

Owner Plans To Restore It

Austin House Damaged By Fire Sunday

Around Town

BY SAM C. MORRIS

After a short spring over the weekend, winter came in again with a bang Monday night. From a high of 80 on Saturday to around 26 degrees on Tuesday morning.

So I guess that we will have to put up with the cold weather until after Easter. Anyway Easter will come the first week in April so it is not as long as you think.

The fire Sunday at the Austin house has some of the old folks racking their brains to get the correct date as to when the house was built. The daily paper Monday that carried the story of the fire stated that the home was built in the late 1800s. From a few telephone calls after the paper arrived in Raeford, it would seem that 1901 would be nearer the correct date.

I can't be sure because this was before my time, but I can recall when Lawyer Ed Smith and family lived in the house.

We hope that it will be restored, because it has always been an asset to the town.

When you start writing about the old days, things seem to turn up from trunks and out of the attic. This past week, three different people came by with old letters or papers that had been found.

A letter was brought by the office by Buddy Blue that his father had received from Lt. Sam Roberts in January 1943. It would be of interest to the men of old Battery 'F'.

Joe Upchurch came by the office last week and brought with him a copy of "The Progressive Farmer". The paper was dated May 19, 1896. It was Volume 11 number 16 and was owned by Mrs. L.L. Polk. Joe said he found it along with some other old papers that came from his mother's house.

There were no large headlines and most of the front page items dealt with hogs, poultry, weather outlook, dairy products, etc.

An advertisement on the back page of the paper dealt with land along the Seaboard Air Line that the railroad was selling in the south. The land was advertised at from \$3.00 to \$10.00 per acre.

Another ad had good books selling from 50 cents to 75 cents. These were cloth bound books and were shipped postpaid.

A column headed "Just So" had the following items:

"It is very hard for a church to become spiritual, when many of its male members get their 'spirits' in a bar room."

"Reader, if you don't walk with you talk, the less you talk the better."

Another item under the heading "Snake Was Busy."

"In our country several years ago there was a man who came into a prohibited town, and, unlike you savages here, they said to him: 'You can't get a drink here without a prescription from the physicians, but the man said: 'I am perishing, I haven't time to get a prescription.' The apothecary replied, 'Well, I haven't the power to give you a drink, except for a snake bite.' The man said, 'where's the snake?' So the apothecary gave him the snake's address and he went off. Soon after, however, he came back and said: 'For goodness sake, give me a drink. That snake is engaged for six months ahead.'"

I would say from looking the paper over that the publisher or editor, besides being a farmer, must have also been a preacher or a strong lay leader.

Thanks Joe, the paper was interesting.

A copy of a folder entitled: "Record of William M. Skipper, 1861 - 1865" was brought into the office last week by Joe Thompson. Joe said that it was written by his wife's great - great grandfather.

The history starts with Mr. (See AROUND TOWN, page 14)



The Austin home Monday morning after Sunday's fire...Some damage shows on the roof right of center.

The second floor of the two-story Austin house at 131 W. Edinborough Ave., a 79-year-old Raeford landmark, was gutted by fire at midday Sunday.

Raeford Assistant Fire Chief Robert Jackson said it took about two and a half hours to get the blaze under control, since it had started on the second floor and gone into the attic. He said the cause of the fire is not known.

He said eight to 10 North Raeford Fire Department men, headed by Fire Chief George Baker, helped the 26 Raeford firemen, headed by Fire Chief Crawford Thomas, fight the fire.

Jackson said the Raeford Fire Department received the report of the fire at 11:20 a.m.

Dee Austin, the owner, said Monday an experienced insurance executive had estimated the damage at \$50,000 to \$60,000.

Austin said the losses include

antiques over 100 years old. The second-floor was full of them, he said.

He added that he planned to restore the house, however. The loss was partly covered by insurance, he said.

Austin said the house was built in 1901 by Marcus Dew, a contractor. He lived in it for a short time, then sold it to Ed Smith, a lawyer, who later became mayor of Raeford. Austin's family bought it from Smith's estate. Austin said the house has been in his family about 50 years.

Austin said his sister and brother-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Don Wilson, were living in the house, and he lived there part of the year and in Raleigh the rest of the time. Austin owns and operates Miltner Inn, a motel, on U.S. 401 north in Raleigh.

The Wilsons were attending church services and the house was unoccupied when the fire broke out.

The house was built of timber with its front showing large, white columns, and contained 12 rooms. Four were bedrooms which occupied the second floor. One of the rooms on the first floor is a living room measuring 20 by 40 feet.

The blaze started in the hallway of the second floor. Austin said he didn't know exactly what caused it but he was certain it didn't come from the electric wiring.

Raeford firemen, some of whom were attending services across the street at Raeford Presbyterian Church and in other churches within a few blocks of the Austin home, responded quickly to the alarm which each received on the portable pocket radio "buzzer" each carries all the time.

Apparently the first volunteer fireman to reach the house was Benny McLeod, who also is a city councilman. McLeod was attending the services in the Presbyterian Church when he received the alarm.

Water from the firemen's hoses leaked from the second floor to the first-floor rooms but the fire didn't reach the first-floor. Downstairs furnishings were saved.

On top of the house, a room offering a panoramic view of the town and surrounding countryside fell into the northeast bedroom when the fire broke through the roof.

Austin said he was in Raleigh when he was notified of the fire. He said his niece and her husband drove to Raleigh to bring him the news. He said they didn't want to tell him by telephone because they feared it would be too much of a shock for him.

Austin said that on the way to Raeford one fear he had was he would see the four large columns which grace the front of the house brought to the ground by the fire. The columns and the exterior of the house generally appeared untouched by the flames, however.

