



Clinical work
School Dentist Dr. Mike White administers a mouth covering and prepares to work on a tooth that has been bothering Ralph. While White prepares to fill the tooth, his other patients watch and help during the process. "It helps the patients if they can be involved," White said.

'White Knight' Provides Dental Care

By Sherry Matthews
Just the thought of a trip to the dentist usually evokes pain for most. However, for school age children at South Hoke the fears of being hurt by the drill have been allayed by a "knight in white armor."
The new "knight," as some of the students refer to him, is Public Health Dentist Mike White, who has been assigned to work within the Hoke School system.
This is the first time in the history of the Hoke Schools that a dentist has been provided, Hoke Health Director Lloyd Horne said.
Horne apparently was a key factor in getting a dentist for the school system.
"We really needed one," Horne said.
"We have had a dental hygienist that we have shared with Scotland County," Horne added.
The hygienist provided dental health care education and was "beneficial" in coordinating a "mouth rinse" program within the school system.
White, a University of North

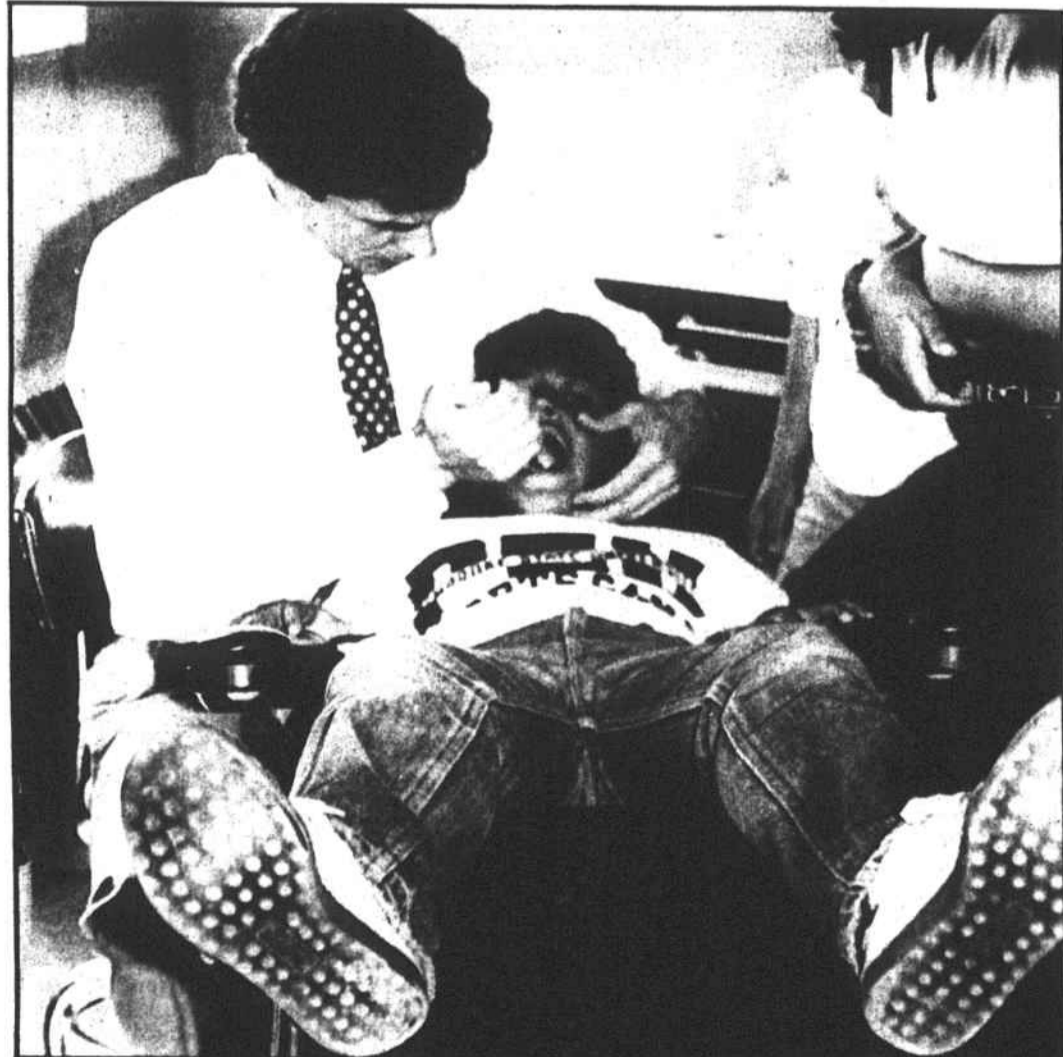
Carolina graduate, has a D.D.S. degree and has worked with public dental health for the last seven years.
"I really enjoy what I do," White said.
The new dentist is presently working from South Hoke school where he is getting ready to do "clinical work" on students who were eligible for the dental program.
Among White's duties is screening all Hoke students, determining their dental needs and either referring patients or treating them for those needs.
In October, White screened over 3,000 students from six schools and determined that 1,849 children needed dental care.
"There were a lot of students who needed dental care and simply were not getting it for one reason or another," Horne said.
At present, White only treats those "economically eligible" students who attend the South Hoke school, but he screens and refers other Hoke students.
South Hoke was the second

