is during that event that the family will decide what is to happen to St. Luke's. They have discussed demolishing the building and replacing it with a monument that will forever immortalize the dreams of those former slaves who gave their blood and sweat to make the church real.

Perhaps the North Carolina Highway Historical Marker Advisory Committee will see fit one day to recognize the site. I think they should consider it. Don't you?



The old St. Luke's Episcopal Church, located about 100 yards off Rur 1206 in the Oine community, was organized in 1887. The church, which beginning around 1896 was served by black priests, thrived until its closing in the 1940's. Once the property of the Episcopal Diocese, the site in 1964 returned to descendants of the former slaves who had donated one acre of land and had assisted in the church's construction. The building is beginning to deteriorate and those descendants have made plans to erect a monument at the site to record for posterity the existence of St. Luke's Episcopal Church.

## Looking Back Into The Record

February 11, 1949

The board of commissioners had a full session here Monday morning at their regular monthly meeting as a number of delegations appeared to request county assistance for several projects, among them the new hospital, completion of the Hawkins High School gymnasium, maintenance of additional roads and an increase in the amount of profits received from ABC sales in the three towns.

Advertised for sale in the classifieds: a brand new '49 Ford Custom 4-door—with everything except the kitchen sink—for only \$2,087.

Advertised for sale by Warrenton Furniture Exchange: "Sofa by day—bed by night, complete with innerspring mattress, for only \$169.50."

February 7, 1964

A four-pronged attack on poverty and ignorance in Warren County was outlined to officials of the North Carolina Fund Monday, as a group of Warren citizens made a bid to receive assistance during a five-year \$4 million dollar effort to break the cycle of poverty in the state.

Members of the Warren County Hospital board of trustees took a major step toward complete ac-

creditation of the county's hospital Wednesday night by proposing construction of a hospital addition estimated to cost between \$12,000 and \$15,000.

Mr. and Mrs. John E. Floyd of Norlina announced the upcoming marriage on March 15 of their daughter, Gertrude Ann Floyd, to James William Hundley, son of James H. Hundley and the late Mrs. Mildred C. Hundley of Norlina.

February 8, 1979

Warren County's board of commissioners Monday formally set in motion the machinery to hold a \$2.25 million school bond issue here later this year.

The Norlina Board of Town Commissioners at their regular meeting Monday night voted to investigate the cost and feasibility of constructing 150 feet of curbing and guttering along one of the town's principal streets, with the suggestion that its cost might be paid from Powell Bill funds.

Carolina Telephone's 1978 city tax bill here was \$7,059.76 and Richard R. Barnes, Jr., district commercial and marketing manager, said that the company's total tax bill paid within Warren County was \$41,372.31.

## Zoning Ordinance Change Asked Of Planning Board

A petition to amend a zoning ordinance in the River Township was presented at Tuesday afternoon's meeting of the Warren County Planning Board.

The petition, presented by Al Thompson on behalf of his clients William and Rosa Lee Leavitt, requested that the board recommend a change in zoning from lakeside residential to light industrial use on a wooded lot located off SR 1356 in the River Township. Thompson asked the board for a favorable recommendation to the county commissioners.

The zoning change is needed, Thompson said, for Leavitt to remove old cars which he uses for parts from his residence to another lakeside residentially zoned parcel of land located near his home.

Thompson said Leavitt is in the business of remodeling 1964-1972 Chevies and has approximately 15 cars on his property for parts. Thompson said Leavitt realizes he is in violation of the zoning ordinance, but requests the zoning on his other property

changed so he can move the cars from his home.

The county previously chose not to make Leavitt remove the cars since the situation was not paramount, said Thompson.

Thompson said he had affidavits from some of Leavitt's neighbors stating that the removal of the cars from his residence would enhance the lakeside residential area and improve the property values.

The proposed site where Leavitt wishes to relocate his cars would be a five-acre area located on the interior of the property he owns, approximately 600 feet off the public roadway.

The area would not be visible from the roadway, nor would it be able to be reached by the public since it is on private property, Leavitt said. The area would also be fenced in for reduced visibility and security reasons.

After reviewing the petition and discussing the matter, the board chose to examine the petition more closely at their next

## Here and There Howard Jones

### Looking Closer To Home

At times you can go halfway around the world in search of some piece of information which you ultimately discover on your doorstep. At any rate, such was the case with me last Wednesday morning minutes before last week's edition was due to go to press.

Having written in this column about Vita Sackville-West's entertaining yarn, "All Passion Spent," which appeared on public television the previous Sunday night, I found myself experiencing a restless Tuesday night wondering if I had written the name of the author accurately.

The next morning I hurried to the office in search of some information on the play. I ran across a copy of "Centerpiece," the monthly program magazine of the UNC Center for Public Television, but was able to learn only that the Masterpiece Production starred Dame Wendy Hiller as a newly-widowed 85-year-old who declares her independence from her intrusive but well-meaning children and decides to live alone in her own house. Nowhere in the publication was there a mention of the author.

It was, by then, almost nine o'clock and knowing that the Warren County Memorial Library next door was not due to open for an hour, I telephoned Channel Four studios in Chapel Hill in search of Ms. Sackville-West's correct name. After being transferred to the programming department, I spent several minutes waiting for a very pleasant lady to search for the information I wanted. Her search proved in vain, and she suggested that I call WGBH-TV in Boston, which had produced "All Passion Spent." I did so, only to learn that the production facilities there were not expected to open until noon and there was no one who could help me.

At this point, I had about exhausted time and telephone money. It then dawned on me that I might try the library at Warren County High School. A phone call there put me in touch with Elaine Coleman, who is always pleasant and accommodating. I told her what I wanted and within minutes she called me back with the information.

Elaine had been able to find quite a bit of information about Victoria Sackville-West, including her birthdate and deathdate, and the rather obscure bit of information that Queen Elizabeth I had given her ancestors a castle in Great Britain.

After all the bother, I learned that I had indeed spelled the author's name correctly. I also learned that when you can't find out something in Chapel Hill or Boston, you might try Route 1, Warrenton.

...

Temperatures plunged rapidly here over the past weekend, dropping from 83 degrees on Friday to the freezing mark by early Sunday morning, when trees in Warren County were coated with ice.

Colder weather brought talk of winters gone by at breakfast Monday morning when a World War II veteran recalled being on the firing range at Fort Sill, Okla. early one frigid winter morning.

"It was so cold that morning," the veteran recalled, "that the range officer told us there was but one barbed wire fence standing between us and the Arctic Circle, and on that morning, the gate had even been left open."

...

Some people seem to have an almost uncanny ability to put a good face on the worst possible situation. I was reminded of this the other day when someone told me of a middle-aged man who was executed in the state penitentiary.

"It wasn't too long," my friend advised me, "before his children were telling people that their father had occupied the seat of applied electricity at a major institution at the time of his death."

regular meeting and told Leavitt they would possibly set a public hearing on the matter at that time.

In other matters:  
• The board approved the final plat of Summerwood, Section Three, located in the River Township.

• The board approved the final plats for four water shore lots in the Oakridge Subdivision in the Roanoke Township.

• The board approved the projection of lot lines in the Summerwood, Section IV revised plats. The subdivision is located in the River Township.

• The board tabled any action to be taken on the preliminary plat of Greenwood Village Subdivision, Section II over to the next meeting. The plats show the addition of 14 acres to the subdivision located off SR 1001 on SR 1149.