The only damage visible at the front of the house after the fire had been extinguished consisted of two windows broken with charring showing within.

Several hundred people watched the firemen fight the blaze.



Dee Austin stands in second-floor hallway. Fire started on the floor next to his left foot.

Music, Youth, Education Minister

Tillman Called To First Baptist Staff

Rev. V. Tillman has accepted a call by First Baptist Church of Raeford to serve as minister of music, youth and education.

Tillman's primary responsibility will be in the music ministry of the entire church. He will also work in the area of education in promoting the existing programs of the church.

Tillman is a native of Springside, Saskatchewan, Canada. He graduated from high school in Yorkton, Saskatchewan, in 1971. He attended North America Baptist College in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, where he received his Diploma of Music in 1973.

He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kansas in 1977, with a double major in humanities and music education.

In December 1979, he received his Master of Church Music degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

Tillman was substitute church pianist at Springside Baptist church, 1971-1976.

He was summer counselor and music director, Saskatchewan Baptist Association Camp, Yorkton, 1976-1977.

He also has served as music coordinator at Nuuanu Baptist Church in Honolulu, Hawaii, interim minister of music, Burlington Ky., Baptist Church, and Minister of Music, Lee's Lane Baptist Church, Louisville.

Tillman studied piano for 12 years and voice for eight years. He



B. V. Tillman

has been a member of college concert choirs, summer music teams, folk music groups and most recently a member of the Seminary Choir and Seminary Vocal Ensemble at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

He is married to the former Rebecca Lynn Smith of Orange, Calif. She graduated from high school at Newport Beach, Calif. received an Associate of Arts degree from Orange Coast Community College, Costa Mesa, Calif., and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Tabor College.

She is a data control specialist in the Administrations Department of the University of Louisville.

Store Manager Held Up Feb. 20

Armed-robbery Hearings March 14

Five Parkton area people face preliminary hearings March 14 in Hoke County District Court of on charges of armed robbery Feb. 20 at McNeill Lake Store on Rt. 1, Lumber Bridge.

The sheriff's department report shows that five were charged two days after the alleged robbery occurred.

All were still in Hoke County Jail Tuesday because they were unable to post the \$50,000 bond set for each.

Named in the warrants are Ervin Wactor, 16, Jimmy Simpson, 18, and his brother, Bennie, and Lawrence Manning, 29, all of Parkton, and Andre Reco Stansbury, 19, of Rt. 1, Parkton.

The sheriff's department quoted the manager of the store Mrs. Josephine Barefoot, as saying she turned over \$539 and a \$20 check

endorsed by Luther Paul from the cash register at the point of a double-barreled shotgun held by a man whose face and head were covered by a stocking.

Mrs. Barefoot told the investigating officer she drove her truck in pursuit of the robbery car after the gun-carrying masked man and two men who had preceded him into the store left but she lost sight of the car in Parkton.

She reported two men entered the store about 8 p.m. One went to the beer and wine counter and the other asked for a cigarette. She handed the latter a cigarette and lighter, then the latter asked her where her "husband Bob" was at. She said she replied Bob wasn't her husband but he had gone to Red Springs and would be back any-

(See ROBBERY, page 14)

County Nets \$91,720.71 From 1% Sales Tax

Hoke County received \$91,720.71 from its one per cent sales tax for the quarter which ended Dec. 31, 1979, after the state deducted the cost of collecting the tax.

The county netted \$79,620.46 from its tax in the same quarter of 1978.

The total collection for the last three months of 1979 was \$92,499.56. The cost of the collection was \$778.85.

Of the net remaining after the cost of collection was deducted, the City of Raeford received \$13,412.38, with the county government getting \$78,308.33.

Kidnapping, Gun Charges To Be Heard On March 7

A preliminary hearing of a kidnapping charge and trial on two charges of assault by pointing a gun are scheduled for March 7 in Hoke County District Court for a Raeford man.

Neill Archie Purcell, 34, of 707 Saunders St., is free on \$25,000 bond for appearance in court on the trial and hearing date.

Purcell is accused of committing the offenses Feb. 16 against Alfred Quick, 21, of Rt. 1, Raeford, operator of Evan's Center on Vass Road.

Purcell was arrested and charged later the same day, records show. The Hoke County Sheriff's Department report quoting Quick and other witnesses as indicating the series of events leading to the charges started outside Evan's with a disagreement between Quick and Purcell over payment for admission of a woman companion of Purcell to the club.

A summary of the report follows.

When Quick started returning to the club, Purcell, in the yard, carrying a rifle, told him not to move, and when Quick started to go inside, a shot was fired. Quick saw

Willie McLean and Purcell "tussling" with the rifle, then Purcell went out and took the rifle, and Purcell left in his car. Purcell took the rifle to the sheriff's department and reported the incident, then returned to the center. Purcell, carrying a shotgun, forced Quick to drive away from the club.

During the ride, Quick said, Purcell told him he would make a deal with him if Quick didn't report the incident and would return in the morning the gun Quick had taken.

Purcell let him go later at St. James Church intersection.

Caucuses March 13

Democrats from Hoke County will caucus at their precinct polling places on Thursday, March 13, at 8 p.m., Ken W. McNeill, chairman of the county Democratic party, announced this week.

Any registered Democrat is eligible to attend.

"These precinct meetings represent grass-roots democracy in action," McNeill said. "Democrats all over North Carolina will be

gathering to elect delegates to the county Democratic conventions and to discuss and pass resolutions on issues that concern them."

He stressed that the Democratic party is seeking broad participation in its meetings at precinct and county levels.

"We seek to be an inclusive party," McNeill said, "and we urge all active Democrats to attend these meetings and make their voices heard."