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Evidence found near graves

By Ron Anderson

Law enforcement officers are collecting physical evidence this week as part of an on-going investigation into the murder of two Raleigh women whose skeletal remains were discovered in a pine forest near McCain on January 13, Hoke County Sheriff Dave Barrington said Monday.

A piece of plywood found in a beaver pond near the site where the two women were buried has been sent to Raleigh for analysis.

The board had a lot of blood on it, Barrington said.

Last Thursday, Edward Lee Cummings, the man charged in the shooting deaths of Karen M. Puryear and her sister, Teresa A. Puryear, had his first appearance in court.

District Court Judge Warren Pate advised Cummings of his rights and set a probable cause

hearing date for February 7 on two first degree murder charges.

Cummings, 44, a balding man with a goatee and thin mustache, walked with a slight limp when he entered the courtroom.

Judge Pate told Cummings he could receive the death sentence or a long prison term if he were found guilty of the two murder charges.

Pate asked Cummings whether he would rather have his own attorney or have a lawyer assigned to him by the court.

"Is my father here?" Cummings asked the judge. "I'd like to speak with him."

Cummings was allowed to have a conference with his father, Curtis Cummings, 74, after which Judge Pate assigned the public defender's office in Fayetteville to represent Cummings in the case.

Cummings, of Willow Springs, was arrested on January 20 and

charged with the shooting deaths of Karen M. Puryear, 22, missing since November 19, and Teresa A. Puryear, who was 15 when she was reported missing in September 1983.

The remains discovered in the graves near McCain were identified as the two girls by State Medical Examiner Dr. Page Hudson.

According to a search warrant filed by the Hoke County Sheriff's Department, Karen Puryear had been dating Cummings since 1979 and had lived with him, both at his home in Willow Springs and at her mother's house in Raleigh.

Cummings had fathered three children by Karen Puryear, one of whom died of crib death, according to the warrant.

In May, 1985, Karen Puryear left Cummings and later took out a (See EVIDENCE, page 2A)



First appearance

A shackled Edward Lee Cummings (center), who has been charged with two counts of first degree murder in connection with the shooting deaths of two Raleigh women, is taken to his first court appearance Thursday by Hoke County Sheriff's deputies, David McNeill (left) and Clarence Patterson (right).

Conversation sparks search

Evidence was seized by Hoke County deputies after an officer overheard a suspect in the killing of two Raleigh women telling his father to retrieve the items before they were seen by anyone else.

Hoke authorities obtained a search warrant from District Court Judge Warren Pate, after a county deputy overheard murder suspect, Edward Lee Cummings, telling his father, Curtis Cummings, about papers which contained information about "what this (the case) was all about," court records show.

Deputy David McNeill allegedly overheard Cummings telling his father the papers were located under the floor mat of the suspect's 1979 Chevrolet Caprice and in the trunk of the car.

The conversation allegedly took (See MURDER, page 2A)



Snowy Monday

The first significant snowfall in Hoke County came on Monday with no speakable accumulation. Arctic temperatures followed on Tuesday with a low of 8°

and wind chill factors much lower. Many residents were seen with frostbitten noses and freezing hands during the early part of the week.

Hoke development program on track, researcher says

By Ron Anderson

According to a St. Andrews Presbyterian College teacher who specializes in rural industrial trends, the Raeford-Hoke Economic Development Commission is on the right track in its efforts to attract more jobs.

Dr. Thomas Till, a business and economic professor at the college, has concentrated his research efforts on ways of increasing the number of jobs in rural counties in the south.

An article by Till is included in "Non-Metropolitan America in Transition," a book published in 1981 by the University of North Carolina Press.

Attracting industry to rural communities is "a highly competitive business," Till said last week.

For every firm that wishes to relocate, there are 1,000 counties that would gladly have the company move within its boundaries, Till said.

"The chief need is to have an edge on the competition," Till said.

The first requirement is for counties to organize and establish a skilled industrial development team.

The structure of the Raeford-

Hoke Economic Development Commission gives the organization its competitive edge, according to Economic Developer John Howard.

The commission receives 75% of its funding from Hoke County and 25% from the City of Raeford, but the organization receives equal guidance from the city, county and the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce, Howard said.

The second requirement in attracting industry to an area is establishing a good industrial site. "You can't just take clients out to a cornfield, the area has to be accessible to good transportation and water and sewage lines," Till said.

An industrial park and marketing feasibility study for Hoke County is currently being conducted by the engineering firm of Skip Green and Associates.

By March, two possible industrial sites will have been located in the county, Howard said.

A supply of skilled workers to fill the needs of incoming industries is another way counties can gain a competitive edge.

"Our community college system is dedicated to training people to fill jobs," Howard said.

Another factor companies consider before moving into an area is the availability of cultural activities.

From the beginning, the Economic Development Commission has seen the need to improve the quality of life in Hoke County, Howard said.

