

The News-Journal

The Hoke County News - Established 1928

The Hoke County Journal - Established 1905

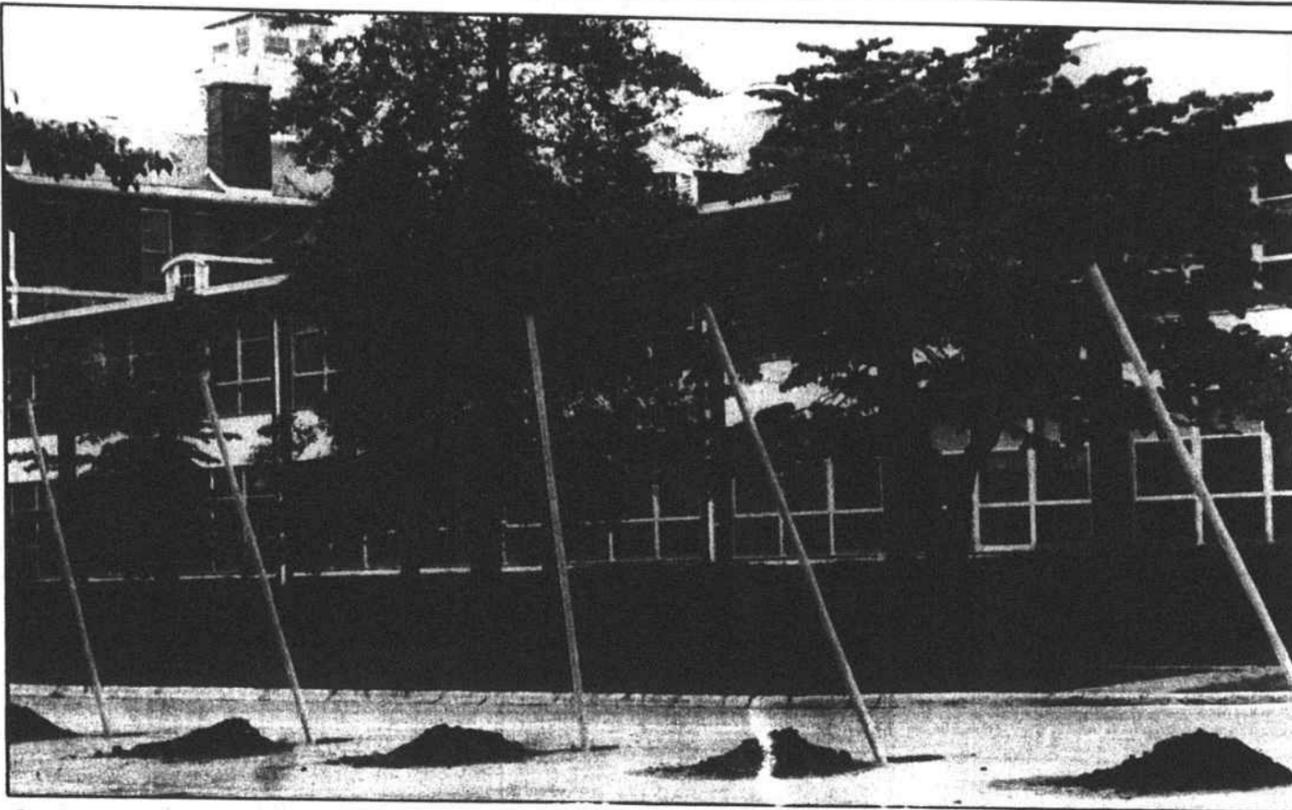
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Thursday, September 29, 1983



Getting prepared for the change-over

Holes are being dug and poles are being placed in an effort to get things ready for the change-over Friday. That is the day that McCain Hospital, North Carolina's only tuberculosis sanitarium, will be turned into a prison

hospital. The poles, shown here, are the first step in getting a high prison fence up and surrounding the over 80-year old facility.

McCain Closes Doors Friday

By Sherry Matthews

This Friday, McCain Hospital, the last remaining tuberculosis (TB) facility in North Carolina, will close its doors to the public.

In its place will be a 300-bed prison medical unit complete with a barbed wired fence.

"Our last day is September 30. After working hours Friday, the hospital will become a part of the Department of Corrections," McCain Hospital Administrator John Watson said.

Although the actual conversion,

which has been in the planning stages since May, will not take place until Friday, the eight remaining TB patients are expected to be moved Wednesday afternoon.

"Three will be transferred to Cherry Hospital in Goldsboro and one will be sent home," Watson said.

The four remaining patients have not been placed, according to Watson.

"We are still undecided about where to send those four patients,

Someone in Raleigh will have to make that decision," Watson said.

When the North Carolina Legislators voted to close McCain in May, 42 patients were being housed at the lung treatment facility.

Money was allocated by the Department of Human Resources for the care of those patients.