choice when it came time to decide where to place the new dentist, Horne said.
According to Horne, J.W. Turlington, which houses fifth and sixth graders, was the first choice, but because of "insufficient room" South Hoke became the "next logical" site.
"South Hoke had the space and Turlington didn't," Horne said.
Although Horne said the students with the most dental problems were fifth and sixth graders, he admitted being satisfied with the South Hoke location.
"We have younger kids there. If we work on them now, hopefully they won't have those problems when they reach Turlington," he said.
Although most children are usually wary of climbing in the dentist chair, those students waiting for treatment at South Hoke are "ready" to enter White's dental kingdom.
"I just love Dr. White," one South Hoke student said.
"He really makes it all right,"

she added.
White, who clowns with the kids and lets them help him in the clinic, loves working with the "little kids."
Three students come into his office together for treatment.
"That is simply good dental practice when you are working without an assistant," White said.
"It also helps the other kids," he added.
Peer pressure and the "companionship of others that must go through the same ordeal" helps put the students at ease while they wait their turn.
White also helps the students to relax by putting them to work.
"I let them hold the suction, help me mix the fillings and clean the instruments," White said.
"This keeps them occupied, and it also helps me out a lot," he said.
White, who also held workshops for the Hoke teachers to help them help the children, admits that he will not tell a child that the treatment will not hurt.
"That is a big no-no," White said.

"I tell the teachers not to tell them that it won't hurt, and I don't tell them that either because they might just feel something," White said.
"I just tell them they might feel some sensation. It usually puts them at ease," White added.
White's South Hoke students seem to trust him.
"I think they love him to death," Horne said.
"I know he loves them," the health director added.
White will agree.
"They are so much fun to work with. I have a good time with those kids," he said.
As White talks, three patients walk in, ready for whatever their "good dentist" has in store.
"I'm not sure it is me they are eager to see or the rewards I give them once we have finished," White said.
"When they leave here I give them a good behavior award," White said.
Among those awards are rings and stickers that range from

"World's Greatest Patient" to "My Dentist Loves Me" or "I Love My Dentist."
"That is my favorite one to give out," White said.
Although White loves to joke with his patients and "just have a good time," he takes his work very seriously.
"I want to help these kids build up their teeth and improve their dental care," he said.
"Whatever I can do to help I will do," he added.
Although White was originally assigned to Hoke County for one year, Horne said that word from state officials promises a brighter future for Hoke's new dentist.
"We may be able to keep him around until 1985 the way it looks now," Horne said.
"If we are able to keep him with us, we will be able to use a little more flexibility over the next couple of years," Horne said.
"What he is doing is great," Horne said.
"We have needed someone like that in the schools for a long time," he added.



Checking over his work
After White completes his fillings, he checks Ralph over one last time to see if everything looks OK. White also lets his other patients check out the work, "to build their confidence in what is really going to happen."



Preparing to swish
White joins his patients as they prepare to perform their daily "swish." "Swishing" is a fluoride treatment that helps strengthen the teeth, White said. These kids enjoy swish time, White added.



A little instruction
White, who enjoys teaching and just "goofing off" with the kids, shows them how to properly brush their teeth. White instructs his patients in dental care and also teaches them how to work in a dental office. "They are a lot of fun," White said.