"Some of it is simple: creating a clean living environment and creating a sense of community spirit," Howard said.

The upcoming Turkey Festival and the 75th anniversary of Hoke County are ways of creating a positive attitude throughout the community, according to Howard.

Also, Hoke County offers some of the finest women's and men's civic associations available, Howard said.

An important aspect to remember while looking for companies to come into an area is to make sure the businesses are diversified, Till said.

That way if one industry fails on hard times, the other companies will be able to provide jobs for area workers.

"Our factories are to put in a diversified base of industry," Howard said.

Results of EAS polling not public for two weeks

Results of a poll taken during January on extending local telephone service between Raeford and Fayetteville will not be released for at least two weeks, a spokesman for the North Carolina Utilities Commission said Monday.

Ballots were being counted this week by Carolina Telephone Company, after voting from Raeford customers ended Monday on whether or not to install the Ex-

tended Area Telephone Service (EAS) between the 875 exchange and Fayetteville.

The results will not become public information until they are filed with the Utilities Commission during February.

"I would think the results will be filed within two weeks," said Carolyn Johnson, a staff attorney with the North Carolina Utilities Commission.

Once the results are filed,

members of the Public Staff will begin their studies and decide whether or not they feel EAS should be established between Raeford and Fayetteville.

"The Public Staff takes at least two weeks to go over the results and make a recommendation," Johnson said.

"I can't predict what the commission is going to do about it. Until they look at the polling of

Raeford subscribers, they won't make a decision," Johnson said.

A spokesman for Carolina Telephone Company said the Utilities Commission has ordered his company not to release the polling results.

"I can't give you any forecast or feeling about it (the polling)," Carolina Telephone Division of Public Affairs Manager Bobby Stiggs said on Monday.

The EAS polling was ordered by

the Utilities Commission on December 19.

If EAS is established, the 3,700 customers on the Raeford exchange will be able to call over 90,000 telephones for a local rate increase of \$4.52 per month.

Carolina Telephone sent ballots to customers in the 875 exchange with the January billings.

Telephone customers with more than one phone number were entitled to vote for each telephone

line. The cutoff date for the polling was Monday.

Stiggs said any ballot received with a January 27 postmark will be counted in the poll.

The polling was ordered to see whether or not Raeford customers are willing to pay a monthly matrix charge of \$4.52 for residence one-party subscribers and \$10.78 for business one-party subscribers.

After Main Street fire

Owners unsure about rebuilding

By Ron Anderson

The owner of a Main Street building which was destroyed by fire last week says he is undecided whether or not he is going to replace the structure.

"My plans are really indefinite right now," owner of the McLauchlin Company building, John W. McPhaul said on Monday.

"At the present time, we are giving great consideration to replacing the building," McPhaul said.

"I have replacement insurance that says you have to rebuild to get the money back," McPhaul said.

The McLauchlin Company building housed McLauchlin Hardware and Lock Co., Inc., the oldest business in the county, and Hardin's Food Store.

The building plus both busi-

nesses were destroyed when a fire burned the structure to the ground last Tuesday.

All the county's volunteer fire units plus Cumberland County's LaFayette Village Fire Department battled the blaze which was described by firefighters as one of the most serious fires in Hoke County since one-half of Raeford burned to the ground on December 30, 1925.

An investigation into the cause of the fire is being conducted by the State Bureau of Investigation and the Raeford Police and Fire Departments.

"We're still looking at it to try to determine the cause of the fire," District Supervisor of the Southeast District SBI Officer Ray Davis said.

"We haven't developed any

suspicion of it (the fire) being intentional," Davis said.

The fire apparently started near a fish cooler in a back corner of Hardin's at approximately 2:30 a.m. on Tuesday.

No immediate plans have been made to reopen the McLauchlin Co., Inc. which was operated by McPhaul's son, Jimmy.

The hardware store did have replacement insurance, according to McPhaul.

Also, it is uncertain as to whether Curtis Hardin will reopen Hardin's Food Store, according to McPhaul.

A decision by Hardin "could influence our plans on what to do there," McPhaul said.

Less than six months ago, Har- (See RAEFORD, page 3A)



Wheels of the past

These old wagon wheels are stacked on state highway 211 along with an abundant array of other items. Some may consider the collections of local dealers junk, but others consider it treasure. We take a photographic look at the Hoke County landscape on page one of section B in today's News Journal.

Around Town

By Sam Morris

The snow early Monday afternoon was beautiful coming down. It didn't snow long and the sun is now out at about 2:30 p.m. The wind is blowing and it is cold. The temperature stands at 27°, but the wind chill makes it much colder.

The forecast is for the thermometer to get down to about 5° Monday night with a wind chill of about -20°. Now this is not my kind of weather.

The long range forecast is for it to warm into the 40s by the weekend. Winter has finally arrived.

The committee that is making plans for the celebration of the 75th Anniversary of Hoke County has designated Friday, May 8 as (See AROUND, page 6A)