"Most were transferred to Cherry or sent home," Watson said.

In addition to patients, McCain housed some 180 employees who anticipated losing their jobs when

the hospital was converted to a prison facility.

When the final vote was cast to close McCain, budget leaders guaranteed that no jobs would be lost and benefits would remain intact, State Rep. Daniel H. DeVane said earlier.

According to Watson, that has "pretty much" been the case.

"We have 20 or 25 people who are going to retire at the end of the week," Watson said.

"There are more than 100

(See McCain, page 2A)

Closing May Raise Local Health Costs

By Sherry Matthews

With North Carolina's only remaining tuberculosis (TB) hospital converting to a prison unit on Friday, the Hoke County Health Department may soon be flooded with new patients that they cannot handle and local taxpayers may be facing higher costs, a spokesman said.

"We are already seeing an increase in our chest clinics," Hoke Health Director Lloyd Horne said.

State funds being provided to compensate local health departments for the closing of the McCain Sanitarium will not cover the increase in local costs, Horne said.

Hoke County will only receive \$9,500 to compensate for the service provided by McCain.

"The additional patients are not our main problem. We don't have the X-ray equipment or development capabilities to handle the kind of patients that McCain was getting," Horne added.

McCain Hospital will officially shut its doors to the public on Friday, but out-patient clinics were shut down in August.

"The out-patient clinic was the way people were initially getting admitted at McCain, and when that closed, we began to see a difference here," Horne said.

According to Horne, the health department was sending Hoke residents to McCain for routine X-rays and treatments.

"Those patients that we have been sending to McCain will now be coming back here," Horne said.

Since the out-patient clinic closed, the health department's X-ray clinic has tripled.

"We have been seeing an average of six or seven patients per clinic, but we are now scheduling 24 patients per clinic," Horne said.

With the sudden influx of patients, Horne believes the health department is going to need X-ray capabilities that they have "up to now" been able to live without.

"We have one X-ray unit that is mounted to the wall," Horne explained.

"That unit is fine for taking X-rays of those who can stand, but it will not accommodate everyone that may need it," Horne added.

"We will eventually need an X-ray unit that will accommodate paraplegics and the elderly," Horne said, noting that they would also need development equipment.

According to the health director, a former McCain doctor will be working with Hoke patients once a month performing X-rays.

"We will soon be asked to do what we previously have been letting McCain handle," Horne said.

In addition to an increased X-ray patient load, Horne is expecting the size of his TB clinics to expand at a rapid rate.

"We now have a total of 100 TB related patients, past and present. The size of those clinics may increase 300% to 400%," he said.

"McCain did a lot of the work, and now that it is closing, it will be pushed back to the local health department," Horne said.

County money has also been a problem, according to Horne.

In this year's budget, a health department secretary was cut and no additional funds were provided for the purchase of X-ray film.

"Our clinics are going to grow and we will probably use at least triple the amount of film that has been budgeted," Horne said.

"We simply do not have the equipment or the county money to handle a sudden flood of people," Horne said.

At this point, Horne is not "real sure" how McCain's closing will affect the local health facility.

"It is hard to plan for something you are not sure of. Right now, all we can do is guess," Horne said.

"I hope we can handle it, but right now it is anybody's guess. We will just have to wait and see," Horne added.

Around Town

By Sam Morris

The weather has been almost perfect for the past week. The days are warm, but not hot, and the nights are fine for sleeping with the temperatures being in the low 40s.

Of course we could use some rain, but it is about time to pick cotton and it is better picking in dry weather. Maybe the late beans and the fall turnips will survive with the rain we have had recently.

It was music to my ears when the air conditioner ceased to come on every few minutes. Now if it doesn't get so cold that the furnace runs all the time, maybe my retirement check (Social Security) will last for the month.

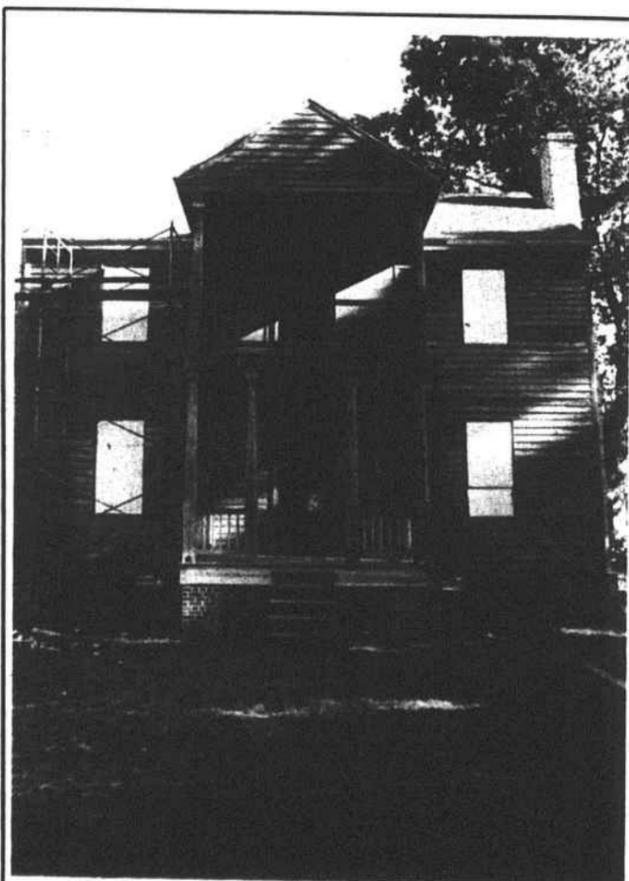
The folks at the golf course were sowing rye grass on the greens Monday morning, so they must be looking for colder days ahead. Brown Hendrix, owner at Arabia said it was a new type of grass and could be cut after three days growth. This means we will not have to putt through the tender grass for a week.

Anyway it is good football weather.

The Puppy Creek Community Watch will have an organizational meeting Thursday night at 7:00 o'clock. The meeting will be held at the Puppy Creek Fire Station. Officers for the coming year will be elected. After business, there will be a covered dish supper. Please attend.

The Raeford Junior Woman's Club will sponsor bingo, Saturday

(See AROUND, page 2A)



Restoration in progress

Roof, foundation and chimney repairs have already received their finishing touches and porch work is nearly complete on the 181-year old Mill Prong House, located in southern Hoke County. During Sunday's annual meeting of the Mill Prong Preservation Society, Inc. members and guests were taken on a tour of the Mill Prong House and the Hector McLean House just outside of Laurinburg. Guests were shown the completed portions of the Mill Prong House by Edward F. Turber, who is the restoration consultant for the project. The Mill Prong Society received \$25,000 from the North Carolina Legislature to be used for the restoration of the house. Mill Prong Preservation Secretary Ruth McEachern said that they need to raise some \$22,000 to match the states allocated monies.

Commissioner Lingers In Jail

Hoke County Commissioner James A. Hunt was given another six-month suspended sentence Tuesday in Harnett County District Court for worthless check charges.

In addition, *The News-Journal* learned Monday that five new worthless check arrest warrants have surfaced against the commissioner in Robeson County.

Hunt, who has spent the last 12 days in the Scotland County Jail, was taken into custody Monday by Harnett authorities. The commissioner was under a \$5,000 bond in that county for failing to appear on his scheduled court date.

Hunt was jailed in Harnett over-

night to ensure his appearance Tuesday in district court and then returned to Scotland County, a Harnett jailer said.

Scotland authorities confirmed Wednesday that Hunt remains in jail.

The Robeson County warrants have not been served on the commissioner but are expected to be issued after he is released from jail.

In a telephone conversation Monday from the Harnett County Jail, Hunt appeared relaxed and joked about his incarceration.

"They're feeding me three times a day. I'm doing just fine," Hunt said.

"All I'm doing is relaxing and

listening to the radio," Hunt added.

Hunt blames his recent incarceration on too many court dates scheduled for the same day.

"I had one in Fayetteville, Raeford and Laurinburg. I could not make three court dates at once," Hunt said.

Hunt also said he had tried to get a Scotland County judge to allow him to pay off the checks without having to appear in court.

"I asked him to let me pay off the \$4,500 in checks at \$1,000 per week, but he said 'no' and placed me under \$35,000 bond," Hunt said.

(See HUNT, page 2A)

Suspected School Meat Held For USDA Probe

Hoke County officials were alerted last week that 74 cases of ground beef, delivered to the schools from two midwestern plants, might be contaminated.

None of the over 4,000 pounds of beef has been served to the county's students, Hoke School Superintendent Bob Nelson said.

The meat has been locked away until it can be inspected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and it will not be served to students until it is proved safe, Nelson added.

The beef is part of a 6.4 million pound shipment transported from Cattle King of Denver, Colorado, and Nebraska Beef Inc. of Gering, Nebraska.

News reports indicate that both plants are suspected of having un-

sanitary conditions at their facilities.

The ground beef is produced by both plants for the federal school lunch program.

Agriculture Secretary John R. Block ordered the meat impounded until federal inspectors could examine it.

The schools will be able to get by until the meat is OK'd or replaced, Nelson said.

"We're just not going to serve the ground beef," Nelson added.

Since the probe began, 34 states have been suspected of having received some of the suspect meat.

Charlotte, Rockingham, Butler and Fayetteville are among the North Carolina school districts thought to have received some of the contaminated meat.



Inside Today

School year's off

School is back in session, and students are off and running. Along with the beginning of a new school year is the hope that the Hoke County Schools will improve its programs and its facilities. We take a look at some of the new programs and the planned improvements in this week's B-section of *The News-Journal*.